

Frequently Asked Questions

INTENT TO REGISTER FOR AUSTRALIA ENERGY EXCURSION:

If I fill out the Intent to Register, does this commit me to the trip immediately?

No. Filling out the Intent to Register lets the committee know that you are interested in the tour and wish to receive the final registration form. Once you receive the final registration form, you will be required to make a firm commitment; space is limited for this tour and will be based on first 100 applicants who pay their registration.

Am I required to put a deposit down immediately if I fill out the Registration Form?

Yes – as specified below:

Required immediately: \$250(CAD) \$200(US) Non-Refundable Deposit required confirming flights, hotels, and tours.

When is the final payment for this trip due?

Final payment is due in full **on or before** April 15, 2008, paid to Downunder Travel.

VISA:

How do I get my Australian Visa if I live in Canada/US?

Downunder Travel will be responsible for getting all the traveler's visas for Australia. Just make sure you attach a copy of your passport with the registration when you pay the deposit.

Does my Visa have an expiry date?

An Australia ETA / VISA are valid for 12 months from date of issue, for a maximum 3 month stay in Australia.

PASSPORT:

How do I get my Passport if I live in Canada/US?

A Canadian or U.S. passport can be obtained from the country of residency.

In Canada: forms are available from any Canada Post Outlet and are processed by the Foreign Affairs Office. Forms are for first time application and renewal. For complete instructions please see website at www.ppt.gc.ca/can/index.aspx?lang=e

In the United States: for first time application, individual must go in person to any of the 8,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the U.S. which are many Federal, State and Probate Courts, Post Offices, some public libraries and a number of county and municipal offices. For renewal application, submission can be done by mail. For complete instruction please see website at <http://travel.state.gov/passport>

When do I have to get my Passport to go to Australia?

Once a passport is issued, it will permit the holder to travel to any country. Application should take place at least 6 months prior to departure date to allow time for processing. Some countries require that your passport be valid at least six (6) months beyond the dates of your trip.

Does my Passport have an expiry date?

Yes. For Canadian Citizens: if you are 16 years or older, your passport will be valid for a period of 5 years. For U.S. Citizens: if you are 16 years or older, your passport will be valid for a period of 10 years.

How much will my Passport cost?

For a Canadian Passport the cost is \$87.00 CAD – allow 8 weeks for processing.
For a US Passport the cost is \$97.00 USD – allow 8 weeks for processing.

TOUR PACKAGE CANCELLATION INSURANCE – U.S. AND CANADIAN

Does the cancellation insurance being offered thoroughly cover everything, flights, hotels, tours etc?? It is quite high and we were just wondering. This tour package insurance is 100% non-refundable.

Deposit to secure flights, hotels and tours. All flights, tours, hotels etc will be covered. Insurance policies have to be issued to cover the value of the trip at the time of booking, even though at the moment it is a deposit, the Cancellation insurance must be taken with the deposit or they can decline covering the package all together.

What about trip cancellation insurance? Is this required and if so, how much will it be?

Cancellation Insurance for all flights, tours, hotels etc will be covered. The cost if you are **under 70 years** old is CAD \$385.00; USD \$320. The cost if you are **over 70 years** old is CAD \$445.00; USD \$460.

HEALTH INSURANCE – CANADIAN:

Does my Alberta Health Care cover me in Australia?

No – for that reason it is strongly recommended that you purchase travel insurance. Some companies offer their employees the necessary coverage through their own health care plans so it's a good idea to check with your Human Resources Department first as you may not need to purchase additional travel insurance.

Do I need additional health insurance?

If you do not have additional coverage through your employer then please speak with our travel agent, Downunder Travel who can provide the medical insurance coverage you will require.

HEALTH INSURANCE – US:

Does Medicare/Medicaid cover me while I'm in Australia?

No, the Social Security Medicare/Medicaid program does not provide coverage for hospital or medical services outside the U.S. Some companies offer their employees the necessary coverage through their own health care plans so it's a good idea to check with your Human Resources Department first as you may not need to purchase additional travel insurance.

Do I need additional health insurance?

If your health insurance policy does not provide coverage for hospital or medical costs abroad or you do not have additional benefits provided by your employer, you are urged to purchase a temporary health policy such as the RBC Deluxe package which contains all the coverage you will require. Please speak with Downunder Travel regarding additional health insurance.

MONEY:

What type of money should I take? US or Canadian money or a local currency? If local currency, what is it and what is the current exchange rate for Cdn/US \$?

When traveling in Australia you will need to use local currency.

The currency is the Australian Dollar. Australia's currency consists of coins of five, 10, 20 and 50 cent and one and two dollar denomination; and plastic (polymer) notes of five, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollar denomination. Any amount over AUD\$10,000 in cash (or equivalent in foreign currencies) must be declared at customs upon arrival in Australia.

Currently the Australian dollar is worth approximately.

Canadian Dollar Conversion	US Dollar Conversion
\$1.00 AUD = 0.92 CAD	\$1.00 AUD = 0.79 USD
\$1.00 CAD = 1.08 AUD	\$1.00 USD = 1.26 AUD

Traveler's cheques are a safe way to carry cash and can be exchanged at the airport, local banks and most hotels.

You may choose to carry some local currency or US/CAD currency and convert at the airport or local bank.

Should you decide to use ATM and Credit Cards you must advise your bank that you are traveling, the destination and date, then they are aware of upcoming foreign charges that will be appearing on your accounts.

For further information see the Canadian Foreign Affairs website: www.voyage.gc.ca

Will American/Canadian Credit Cards be accepted in Australia? If so, which ones?

VISA and MasterCard are widely accepted throughout Australia and New Zealand. American Express is often accepted in larger centers.

Are there banks in Australia where I can get money out of the ATM?

It would be best for each passenger to check with their financial institution as rules will vary between banks. You may also require a special "PIN" number if your bank card will work (See below).

Check with your bank for information on ATM services in other countries or [VISA](#) and [MasterCard](#) for the addresses of ATMs around the world. *Your bank can advise if you need a new Personal Identification Number (PIN) for overseas access to your account.* Credit cards and debit cards should be used with caution due to the potential for fraud and other criminal activity. Use an ATM during business hours inside a bank, supermarket, or large commercial building. Leave copies of your card numbers with a family member in case of emergency.

Will I have to pay extra for field trips, entrance fees, transportation when I get there? If so, how much?

The tour will include your flights, airport transfers and accommodation. The Welcome and Farewell Dinners are included. Sightseeing Tours that you register for in advance will also be included. Should you select a free day you will have extra costs locally.

Not Included: Airport Taxes, Insurance and Passport Fees.

When the itinerary "fine tuning" is nearing completion, all those you have submitted an "Intent to Register" form will be advised of the total amount to be prepaid. This amount will include all the above mentioned expenses, so that passengers will only require spending money for souvenirs and personal expenses.

Will I have to pay extra for meals? If so what is the average cost per meal?

Some meals are included in your tour price, dependent on sightseeing options selected. The average cost of meals would be approximately:
Breakfast would be in the \$10 - \$15 range. Lunch would be in the \$15 - \$25 range.
Dinner would be in the \$20 - \$40 range.

IMPORT/EXPORTS:

Going to Australia – Customs?

Australian Customs manages the movement of goods and people across the Australian border. There are restrictions on goods that you can bring in and out of Australia including animal and plant material, food, wildlife, drugs and medicinal products, firearms and more than AUD\$10,000 of currency. You may need to declare goods upon arrival into, or departure from Australia. For further details, refer to the '[Information for Travellers](#)' section on the Australian Customs website. Travelers are allowed to bring goods into Australia duty free AUD\$900 worth of goods not including tobacco or alcohol. 2.25L alcoholic beverages. (Including wine, beer or spirits). 250 cigarettes or 250 grams of cigars or tobacco products other than cigarettes. Members of the same family who are traveling together may combine their individual duty free allowances. For further details on [duty free allowances](#), visit the [Australian Customs](#) website. You can purchase duty-free items from in-sky shopping onboard your flight or at any Australian airport before you clear Customs.

You are allowed to bring in personal belongings duty-free, including a camera, a portable tape recorder, a movie or video camera and a portable computer.

There are absolute prohibitions against arms, drugs, and plant or animal products considered infested with disease or pests.

Do I have to pay export duties if I take goods out of Australia?

Items you MUST declare:

You must declare to customs amounts of AUD\$10,000 or more in foreign or Australian currency (notes and coins) you take out of Australia.

Heritage Items – it is illegal to take or send out of Australia without a permit, items identified by the Australian government as important to Australia's cultural heritage. These include works of art, stamps, coins, archeological objects, minerals and specimens etc.

For more information see: www.deh.gov.au/heritage/awh/movable/index.html

Firearms and ammunition – you must obtain an export permit from either Customs or Defense before exporting firearms and/or ammunition.

For more information see: www.customs.gov.au

Protected wildlife – Australia has strict laws controlling the export of protected wildlife and products made from protected wildlife (including some medicinal products)

For more information see: www.deh.gov.au

Do I have to pay import duties or taxes when I bring things into Canada/US? What is my \$ limit before I have to pay taxes in Canada/US on import of goods for a two week trip? Are there any restricted goods that I can't bring back into Canada/US?

Expensive items (such as computers and cameras) that you take out of the country, that you intend to bring back, should be registered, to avoid paying duty on your return.

Returning Home – KEEP ALL YOUR RECEIPTS FOR THE PURCHASES YOU MADE!!

When planning your trip home from Australia, there are a few things to consider.

Convert any remaining Australian coin into currency before you leave the country or keep as a souvenir. Coins cannot be converted abroad.

About the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) The TRS enables you to claim a refund, subject to certain conditions, of the goods and services tax (GST) and wine equalization tax (WET) that you pay on goods you buy in Australia. To claim a refund you must: Spend \$300 (GST inclusive) or more in the one store and get a single tax invoice. Buy goods no more than 30 days before departure. Wear or carry the goods on board the aircraft or ship and present them along with your original tax invoice, passport and international boarding pass to a Customs Officer at a TRS facility. **Claims at airports are only available up to 30 minutes prior to the scheduled departure of your flight.**

The refund only applies to goods you take with you as **hand luggage or wear onto the aircraft** when you leave Australia. It does not apply to services or goods consumed or partly consumed in Australia, such as wine, chocolate or perfume. However, unlike other tourist shopping schemes, most of the goods, such as clothing and cameras, can be used in Australia before departure.

CANADIAN CUSTOMS

Travelers should also be prepared for customs procedures when they enter Canada. Everything acquired abroad must be declared, so keeping receipts of purchases is advisable. Customs forms are usually distributed on the plane flying to Canada; they are also available at airports and land and sea ports of entry.

If you have been away from Canada for seven days or more you can claim up to CAN\$750 worth of goods without paying any duties.

Although you can include some tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, only a partial exemption will apply to cigarettes, tobacco products, or manufactured tobacco. See the section "Alcohol and tobacco" for more details. With the exception of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, you do not need to have the goods with you when you arrive. You cannot combine your personal exemptions with another person's or transfer them to someone else.

Alcoholic beverages

You are allowed to import only one of the following amounts of alcohol free of duty and taxes: 1.5 liters (53 imperial ounces) of wine; 1.14 liters (40 ounces) of liquor; a total of 1.14 liters (40 ounces) of wine and liquor; or 24 x 355 milliliter (12 ounces) cans or bottles (maximum of 8.5 liters) of beer or ale.

Tobacco products

You are allowed to bring in all of the following amounts of tobacco into Canada without paying duty: 200 cigarettes; 50 cigars or cigarillos; 200 grams (7 ounces) of manufactured tobacco; and 200 tobacco sticks.

For further information on personal exemptions, duties etc – Revenue Canada has an "I Declare" publication visit www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/E/pub/cp/rc4044

Canada imposes special restrictions on a variety of imported goods. They include meat and dairy products, weapons, plants, vehicles and environmentally harmful products, as well as exotic animals and goods based on their exploitation. Check with Canadian customs officials in advance if you plan to import any articles in these categories. It is illegal to bring obscene materials, child pornography or hate propaganda of any kind into the country.

The Government of Canada has introduced the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. Under this new legislation, there are no restrictions on the amount of money that you can bring into or take out of Canada, nor is it illegal to do so. However, you now have to report to a customs officer amounts equal to or greater than C\$10,000 that you are bringing into or taking out of Canada. For more information, refer to the brochure entitled [Crossing the Border With \\$10,000 or More?](#), published by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

If you have any questions about what you can bring back, call the CRA's information service at **1 800 461-9999** (toll-free in Canada), **(204) 983-3500** or **(506) 636-5064**.

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS

Articles acquired abroad and brought back to the U.S. are subject to duty and Internal Revenue Tax. U.S. Customs currently allows each U.S. citizen to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty free, provided the traveller has been outside the U.S. for at least 48 hours, has not already used this exemption within the preceding 30 day period, and provided the traveller can present the purchases upon his or her arrival at the port of entry. This includes not more than 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars and one liter (33.8 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages may be included in your exemption. Family members who live in the same home and return together to the United States may combine their personal exemptions. This is called a joint declaration. For further information see:

<http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

The flat duty rate will be charged on items that are dutiable but that cannot be included in your personal exemption, even if you have not exceeded the exemption. The best example of this is liquor: if you return from Europe with \$200 worth of items, including two liters of liquor. One liter will be duty-free under your exemption; the other will be dutiable at 3 percent, plus any Internal Revenue Service tax.

For further information Consult with U.S. Custom Service free publication "Know Before You Go, Customs Hints for Returning U.S. Residents".

<http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/toolbox/publications/travel/knowbeforeyougo.ctt/knowbeforeyougo.pdf>

Can I ship goods home separately? If so, how and how much?

Yes, items can be shipped home; however the cost of doing so is not available at this time.

FYI – U.S. Citizens: Items mailed home are not eligible for your \$800 personal exemption. If the item you are mailing home is less than \$200, duty will be waived. Be sure to write on the outside of the package that it contains goods for personal use.

FYI – Canadian Citizens: Except for alcohol and tobacco products, you can **SHIP** goods to Canada that you are including in your 750-dollar exemption. You have to ask for and complete a Personal Exemption Customs Declaration form, known as an E-24, at customs when you return, so that you can claim the goods without paying duty or tax. Claiming unaccompanied goods. When goods arrive that preceded or followed your arrival in Canada, you have 40 days to claim them by producing your copy of Form E24, Personal Exemption Customs Declaration. This is the form you had to complete when you returned to Canada. The carrier who delivers the goods will ask you to pay the duties that apply, along with a processing fee. You then have two options. You can: accept delivery by paying the amount owing and then file a claim with us for a refund; or refuse to accept delivery.

SAFETY/SECURITY:

Will we be registered with the Canadian/US Embassy while we are there?

Canadian citizens are required to register with the Embassy only if their stay is over 30 days. According to the U.S. Department of State, Travel website, U.S. citizens can register with their Embassy, especially if their stay is over 30 days. Please visit:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_1186.html for more information.

In case of an incident, does the Embassy look after me?

The Embassy representing your country of residence will assist with lost passports; provide names of medical personnel and medical facilities, etc.

Information obtained from www.voyage.gc.ca

The Canadian embassy or consulates can help you with any of the following:

- contacting relatives at home in case of an emergency;
- dealing with medical emergencies;
- coping with situations such as natural disasters and civil or military conflict;
- accessing sources of information about local laws, regulations, cultural customs and visas;
- replacing passports; and
- dealing with local authorities if you are arrested.

These Canadian government offices offer 24-hour emergency assistance. You can also contact the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Ottawa at **(613) 996-8885** (collect calls accepted) or call **(02) 6270-4000** from Perth and **(02) 9364-3000** from the Outback, Queensland or Sydney.

For further information please visit www.voyage.gc.ca for Canadian citizens.

The Consulate General of the United States in Perth can be reached Monday - Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm at **(08) 9202-1224** and After Hours at **(08) 9476-0081**.

The Consulate General of the United States in Sydney can be reached Monday – Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm at **(02) 9373-9200** and After Hours at **(02) 4422-2201**.

For further information please visit www.travel.state.gov for U.S. citizens.

What responsibility does the travel agency have on this trip?

Escorts from Downunder Travel and the Tour Operators together will ensure all needs of the group are met, such as:

- Airport check-in coordination in Calgary, Los Angeles and Sydney, as well as all other airports,
- Assist with translation where required,
- Coordinate together with supplier and Tour Group in Australia,
- Liaison with local hotels, buses and sightseeing tours,
- Available to assist members of the group with individual requests such as emergency situations, replacement of personal medication, special dinner or shopping requests, comfort issues, etc.

DOWNUNDER TRAVEL WILL ENSURE THE GROUP'S NEEDS ARE LOOKED AFTER THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE.

CALLING/EMAIL HOME:

Can I call home from the Hotels we are staying at? What is the rate per minute?

Rooms in the hotels are equipped with telephones for international calls. Hotels often charge fees for connecting international calls. It can be less expensive to place a call from the pay phone in the hotel lobby.

For Canadian's you can use your Telus Calling Card and place calls via Canada Direct. For information on the Telus Calling Card see www.telus.com
The access number for Australia is: 1-800-881-150 or 1-800-551-177.
The access number for New Zealand is: 000919
For further information see http://www.infocanadadirect.com/engl/2_0/index.asp
Rates from Australia 10.8c per minute

For USA calling services, you can use AT&T USA Direct Prepaid phone cards
The access number for Australia is: 1-800-881-011 using Telstra and 1-800-551-155 using Optus
For further information see <http://www.usa.att.com/traveler/index.jsp>

For USA calls if you have an AT&T Long Distance Plan you can get a Calling Card by calling 1-888-583-9349 or visit www.att.com for further information.
The access number for Australia is: 1-800-881-151 and the number for New Zealand is 000-913.

There are local Australian companies that also offer overseas calling card services to call the USA and Canada, for information and rates see www.telephonecards.com.au

Will my cell phone work in Australia?

Cell phones can be setup to work international. You may need a special phone for traveling and rate plans will be expensive. You must contact your cell phone company well in advance of traveling to setup your phone and check coverage.

Is there internet access at the hotels so I can keep in contact with my family?

In large cities, you'll find an increasing number of Internet cafés, where you can make contact with home or friends by exchanging e-mails. Hotels also offer internet access for a small fee.

SPECIAL MEALS:

Travelers with special dietary requirements must advise the Travel Agent when the booking is made, so that advance arrangements can be made to accommodate special diets. The Airlines can provide special in-flight meals and tour operators and hotels can accommodate special diets when notified in advance.

I am on a special diet – can I bring food with me into Australia? Is there any restrictions?

All food items must be declared including fresh, dried, canned foods on arrival into Australia. You may be permitted to bring canned foods but NOT fresh fruit, vegetables and other perishable items. For further information see

<http://www.daff.gov.au/content/output.cfm?ObjectID=D2C48F86-BA1A-11A1-A2200060A1B01848>

Western food items can easily be purchased in Australia.

Will vegetarian meals be available? Will diabetic or other special diet meals be available?

Typical Australian meals will be offered which can be easily adapted to vegetarian and diabetic diets. .

I have an allergy to peanuts, will this present a problem?

As with any restaurant anywhere, travelers with peanut allergies should take all necessary precautions and never take a risk and avoid anything that is questionable.

Travellers who carry medication and syringes for allergy treatment or insulin injections should obtain a note from their family physician explaining the medication and need for syringes.

HEALTH CONCERNS:

You must declare all medicinal products on arrival into Australia. It is advisable to have a letter or a prescription from your doctor or practitioner describing the medication and your medical condition. You must also declare all herbal products. All products must be carried in their original containers.

Do I require certain vaccinations/immunizations before going to Australia?

We recommend that all travellers consult with their family physician as they can determine what an individual needs.

The Safety/Security will post updated information to this site as it becomes available.

Is there wheel chair access available at all of the locations?

Yes, very accessible for all people including those with disabilities. Travelers who have special needs can be accommodated throughout the tour. Please advise the Travel Agent when the booking is made, so that advance arrangements can be made to accommodate your needs. The airlines can provide wheel chair assistance throughout the flight.

I have asthma – is this an issue?

Travelers who have any prescription medication are advised to carry all medication, in original containers, with them at all times. Medication should never be put in checked baggage.

Can I get medication such as antibiotics, cold, flu, etc. in Australia? Or should I bring my own?

The travel agency states they are certain any of the above mentioned medications can be obtained in Australia. It is strongly suggested that each passenger bring their own.

MISCELLANEOUS:

How much luggage can I take - # of bags? What is the size and weight? What happens if I am over? What is the rate?

Domestic Flights:

The baggage allowance for domestic flights within Australia is 1 piece. Total dimensions must not exceed 140cm (54 in) per passenger. Maximum weight allowance 20 kg (44lbs) per piece.

Because the domestic baggage allowance is so much more restrictive than international flights, all passengers should adhere to the 20 kgs/44 lbs. allowance. Rate's on baggage that is over the allowance is not available at this time.

International Flights:

On the return international flight from Sydney to Canada the baggage allowance could revert back to the normal allowance of 2 pieces, total dimensions of the 2 pieces must not exceed 270cm (106in) with no 1 piece exceeding 158cm (62in).

The maximum weight allowance of 32 kg / 70 lbs per piece. (to be determined once the agreement is reached with the airline of choice).

So if one was to shop in Sydney they could be permitted an extra piece of baggage. The travel agency will advise the committee on the final rules regarding this subject once the airline has been determined and this information will be posted.

Carry-on Baggage Allowance – Domestic and International Flights:

The carry-on baggage allowance is: 1 x 115cm (45in) bag or 1 x 185cm (73in) non rigid garment bag, with a maximum weight allowance of 7kg (15lb) per piece.