

## **LIVING WITH AN AUSTRALIAN FAMILY**

The following information will help you prepare for home stay accommodation. When you begin school, school staff will provide you with more detailed information as part of your orientation.

The way Australian families live will be different from the ways your home country. When you live in home stay with an Australian family you are usually considered part of the family. The Australian families that take international students for home stay are generally considerate, kind people who try to understand the culture differences between themselves and their international students. You, also, need to try to understand these differences so that your home stay is a good experience for you.

### **What do you get in homestay?**

Your home stay family will provide you with a room of your own, a place to put your belongings, and a place to study. You will be given three meals a day as well as snacks as required and have access to the laundry and the main living areas in the house. You will also be given an opportunity to learn about Australian culture within a caring family environment.



### **What do you pay?**

The cost of home stay will be AUD\$272 per week.

### **How do you pay for homestay?**

EQI provides a home stay management service which is covered by the tuition fees you pay. Home stay fees are required to be paid in advance of your arrival for up to twelve months depending on the duration of your course. Payments will be calculated from one week before your course commences until one week after your course finishes. This money will be held by your school that will pay your home stay fortnight on your behalf.

### **Australian families are not all the same!**

Australian families, like families everywhere, differ from each other in many ways. This is especially so because Australia is a multi-culture country. Australia has been settled by people from all over the world, including Europe and Asia. There is freedom of religion in Australia and people practise many different religions eg Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism.

In general, Australians live in nuclear families (that is, mother, father and children) rather than with grandparents, uncles and aunts, although they often have regular contact with their relatives. In recent years, the numbers of single parent's families (one parent and children) and childless families (husband and wife only) has increased.

As most Australian teenagers are students, much of their time is spent at school and doing homework. Students normally attend school between 8.30 am, five days a week,

Australian teenagers often invite their friends to their home. This is with parents' permission and knowledge. International students can do this also, but they must first make sure it is okay with their home stay parents.



## Transportation to and from school

Depending on where they live, students either;

- Walk; or
- Ride bicycle; or
- Catch trains or busses to school.

Some students must use two buses or a bus and train if they live a long way from their school. You will need to cover the cost (if any) of your transportation to and from school each day.

## Additional spending money

As well as the money you will need to pay for your home stay, you will also need extra money to pay for other living expenses.

In many Australian families, the parents give their children spending money each week (called 'pocket' money). The amount given usually depends on the age of the child is expected to buy with the money. Some teenagers might expect to pay for their own transport and entertainment. Transport could cost up to AUD\$20 per week, while one trip to the movies might cost as much as AUD\$15 (this included transport and something to eat). Most international students, who are careful with their money, could manage with approximately AUD\$50 additional spending money per week.

## Talking to the family

It is normal to feel nervous when you first meet your home stay family. You will begin to feel happier when you get to know the family better. Talking to your home stay family about any worries or questions you have when you first arrive will help you adjust to living in new country.

If you do not speak English well, you can still communicate. Write down what you want to say if your written English is better than your spoken English. Draw a picture what you want to say. Use your bilinguals' dictionary. Mime or act out your message. Ask another student to interpret for you or use the telephone interpreter service (your home stay or school can tell you about this).

If you spend most your time in your room with the door closed, the home stay family may think you do not like them. Spend some time each day with the family talking, watching TV, or helping the family with house hold task. Tell the home stay family about your culture and find out about theirs.

## Make most if your homestay experience

Staying in home stay gives an excellent opportunity to:

- Learn about Australian culture;
- Make friends with Australian;
- Improve your English language skills;
- Share information about your culture; and
- Adjust to new country while living in a safe and caring environment.

