



# INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION HANDBOOK



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# WELCOME

Welcome to the beautiful city of Melbourne, and to our fantastic school. We are so happy to have you in our community.

Please find some useful information to facilitate your integration within the Bayside area. We hope you find this information useful, and please don't forget we are always here to assist you with any questions, small or large.

International parents of Firbank Grammar School have helped provide this information.

## **International Support Group**



# REAL ESTATE INFORMATION

## FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE TO LIVE

Many of us have become citizens of the world, and relocating to a new country or state can be both exciting and challenging. This information is useful for both interstate and international families.

Relocation is different for every family. For some, family members arrive at different times and stay in temporary accommodation before commencing their search for a home. If you are looking for short-term accommodation, we recommend Caroline Serviced Apartments in Male Street Brighton, or similar. Our Senior School Boarding House is also available for short-term accommodation for students – should you be interested, please ask for further information.

Unlike some other countries, in Australia it is extremely rare to establish a direct relationship with your landlord. Your real estate agent will act on your behalf of both you and the owner. The positive is that the industry is very standardised and they all work in a very similar, consistent way, according to regulations.

Real estate company Follett and Co is a sponsor of Firbank Grammar School. Founded by Justin and Rachel Follett, the office is located at 274 Bay Street, Brighton. Follett & Co. is the place to come if you're searching for a boutique real estate agent whose sole focus is providing fully-customised and personal service, honest communication, and decades of experience to an exclusive list of clients.

Justin and his vastly experienced team are keen to devote all their time and resources to getting the best results and outcomes for each and every client. For all your real estate needs please consider contacting Justin or Rachel Follett on 9598 9111 or [welcome@follettco.com.au](mailto:welcome@follettco.com.au)

The websites below are helpful to find a property. Whether you relocate together or not, you can still make a joint decision. Here you have some useful website suggestions:

- [domain.com.au](http://domain.com.au)
- [realestate.com.au](http://realestate.com.au)

1. Check the properties in those websites often. These change weekly.
2. Select BUY / RENT, add suburb + VIC (Victoria) and tick the box 'Surrounding Suburbs' to increase your chances
3. Liked any? Contact the real estate agent by email or phone and ask for an inspection time
4. Are you sure you found the right home for your family? Lodge an application, which can be found on the website
5. The real estate agent will inform you whether the landlord has approved your application.
6. If so, pay the bond and both parties will sign the lease contract.

Inspect the property carefully before placing your belongings. Ensure that ALL previous damage is included in the 'entry report' form to avoid surprises at the end of the contract. Add any issues you may find and return this form to the agent.

### TOP TIP

If you are an expat, ask to include the 'Diplomatic clause' in the contract. If you were relocated in the middle of the lease, this would allow you to leave giving short notice. Otherwise, you or your company will continue paying rent until the end of the lease, or until the agent finds someone else.

### TOP TIP

Read the contract carefully. A copy of a guide for Tenants, 'Renting a home: A guide for tenants' <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing> must be included in your folder.

# BAYSIDE CITY COUNCIL

## CONTACT AND SERVICES

The municipality of 'City of Bayside' (commonly known as the Bayside area) includes the following suburbs: Beaumaris, Black Rock, Brighton, Brighton East, Hampton, Hampton East, Highett (part) and Sandringham.

It is a wonderful area for families where you can spend time near the beach surfing, swimming, relaxing, walking, biking, running, eating, meditating, etc. Life in this area is vibrant all year round!

The City of Bayside provides very helpful information to its residents. These are some of the services you can find:

- Finding out your bin day. You must take your bin outside for collection weekly. The Bayside City Council provides more information here: [bayside.vic.gov.au/waste-and-recycling](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/waste-and-recycling).

### TOP TIP

Check out what your neighbours do in your street to ensure which bin colours you should take for collection.

- **Children and Family.** If your family has a baby or a young child, you can reach the Maternal and Child Health service to find information about kindergartens and vaccinations. Firbank has a wonderful Early Learning Program for 3 and 4 year olds (ELC) and a Stay & Play playgroup for younger children, both at Brighton and Sandringham. You can find more information here: [bayside.vic.gov.au/children-family](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/children-family)
- **Libraries.** For reading lovers, Bayside offers a good network of local libraries, which are also accessible online. You can find more information here: [bayside.vic.gov.au/library](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/library)
- **Sports.** If you love participating in sport, you can find sport clubs and other related information here: [bayside.vic.gov.au/sport-recreation](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/sport-recreation)

The Council offers many useful services, resources and activities. The website is very easy to navigate and most of the arrangements can be done online; They are such friendly people that you may want to go and ask them personally.

### Contact

[bayside.vic.gov.au/contact-us](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/contact-us)  
(03) 9599 4444

## GETTING A BEACH PARKING PERMIT FROM BAYSIDE CITY COUNCIL

In the Bayside area, you must pay to park by the beach. But if you are a resident in one of those suburbs, you can get two beach parking permits per household. You must still abide by the time limit but you do not have to pay. All residents have one!

What you need to do to obtain yours:

- Contact the City Council over the phone on (03) 9599 4444 or visit this link: [bayside.vic.gov.au/services/parking-and-roads/parking-permits](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/services/parking-and-roads/parking-permits)
- Complete an application form in paper or online and include a copy of your house purchase or rental contract to prove you are a resident, if required.
- Complete the application process as required on the Bayside City Council website to get your digital parking permits, providing a copy of your house purchase or rental contract to prove you are a resident, and a copy of VicRoads Certificate or letter from company who owns the car.
- With digital parking permits, your car number plate is your permit so there is nothing to display on your car'.

# PARKING IN MELBOURNE AND BAYSIDE

Parking in Melbourne and the Bayside area is easy if you understand the signs, which is not always obvious when you arrive in Australia for the first time. Some of these rules are unique to Australia, meaning you will need to become familiar with them or risk fines.

Most parking areas in the Brighton area are free of charge, but respect the timings or unfortunately you will be fined!

- **RED SIGNS**  
Stay away. NO PARKING within indicated times and days.
- **GREEN SIGNS**  
Parking is permitted free of charge, within the indicated times and days. For example: ¼ P = 15 minutes, 1P = 1 hour, 2P = 2 hours, and so on.
- **GREEN SIGNS WITH THE WORD 'TICKET'**  
You can park within the indicated times and days, but you must pay for a ticket. Look for the nearest ticket machine and get a ticket.

Here you have some typical examples of what you will find around the city:

## PARKING SIGNS



You cannot park from this point on the left. You can park free of charge for 2 hours (2P) from this point on the right, at the indicated times and days.



Green Sign containing a P = Parking allowed. But the sign contains the word 'TICKET' so you must PAY. You can stay for the maximum amount of time indicated near the (P). Look for the nearest machine and do not stay longer than permitted!



Your car will be removed, so you better stay away from this one. Always check the times and days information carefully.



Confused? Us too! Do not worry... Australians are really friendly so just ask the nearest person to make sure.

## HOOK TURN



If you want to turn right and you see this sign, make sure you stop on the left lane, right in the crossing, allowing cars in the right lane to circulate. When the traffic light turns green, then turn right.

## TRAMS

Trams stop VERY frequently to allow passengers to board and exit. NEVER overtake a tram when it stops as you will risk hitting passengers disembarking the tram. You MUST WAIT until the tram takes off before you can continue past. Trams cannot swerve or stop suddenly so keep a safe distance.

If you come from a country driving on the right side of the road, be patient, as it will take you a while to get used to it, but eventually you will feel comfortable driving on the left side and it will shortly become second nature. The irony is that when you go back to your home country, it will be confusing to go back to driving on the right side!

To drive in Australia, you will need either an International or Australian driver's licence. To check if you are in a possession of a driver's licence that allows you to drive, please contact VicRoads - the Roads Corporation in the state Victoria responsible for driver's licences, vehicle registration and other traffic regulations and driving laws. Call VicRoads on 131 170 if you have any problems or visit the VicRoads website to find out more.

Link: [vicroads.vic.gov.au/](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au/)



# SOCIALISING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

## ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Australians love sport. Going to the gym, biking, playing golf, tennis, walking - anything will do to mingle with the community.

Australian families usually enroll their children in extra-curricular activities. These are great to improve their skills, to have fun, to grow strong, to keep fit, and to make new friends. Family life on weekends is pretty much organised around these children's sport activities and parents are very much involved. This is also a wonderful way for the whole family to increase the chances of making new and local friends.

Activities might consist of weekly training sessions and games on weekends, usually in parks (now you will understand why these are so crowded on Sundays!). The social aspects are there for parents, during pick up and drop off, and cheering for your child's team with other families on the weekends.

The City Council can help you to find some of these. But it might also be a good idea to ask parents during the many opportunities that the School offers to socialise, or to ask your Class Representatives by email. Children can ask their friends too, as they usually are keen to practice a sport if their mates do.

A few suggestions for both parents and children are:

- St. Andrew's Tennis Club Brighton, run by Gerard Douglas
- Dendy Park Tennis Club, run by Dean Ellis
- Brighton Golf Course Dendy (there are many others in the Bayside area)
- Re-Creation Health Club
- Brighton Baths Health Club
- Bayside Badminton Club: Advanced training
- Sandringham Netball Association (weekday trainings and weekend games)
- Nippers Lifesaving club: very popular in the summer season
- Royal Brighton Yacht Club: Sailing classes.
- Brighton Dance Academy: Ballet, jazz, contemporary, hip hop, ballet conditioning, gymnastics, etc.
- Theatre de la Dance
- Shubi Chikara Karate, run by Robert Kancho
- White Studio Taekwondo, run by Linda Pace
- Brighton Soccer Club (Weekday trainings and weekend games)
- Book Clubs - come and join our International Parents' Bookclub or contact your nearest Bayside library

Firbank is home to many after school and holiday programs and you can read more about these in the school newsletter every alternate Friday.

# HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA

## HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

Australia's healthcare system is one of the best in the world, providing people with quality and safe care. The Australian state and territory governments share responsibility for running the health system, and Medicare is the universal health insurance scheme. It guarantees all Australians (and some overseas visitors) access to a wide range of hospital benefits for low or no cost.

Depending on your visa or type of residence permit in Australia (for instance if you are a Permanent Resident), you will have access to the Medicare system and will be able to benefit from the Australian public system.

But in many cases, expatriates enter the country with a working permit visa that does not include Medicare benefits. In this case, you have the obligation to get health insurance to cover your medical needs during your time in the country.

## PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

There are many global health insurance companies that operate in Australia. We advise that you get a policy that covers you in Australia and in the rest of the world, since expat life often involves travelling.

If you are an expatriate, it is likely the company you work for will get health insurance for you and your family before landing in Melbourne because it is one of the requirements to enter the country.

Below is a list of global health insurance companies operating in Australia:

- Medibank
- Bupa
- HCF
- NIB
- HBF
- Australian Unity
- Cigna International
- Allianz

## MEDICARE

Medicare is Australia's universal health scheme. It is a commonwealth government program that guarantees all citizens (and some overseas visitors) access to a wide range of health services at little or no cost.

Medicare is funded through a mix of general revenue and the Medicare levy, currently set at 1.5% of taxable income with an additional surcharge of 1% for high / income earners without private health insurance cover.

Medicare funds access to health care in two main ways. The first, the Medical Benefits Scheme, provides benefits to people for:

- Out-of-hospital medical services, including general practitioner (GP) and specialist services
- Selected diagnostic imaging and pathology services
- Dental care for children in limited circumstances
- Eye checks by optometrists
- Public patients in public hospitals

The benefits paid to patients under Medicare are generally 85% of the fee listed for the service in the Medicare Benefits Schedule. When providers are willing to accept the Medicare benefit as full payment for a service, they bill the government directly (bulk-

billing) and the patient is not charged. That means that if you visit a GP (General Practitioner) at a bulk-billing medical centre through Medicare system, you will not be charged for the visit.

However, please keep in mind that Medicare does not cover many other important health services, such as dental, some allied health, and ambulance services. So, even if you can have access to Medicare, you will still need health care insurance to cover extras or you will pay for those services out of your pocket.

## WEBSITES FOR LOCAL HOSPITALS, GP CENTRES, LOCAL DENTISTS

A 'must do' is to find a Medical Centre near you. Then choose a GP (General Practitioner) who will become your doctor. If you need a specialist, you need to visit your GP first and ask for a referral to a specialist. To name a few:

- Bay Street Family Medical Centre  
412 Bay St, Brighton  
(03) 9596 8222  
[www.ipn.com.au](http://www.ipn.com.au)
- Durrant Medical Clinic  
29 Durrant St, Brighton  
(03) 9592 5133  
[www.durrantmc.com.au](http://www.durrantmc.com.au)
- Brighton Medical Clinic  
26 Carpenter St, Brighton  
(03) 9592 0222  
<https://www.brightonmedical.com.au/>
- Epworth Rehabilitation Brighton  
85 Wilson St, Brighton  
(03) 9591 9200  
[www.epworth.org.au](http://www.epworth.org.au)
- New Street Medical Centre  
393 New St, Brighton  
(03) 9596 8555  
[www.newstreet.com.au](http://www.newstreet.com.au)

- Brighton Family & Women's Clinic  
767 Nepean Hwy, Brighton East  
(03) 9516 5100  
[www.brightonfwc.com.au](http://www.brightonfwc.com.au)
- Australian Laser & Skin Clinics  
174 Bay St, Brighton  
(03) 9370 9898  
[www.australianlaser.com.au](http://www.australianlaser.com.au)
- Lifestyle smiles - Dentist in Brighton  
28 Carpenter St, Brighton  
(03) 9593 1811  
[www.lifestylesmiles.com.au](http://www.lifestylesmiles.com.au)
- Teeth, Mouth, Smile - Dentist in Brighton (Dr Peter Fraser)  
150 Church St, Brighton  
(03) 9592 5947  
[teethmouthsmile.com.au](http://teethmouthsmile.com.au)

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

If you need urgent care, call an ambulance on 000 and they will take you to the nearest Emergency Hospital. Please find below some emergency numbers:

- Police, Ambulance, Fire  
000
- Kids helpline  
1800 55 18 00
- Crime stoppers  
1800 33 30 00
- Nurse on call  
1300 60 60 24
- Poisons information  
13 11 26
- State Emergency Service  
(03) 9256 9000
- Gas leaks  
13 27 71
- Water faults  
13 28 12
- Electrical faults  
13 20 99

# ESSENTIAL NEEDS

## SUPERMARKETS

The most common supermarkets are below.

- Woolworths
- Coles
- IGA
- Aldi
- Gum Tree Good Food
- Brighton Grocer

## MELBOURNE MARKETS

You cannot miss them! Melbournians love their fresh produce and that is why Melbourne markets are top quality. You can find almost any type of international cuisine at their delis (delicatessen). All of them offer great products and shops. Parking is provided. Ideal to discover a different area of Melbourne, buy and have a brunch during the weekends.

Please explore the following ones to discover your favourite one:

### PRAHRAN MARKET

163 Commercial Road, South Yarra. Closed Monday and Wednesday. Well located, ideal to discover the popular and vibrant Chapel Street. Here you cannot miss La Colmena, where our beloved Cristina Jimenez started the very first Spanish pastry shop in Australia. You will experience the finest pastries, a real delicacy. If you look for gourmet products and have a passion for cuisine, please visit the Essential Ingredient shop, which also provides pro-cooking lessons.

### SOUTH MELBOURNE MARKET

322-326 Coventry St, South Melbourne. Closed Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Very interesting shops and ideal to discover the South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and Albert Park areas. If you like French goodies, go to Aghate Patisserie, where you will find the real Parisian croissant and other French delicatessen. You can find Spanish deli products also at La Central.

### QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET

Corner of Victoria Street and Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. Located in the heart of Melbourne city. Closed Monday and Wednesday. This one is the largest and the cheapest and includes a huge area for shopping typical Australian souvenirs.

### SPRINGVALE MARKET

33/46-58 Buckingham Ave, Springvale. Open 7 days a week 10.00 am – 6.00 pm. This is a great market for Asian ingredients and fresh fish. Good prices and a lively, international atmosphere.

## SHOPPING MALLS IN THE AREA

You will find all sort of shops, restaurants, cinemas and much more:

### SOUTHLAND WESTFIELD SHOPPING CENTRE.

1239 Nepean Hwy, Cheltenham.  
This is the closest one in the Bayside area.  
[westfield.com.au/southland](http://westfield.com.au/southland)

### CHADSTONE

The Fashion Capital. This is the largest one in Australia. [chadstone.com.au](http://chadstone.com.au)

# ENTERTAINMENT

## CAFÉS AND RESTAURANTS IN THE AREA

There is a strong coffee culture in Melbourne and for some years now, the city has been awarded the coffee capital of the world. A few years ago, in one of the trendiest cafes in the heart of London, it could be read: 'Are you from Melbourne? Cause we need to know if our coffee is any good'.

Take your time to explore and discover your favourite cafes in the area, most of them offering not only excellent coffee but also delicious brunch/lunch options.

It is also a tradition that the school's Class Representatives hold several 'coffee after drop off' events for their class year levels at any of these local cafes.

Usually open 7 days (check updated working days in Google Maps), the following are some you should not miss:

- Brighton Soul  
129 Church St, Brighton
- Little Sister Brighton  
350 Bay St, Brighton
- The Deck Brighton  
212 Bay St, Brighton
- Moi by Fabrice  
Shop 1/259-279 Bay St, Brighton
- Superrandom  
416 New St, Brighton
- The Pantry  
1 Church St, Brighton
- Schoolhouse Café  
19 St. Andrews St, Brighton
- The White Rabbit  
118 Church St, Brighton
- Olie & Ari  
133-135 Were St, Brighton
- Sons of Mary  
14 Spink St, Brighton
- The Timbuktu Café  
36 Wilson St, Brighton
- The Little Ox  
452 New St, Brighton
- St. Martin's  
116 Martin St, Brighton
- Lenox  
505 Hampton St, Hampton
- Brown Cow  
382 Hampton St, Hampton
- The Hamptons Bakery  
427 Hampton St, Hampton
- The Brighton Baths  
251 Esplanade, Brighton
- Plain Sailing  
144 Ormond Rd, Elwood
- Elwood Bathers  
15 Elwood Foreshore, Elwood

## CINEMAS

There are plenty of theatres around to enjoy movies:

### PALACE DENDY BRIGHTON CINEMA

26 Church St, Brighton. Mainstream. Dendy Brighton features five contemporary cinemas, accompanied by a modern café and bar for you to relax in pre and post film. The cinema prides itself on its family-friendly appeal, with a carefully curated program of quality new release mainstream titles and family favourites.

[palacecinemas.com.au/cinemas/palace-dendy-brighton/](http://palacecinemas.com.au/cinemas/palace-dendy-brighton/)

### PALACE BRIGHTON BAY CINEMAS

294 Bay St, Brighton. International movies, an oasis for movie buffs, screening the best in local and international art-house films all year round.

[palacecinemas.com.au/cinemas/palace-brighton-bay/](http://palacecinemas.com.au/cinemas/palace-brighton-bay/)

### CLASSIC CINEMAS

9 Gordon St, Elsternwick. International Cinema, Jewish and Israeli Cinema, Australian Film Focus.

[classiccinemas.com.au/](http://classiccinemas.com.au/)

### VILLAGE SOUTHLAND

1239 Nepean Hwy, Cheltenham. Cinema complex at Westfield Southland Shopping Centre featuring two huge Vmax auditoriums and three Gold Class theatres (Gold Class sessions are an experience worth trying).

[villagecinemas.com.au/cinemas/southland](http://villagecinemas.com.au/cinemas/southland)

## GALLERIES & EXHIBITIONS IN MELBOURNE

Melbourne is one of the cultural capital cities of Australia and it always has an extraordinary offering in terms of culture and exhibitions.

### MELBOURNE MUSEUM

11 Nicholson St, Carlton. Open daily 10.00 am - 5.00 pm. Great exhibitions all year round. The IMAX cinema, which has the biggest screen in the southern hemisphere, is also there. This is a great starting point to visit the Carlton area, which is full of restaurants, cafes and ice-cream shops. A visit to Lygon St is a must.

[museumsvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/](http://museumsvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/)

### NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

180 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne. Fantastic place for exhibitions all year round. Excellent location in the heart of the Melbourne CBD and Southbank, Flinders St, the worldwide popular Federation Square, which is a must- see on weekends, and the restaurants and terraces by the Yarra river from Princess Bridge until the Crown Casino.

[ngv.vic.gov.au](http://ngv.vic.gov.au)

## ONE-DAY TRIPS AROUND MELBOURNE

Fancy a one-day excursion? There are plenty of things to visit and to do near Melbourne, such as Mornington Peninsula, the stunning '12 Apostles' and the Great Ocean Road, Ballarat, Phillip Island with its penguins and foxes, among many others.

Members of the International Group will have many ideas for you. Please get in touch.

# RELOCATION AGENCIES AND USEFUL EXPAT WEBSITES

- [goodmigrations.com/city-guides/melbourne](https://goodmigrations.com/city-guides/melbourne)
- [internations.org/melbourne-expats](https://internations.org/melbourne-expats)
- [expatarrivals.com/asia-pacific/australia/melbourne/moving-melbourne](https://expatarrivals.com/asia-pacific/australia/melbourne/moving-melbourne)
- [spendlifetraveling.com/expat-living-in-melbourne-australia/](https://spendlifetraveling.com/expat-living-in-melbourne-australia/)
- [expatexchange.com/ctryguide/4516/2/Australia/Expats-in-Australia-5-Tips-for-Living-in-Melbourne,-Australia](https://expatexchange.com/ctryguide/4516/2/Australia/Expats-in-Australia-5-Tips-for-Living-in-Melbourne,-Australia)
- <https://www.ewrelocation.com/>
- <https://www.relocatemelbourne.com/>

## COUNSELLING SERVICES AT FIRBANK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Moving to a new city or country is a very exciting experience, though sometimes a little stressful. It is important that your family remain positive about the changes this move will bring.

Firbank Grammar' School counsellors provide psychological services to students that address educational, social, emotional, and behavioural needs. The school counsellors may work with parents, teachers, and other school personnel to develop an approach that can best help students to grow and learn.

From ELC right through to Year 12, wellbeing plays a central role in Firbank's philosophy.

Firbank is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where all our students feel safe at school. A key Firbank pillar is community. It is important for us to have a culture of inclusion, empathy and action within our community.

Firbank is collaborating with the Department of Education and other schools to build and sustain a culture of respect and gender equality as both a learning space and workplace. This initiative will involve the implementation of a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships.

At the Junior School level, we believe that a happy school community is one in which relationships are built upon friendship, respect, and positivity.

Firbank is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which students are able to learn and grow.

## STUDENT SERVICES

Firbank has wellbeing specialists over our three campuses:

- Ms Sara Groves  
Leader of Student Wellbeing and Senior School Psychologist
- Mrs Jenny Vincent-Green  
Director of Student Services, Senior School
- Yu Tang  
Student Wellbeing Coordinator & International Student Coordinator, Senior School
- Dr Belinda Roberts Scholes  
Works 3 days a week at our Junior School, Brighton
- Ms Talia Oliver  
Works 2 days a week at our Junior School, Sandringham

Firbank provides a counselling service for students and parents when needed.





