



2013 Business Travel to Australia

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Business Customs

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Conducting business in Australia is relatively easy for American companies due to the similarities in language, cultural environment, business practices, and customer expectations. Australians pay attention to advance planning, promptness, follow-up, and are generally direct in their business dealings. They typically conduct business on a first-name basis and exchange business cards for information purposes, but without any special ceremony. Token gift exchange is not common; however, luncheon and breakfast meetings are common. Australians do not typically schedule business functions on weekends. Business attire is the norm for the cities, and country/rural areas are slightly more informal.

Travel Advisory

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For State Department travel warnings, please visit:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

For additional State Department information on Australia, please visit:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_954.html

Visa Requirements

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Americans traveling to Australia for business and/or leisure must hold a valid U.S. passport and either a visa or an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA). ETAs are available via the Internet (<http://www.eta.immi.gov.au>), and from participating U.S. travel agents and airlines when making travel arrangements. There is an A\$20 service fee for each ETA application. The Australian Embassy maintains a list of participating travel agencies that can arrange for Americans to obtain ETAs. U.S. citizens traveling to Australia should note that they can only obtain the ETA in the United States.

Americans can apply to Australian Embassies, High Commissions, and Consulates for a visa. For the location of the nearest Australian diplomatic facility, please refer to:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/contacts/overseas/index.htm>

Requirements for work and resident visas are more stringent. Americans should contact the nearest Australian visa office well in advance of travel.

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States are advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

U.S. Embassy in Australia Website: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/visas.html>

Telecommunications

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Australia's telecommunications infrastructure is excellent and telecom services are relatively inexpensive. Services to businesses include: Internet access, ISDN, voice messaging, and facsimile. Phone cards are commonly used in Australia and can be purchased at numerous retail outlets.

Australian telecommunications providers include: Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Virgin, and Orange. Most have converted their customers to 4G networks while Vodafone has announced it will create a 4G network in 2013. Cellular phone rentals are available at the airport and in the major city centers. You will need to make prior arrangements with your communications carrier or service provider to ensure you are able to use your cellular phone in Australia. You should also make sure your phone equipment can operate in

Australia. Power voltage is 240 volts/50Hz. 3G wireless data plans are available and relatively inexpensive. Telstra's network covers virtually all of Australia.

Australia and New Zealand use power terminals that differ from those used in the United States. Hence, adaptors can be purchased at airports or specific electronic stores.

Internet access is widely available at airports, hotels, and Internet cafés. There are many Wi-Fi hotspots in the central business districts (CBDs) of the biggest cities. Facsimile services are also available for public use in post offices, hotels, and some news agencies.

For more information on telecommunications in Australia, see the Australian Communications and Media Authority website at <http://www.acma.gov.au>

Transportation

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It is a 14-hour non-stop flight from the West Coast of the United States (San Francisco or Los Angeles) to the East Coast of Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, or Brisbane). Several international airlines including Delta Air Lines, Hawaiian Airlines, United Airlines, Qantas Airways, Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand, and Air Pacific fly this trans-pacific route.

Most flights depart from the United States late in the evening and arrive in Australia early morning, with a day lost at the International Date Line. Travel to or from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, South America, and South Africa from Australia is also convenient.

Frequent interstate flights connect the five major Australian cities. The major airlines servicing domestic routes include Qantas Airways, Virgin Australia, and Jetstar Airways. Discounts may be available on domestic airfares when purchased in conjunction with international tickets. Australia has an extensive and efficient domestic transportation system, including air, rail, coach, and sea services.

Australians drive on the left side of the road. Major U.S. and Australian car rental agencies operate throughout the country. Reservations are available through airports, hotels, travel agents, or directly, using a credit card and a U.S. or international driver's license.

Public transportation is well developed throughout urban areas. Convenient bus, rail, and air services are available between cities and country towns.

International Air Travel Times

Los Angeles to Sydney - 14 hrs

New York to Sydney (via Los Angeles or San Francisco) - 21 hrs

Dallas/Fort Worth to Sydney – 16 hrs

Honolulu to Sydney - 9 hrs

Tokyo to Sydney - 9 hrs

Hong Kong to Sydney - 9 hrs

Singapore to Sydney - 8 hrs

Air Travel Times Within Australia

Sydney to Melbourne - 1 hr

Sydney to Brisbane - 1 hr

Sydney to Perth - 4 hrs

Sydney to Canberra - 35 mins

Melbourne to Brisbane - 2 hrs

Melbourne to Perth - 4 hrs

Brisbane to Perth - 6 hrs

Language

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Australia is an English-speaking country.

Health

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Australia has no notable health risks and public tap water is safe to drink. There are active campaigns to encourage the population to protect themselves from exposure to Australia's strong sun and to use sunscreen. Medical and dental services, and all types of health facilities, are comparable with those in the United States. Visitors can easily receive medical attention, but may be required to pay for services immediately, either by cash or credit card.

Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays

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Australia has three time zones: Eastern, Central, and Western. Not all Australian states observe daylight saving time and the dates for the switch to and from daylight savings time varies. To check the current time in Australia, refer to: <http://www.timezoneconverter.com/>

Office business hours are generally between 9:00 am-5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Most shops in major city centers are open on Saturday and Sunday and at least one night a week for evening trading. Banks are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with 7-day/24-hour ATM service. Restaurants and convenience stores are typically open for extended hours.

Australians generally take annual vacation in December and January, combining Christmas/New Year with the school summer vacation period. Consequently, business slows down and it may be difficult to schedule business appointments during this time. Business travelers should ascertain whether their contacts are available during this period before scheduling trips to Australia.

A list of Public Holidays in Australia can be found at:
<http://export.gov/australia/tradeevents/publicolidays/>

Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings

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Certain goods may be brought into Australia on a temporary basis for a period of up to 12 months without the payment of duty or taxes. These goods are referred to as temporary imports. Approval for temporary imports is granted under Section 162 or Section 162A of the Customs Act 1901.

Goods that qualify as temporary imports may also be imported under carnet, where a security is lodged with a carnet issuing body overseas, or under security, where a security is lodged with the Australian Customs Service (Customs) at the time of import. The nature of the goods, what they will be used for while they are in Australia, and who is importing the goods will determine whether or not the goods will qualify.

There are conditions placed on temporary imports. The most important condition is that you export the goods within the time limits approved. If the goods are not exported within the time limit you will have to pay to Customs an amount equal to the duty and taxes that

would have been payable if when you first imported the goods, the goods had not been treated as temporary imports.

For further information, please visit: <http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page4355.asp>

There are no restrictions on the temporary importation of personal computers and software applications for use in normal business situations.

Web Resources

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Australian Communications Authority: <http://www.acma.gov.au>

Australian Customs: <http://www.customs.gov.au>

Australian Embassy/Consulate listing:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/contacts/overseas/index.htm>

Australian Embassy Website: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/index.html>

Australian Embassy U.S. Visas Website: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/visas.html>

Australian Visa information: <http://www.eta.immi.gov.au>

Public Holidays in Australia: <http://export.gov/australia/tradeevents/publicolidays/>

Time conversion: <http://www.timezoneconverter.com>

U.S. State Dept. Australia: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_954.html

U.S. State Dept. Travel Warnings: http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

U.S. State Dept. Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

Australian Tourist Office

Australian Tourist Commission <http://www.australia.com>

Australian State Tourist Offices

Australian Capital Territory: <http://www.canberratourism.com.au>

New South Wales Tourist Commission: <http://www.tourism.nsw.gov.au>

Victorian Tourist Commission: <http://www.visitvictoria.com>

Tourism Queensland: <http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au>

South Australian Tourist Commission: <http://www.southaustralia.com>

Western Australian Tourist Commission: <http://www.westernaustralia.net>

Northern Territory Tourism Commission: <http://www.nttc.com.au>

Tourism Tasmania: <http://www.discovertasmania.com>

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date published. However, **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.

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