



Welcome to *Australia.*

Your Pre-departure Guide

Congratulations on your new life in Australia!

This pre-departure orientation program has been designed to help you prepare for living in Australia. It is an important resource to use during your stay in Australia. This will make your time in Australia easier and help you to know what to expect.

1. Your New Community

Australia is home to a vibrant and diverse community, with plenty of opportunities for you to engage in local festivals and activities. Whether you are looking to explore, volunteer, or simply enjoy your new surroundings, you'll find various ways to feel at home.

2. Packing Checklist

	Yes	No
Current passport (with Australian visa electronically linked)	☐	☐
Plane tickets (ensure your name matches your passport)	☐	☐
Pre-departure program documents	☐	☐
Letter of Offer	☐	☐
Driver's license (if applicable)	☐	☐
Important documents (insurance, vaccination records, birth certificates, marriage certificates)	☐	☐
Power adapters and toiletries for immediate use upon arrival	☐	☐



About Australia

Australia is a vast and diverse country, with a population of nearly 28 million people. It covers 7.7 million square kilometers, stretching 4000 km from east to west and 3000 km from north to south. The weather varies greatly across regions, so be prepared for everything from scorching summers to chilly winters.

Capital Cities

Melbourne
Sydney
Brisbane
Perth
Darwin
Adelaide
Canberra
Hobart

Arriving in Australia



When you arrive in Australia, remember that certain biosecurity measures are in place to protect the country's unique environment. Ensure you are familiar with the items that are restricted or prohibited from entry.

a. Getting Into Your New Home

Getting settled in Australia is made easier with the right information at hand.

Here's what to expect:

b. Accommodation

Finding accommodation in Australia can vary depending on the city and budget. Many international workers start with short-term options like Airbnb or hostels before securing longer-term rentals. Rental properties typically require a bond (security deposit) and rental history. Some employers may offer temporary housing or relocation assistance. It is advisable to research areas close to work, public transport and essential amenities to ensure a smooth transition.

- www.realestate.com.au or
- www.domain.com.au – for rental properties, homes, and apartments
- **Local Facebook community groups** for share housing options – **Fairy Floss** is a popular one.

c. Transport

Australia has a well-developed public transport system, including trains, buses, trams, and ferries, depending on the city.

Major cities like Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane use smart card systems (Opal, Myki, and Go Card for easy travel).

Many workers also rely on rideshare services like Uber or DiDi, while car rentals and bike-sharing are available in most urban areas.

If planning to drive, an international driver's licence may be required. Check local road rules and regulations in advance.



d. Driving in Australia

If you plan to drive in Australia, you may be able to use your overseas driver's licence for a limited period, depending on the state or territory where you live.

Australia drives on the left-hand side of the road, and most vehicles have the steering wheel on the right.

Driving with an Overseas Licence

In most cases, you will need:

- A valid overseas driver's licence issued in your home country.
- An International Driving Permit (IDP) if your licence is not in English, carried together with your original licence.

An International Driving Permit is an official translation of your driver's licence and must be obtained before arriving in Australia from an authorised issuing body in your home country.

Rules about how long you can drive using an overseas licence, and whether you are required to convert it to an Australian driver's licence, vary by state and territory.

If you remain in Australia beyond the permitted period, you may be required to exchange your overseas licence for an Australian one. This process may involve a knowledge test, a practical driving test, or both, depending on your circumstances.

It is recommended that you check the specific driving and licence requirements for the state or territory where you will be living, typically up to 12 months, as long as you also carry your valid South African driver's licence with you.

Bank Account

You can open a bank account with an Australian bank, building society or credit union either **before you arrive or after you arrive in Australia**.

Some banks allow you to **start the account opening process online before arrival**, which can be helpful if you want an account number available to receive funds or salary once you land. However, in most cases the account will have limited functionality until your identity is verified in person at a branch.

In practice, **opening a bank account face to face after arrival is often simpler and faster**, as bank staff can complete identification checks and activate the account during the same visit.

Identification and Documents

Requirements may vary between banks, but you will typically need the following:

1. Passport

A valid passport is the standard primary form of identification.

2. Visa Details

A copy of your visa grant notice or confirmation of your visa status.

3. Australian Address

This can be a permanent or temporary address. If you are staying in short-term accommodation, such as a hotel or serviced apartment, this is generally acceptable when opening your account. Banks may ask for basic evidence of this address, such as a booking confirmation, accommodation letter, or similar document showing your name and Australian address.

4. Employment Details (if available)

Some banks may ask for an employment letter or payslip to support identity or employment verification, particularly if additional documentation is required.

5. Tax File Number (TFN)

You do **not usually need a Tax File Number (TFN) to open a bank account**, but banks will ask for it once you have one. Providing your TFN ensures that interest earned on your savings is taxed correctly. If you do not provide a TFN, tax may be withheld at a higher rate until your TFN is supplied.

Important Notes

Identification requirements may differ between banks. The information provided above reflects the **minimum identification requirements set by the Australian Government**.

It is recommended that you check the relevant bank's website before attending a branch, as individual banks may request additional documentation.

Most banks require you to **attend a branch in person** to complete identity verification, even if you apply online before arrival.

Tax File Number (TFN)

Superannuation

A Tax File Number (TFN) is a personal reference number used by the Australian Government to manage your tax and superannuation records. You will need a TFN if you plan to work in Australia, lodge a tax return, or earn interest from a bank account.

Do I need a TFN before I arrive?

No. You can only apply for a TFN after you arrive in Australia and your visa is active.

When should I apply?

It is recommended that you apply for your TFN as soon as possible after arrival, particularly if you intend to start work. Employers will ask for your TFN so the correct amount of tax is withheld from your salary.

How to apply for a TFN

New arrivals generally apply for a TFN **online through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)**. The application is free.

When applying, you will need:

- Your passport
- Your visa details
- An Australian address where your TFN can be sent by mail

You do not need to visit an office in person to apply.

After you apply

- Your TFN is usually sent by post within 2–4 weeks
- Keep your TFN secure and do not share it unnecessarily
- You will only ever receive one TFN, even if you change jobs, move addresses, or leave and return to Australia

Superannuation

Superannuation, commonly referred to as “**super**”, is Australia’s compulsory retirement savings system. It is similar to a pension plan in other countries.

If you are employed in Australia, your employer will make super contributions on your behalf. These contributions are paid in addition to your salary.

Some employers have a default superannuation fund and can set this up for you when you commence employment. However, you do have the choice to pick your own fund if you already have a preferred provider or wish to nominate one yourself.

Superannuation is usually preserved unless retirement or unless specific conditions for release are met.



Additional Information

Healthcare in Australia

Australia has a well-developed healthcare system that includes public and private services. Your access will depend on your visa type, employer arrangements, and whether your home country has a reciprocal health agreement.

Medicare

Medicare is Australia's public healthcare system. It covers many essential services, including:

- GP and specialist visits (fully or partially, depending on the clinic)
- public hospital treatment
- some prescription medications

Not all visa holders are eligible. If you are eligible, you can enrol after arriving in Australia.

Private Health Insurance

If you are not eligible for Medicare, you must maintain private health cover.

Private health typically covers:

- hospital treatment
- emergency ambulance services
- certain specialist services some prescription medications

Most private health policies do not cover standard GP visits, so you may be required to pay the consultation fee.

Visiting a Doctor (GP)

General Practitioners (GPs) are the first point of contact for non-urgent medical issues. You can book appointments online or by phone. If you do not have Medicare, you will pay the consultation fee directly to the clinic.

Hospitals and Emergency Care

Public hospitals provide emergency treatment to everyone. If you need urgent assistance, call 000 for ambulance, police, or fire services. For non-life-threatening issues, visit:

- a GP
- an urgent care clinic
- an after-hours medical centre

Pharmacies

Pharmacies provide prescription medicine, basic treatments, and general health advice. Common pharmacy brands include:

- Chemist Warehouse
- Terry White Chemmart
- Priceline Pharmacy

Independent community pharmacies are also widely available.



Food and Grocery Shopping

For groceries and household supplies, most people shop at major supermarkets, including:

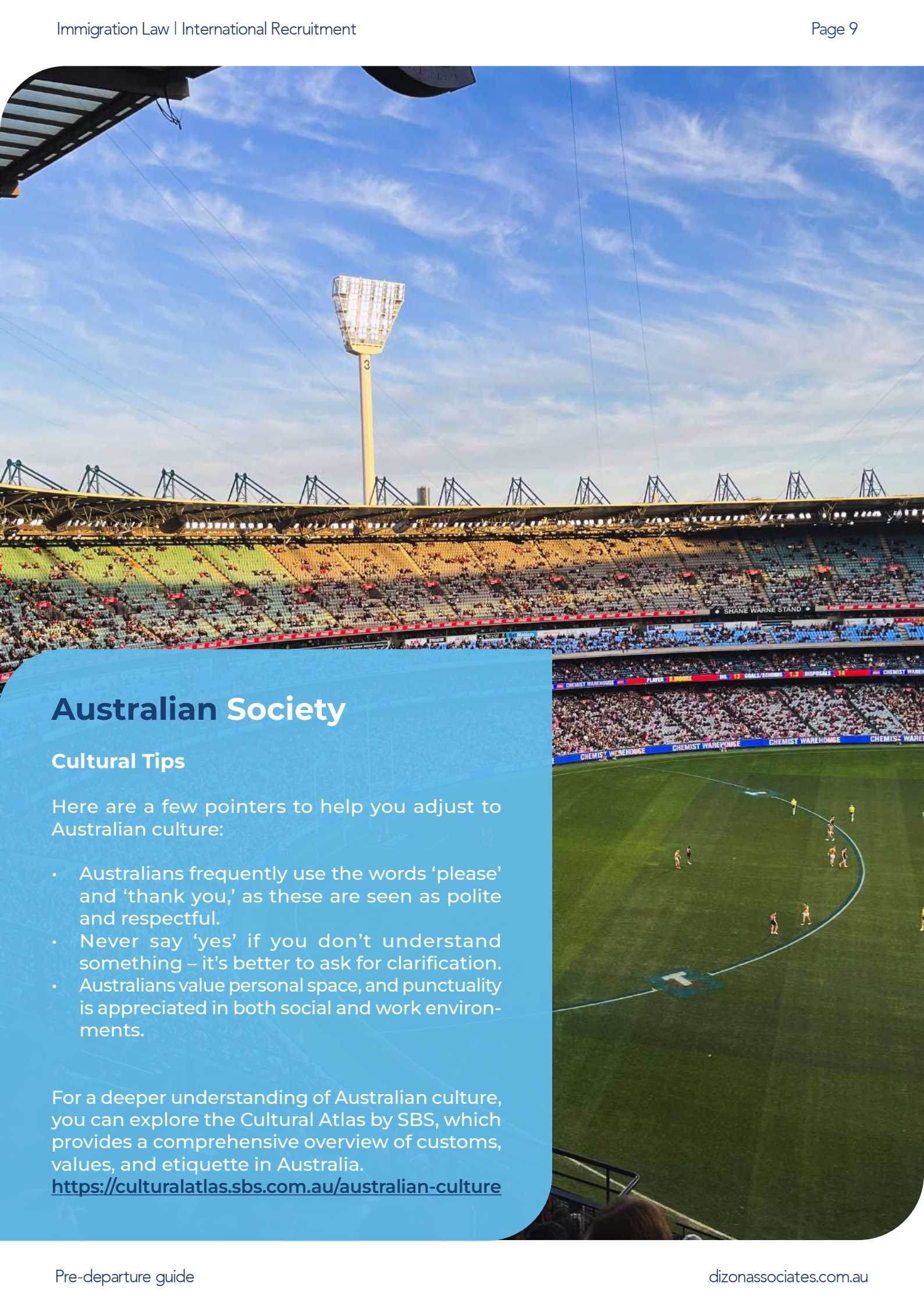
- Woolworths
- Coles
- Aldi
- IGA

In many areas, particularly cities and regional centres, you will also find:

- Local fruit and vegetable shops
- Butchers and bakeries
- Fresh food and farmers' markets, which sell locally produced fruit, vegetables, meat, seafood and specialty items

These options are commonly used by Australians and can offer good quality and value.

For smaller or urgent purchases, **convenience stores** (such as service-station shops or 7-Eleven) are available in some locations, mainly in larger cities. These stores carry a limited range of items and typically have higher prices and are not intended for regular grocery shopping.



Australian Society

Cultural Tips

Here are a few pointers to help you adjust to Australian culture:

- Australians frequently use the words 'please' and 'thank you,' as these are seen as polite and respectful.
- Never say 'yes' if you don't understand something – it's better to ask for clarification.
- Australians value personal space, and punctuality is appreciated in both social and work environments.

For a deeper understanding of Australian culture, you can explore the Cultural Atlas by SBS, which provides a comprehensive overview of customs, values, and etiquette in Australia.

<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/australian-culture>

Helpful Links for New Arrivals

These websites can help you get set up in Australia and access important services quickly.

Banking

- **Commonwealth Bank (CBA):** <https://www.commbank.com.au>
- **ANZ:** <https://www.anz.com.au>
- **Westpac:** <https://www.westpac.com.au>
- **NAB:** <https://www.nab.com.au>

Healthcare and Insurance

- **Medicare (Services Australia):** <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare>
- **Bupa (Overseas Workers Cover):** <https://www.bupa.com.au/health-insurance/over-seas-visitors/working>
- **Allianz (Overseas Visitors Health Cover):** <https://payment.ovhcallianzassistance.com.au/en/?AGENCYID=270810&GROUPCODEID=A600>
- **Find a doctor or medical clinic:** <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

Government and Work Essentials

- **Apply for a Tax File Number (TFN):** <https://www.ato.gov.au/TFN>
- **Department of Home Affairs:** <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au>
- **Fair Work Australia (Workplace rights):** <https://www.fairwork.gov.au>

Public Transport

- **Victoria (Myki / PTV):** <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au>
- **New South Wales (Opal):** <https://www.opal.com.au>
- **Queensland (Go Card):** <https://translink.com.au>
- **Western Australia (Transperth):** <https://www.transperth.wa.gov.au>
- **South Australia (Adelaide Metro):** <https://www.adelaidemetro.com.au>

Housing and Accommodation

- **RealEstate.com.au:** <https://www.realestate.com.au>
- **Domain:** <https://www.domain.com.au>
- **Flatmates:** <https://www.flatmates.com.au>

Understanding Australia

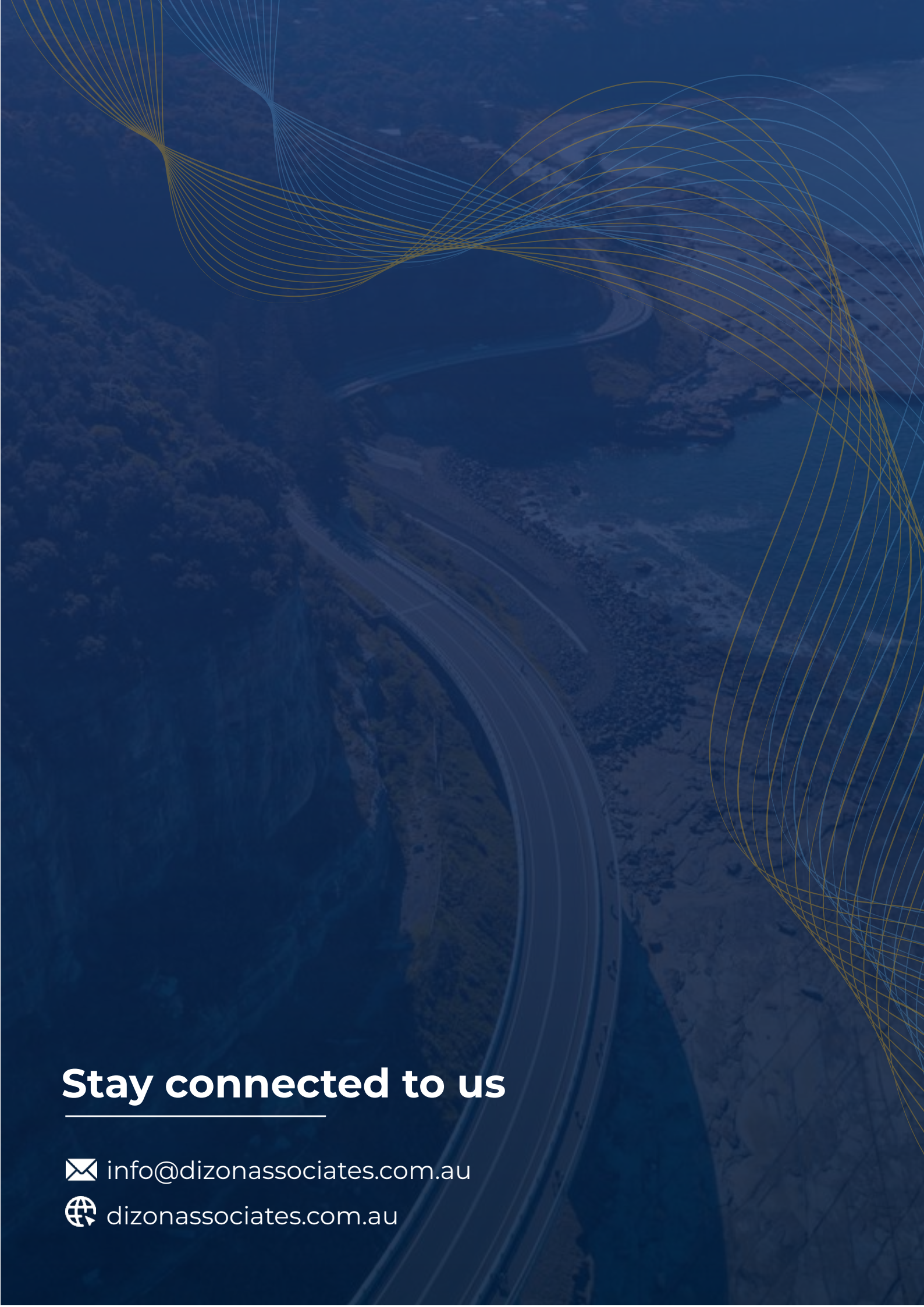
- **Cultural Atlas – Australia:** <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/australian-culture>

Referral disclosure:

Some links in this guide may be referral links. Dizon & Associates may receive a commission if you choose to take out a policy through one of these providers. This does not affect the cost to you.

Disclaimer:

These links are provided for convenience. Website content may change over time, so please refer to each organisation's official website for the most up-to-date information.



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