



COUNTRY

OVERVIEW

& PACKING

GUIDELINES

Australia: Rainforest, Reef, and Cultural Ecology
Spring 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COUNTRY OVERVIEW 3

 GENERAL INFORMATION 3

 CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY 3

 LOCAL CUSTOMS 4

 DIET 4

 SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH 5

 HOMESTAYS 6

 OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS 6

 TRANSPORTATION 6

 COMMUNICATION 7

 PHONES AND E-MAIL 7

 MAILINGS 7

 MONEY 8

 VISITORS AND FREE TIME 9

PACKING GUIDELINES 11

 LUGGAGE 11

 CLOTHING GUIDELINES 11

 EQUIPMENT 12

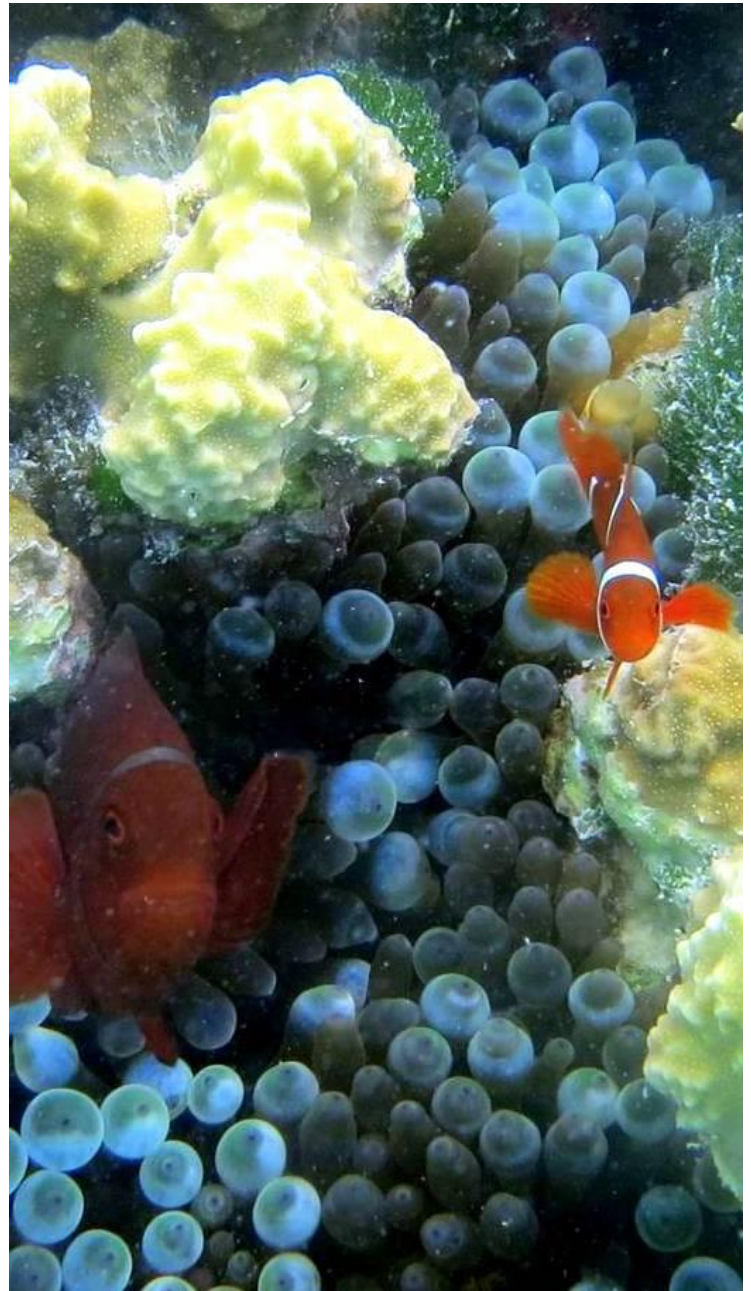
 COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS 12

 GIFTS 13

 WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY 13

 ALUMNI CONTACTS 14

PACKING LIST 15



COUNTRY OVERVIEW



GENERAL INFORMATION

In size, Australia is slightly smaller than the 48 contiguous United States. Its population is estimated at over 22 million, with 86% of the population living in urban centers along the coast. Most of the interior of the country is desert or semi-arid.

Australia is a “Commonwealth Realm,” referring to its status as a former British colony while still retaining the Queen of England as figurehead. It is a parliamentary democracy with a Prime Minister serving as Head of Government. The capital of Australia is Canberra, located in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounded by the state of New South Wales.

Australia is rich in natural resources. Agricultural products, particularly grains and wool, and minerals, including various metals, coal, and natural gas, constitute 65% of its total exports. The economy, however, is dominated by its services sector (68% of GDP), and only 8% of GDP is attributed to its agricultural and mining sectors.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

The program is based in Cairns, a coastal city in Queensland with a population of more than 150,000. In many ways, it is a city that should be seen from the sea. Looking towards this coastal town, mountains rise just beyond the city and are covered in thick rainforests. Just offshore, and stretching for over 1,500 miles, is the world's largest coral reef system. Cairns is ideally suited as a

[Cairns]: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
88/75	88/75	88/73	84/73	81/68
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
82/66	84/68	88/72	88/73	

program base because of its great location and proximity to our educational excursions.

Cairns and its environs are considered part of the Wet Tropics bioregion. Average temperatures for Cairns are in the 80's, however, daytime highs can sometimes be significantly warmer (95^o+), especially from November to March.

The seasons for Cairns and its environs are generally divided into three seasons: the mostly dry and windy season (April -September), where Southeasterly trade winds dominate weather systems; storm season (October to January) where warming temperatures lead to increased humidity and thunderstorms) and the wet season (January-April) where the monsoonal rainfall pattern can dominate.

The dry season is delightful, generally sunny and dry, with cool evenings that make a light sweater or cardigan essential. The storm season and wet season are hot and humid, with high probability of heavy rainfall from February through May. Some homes have air-conditioning, though most have ceiling fans. The sun is always hot, and careful consideration should be made to protect yourself from exposure, heat stroke, etc. Locals describe the highlands (tablelands) behind Cairns as “naturally air-conditioned,” with generally cooler temperatures than the coast year round. Frosts are possible on the Tablelands between June and September.

February traditionally marks the start of the wet season, though some years it can start as early as December. It will be hot and humid most days and warm most nights for the first two-thirds of the program (think the hot days of July-August in most parts of the U.S.), but will be cooler when the program visits the uplands during orientation, and the rainforest trip. From December to April, rainfall can be monsoonal (i.e., “bucketing down”), and students need to be prepared for wet weather.

Weather rarely cancels outdoor program activities unless it becomes a safety issue.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Local customs in Australia are similar to the US in many ways but different in some respects. Generally it is acceptable for both men and women to shake hands upon meeting. Once well acquainted, two men may hug each other, two women may hug and/or exchange a kiss on the cheek and a man and a woman exchange a kiss on the cheek. Once people get to know you, it is not uncommon for them to tease you as part of a greeting, and so it is important not to take offence, and to try and develop a sense of humor towards friendly “banter”.

Australia dress codes are generally very casual, with shorts and flip flops acceptable in most situations. In the cities, for business meetings, and at nights in good restaurants, hotels or clubs a smarter standard of dress is often expected, including for men: a shirt with a collar, long pants and close-toed shoes; and for women: a dress and shoes or sandals. Shirts are required to be worn in taxis and all forms of public transport.

Australians are generally quite punctual people for being so laid back and casual in many regards. If a set time is agreed upon, it is expected that the time will be honored unless the person says “around...o'clock”. There is also a strong tradition of egalitarianism in Australia and a widespread distaste for classism and pretentiousness. You are expected to be modest about your achievements and to treat a cleaner or waiter with the same respect you would show the Prime Minister. You can address anyone, except Aboriginal elders, simply by their first names. For Aboriginal elders you preface their name with “Uncle” or “Auntie”.

Some customs you may have to get used to are:

- No eating or drinking (except for water) in classrooms, public transport, taxis and many shops.
- No littering
- No tipping
- Sitting in the front seat with the taxi driver and engaging in conversation
- No smoking indoors or in transport

DIET

SIT Study Abroad provides experiential learning opportunities where students become embedded in their host community. As such, we strive to accommodate serious food allergies where possible but simply cannot ensure that all dietary restrictions or non-medically mandated diets can be accommodated.

Students are encouraged to participate in the local food culture as a central aspect of daily life. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture. Due to the unique living and learning community central to all SIT programs, we cannot separate food and eating communally (including with your host family) from the program experience. Please consider local diet seriously when selecting your program of choice. Your admissions counselor is a great resource in better understanding the local diet.

The stereotypical Australian evening meal consists of meat and two vegetables, though this is a broad generalization, and many Aussies enjoy a diversity of foods and cuisines. You can find the ingredients for just about any kind of cuisine here, without trying too hard. Breakfast is generally made up of cereal and toast, and sandwiches, burgers, and meat pies are a popular lunch food. In the past 15 years, north



Queensland palettes have become more adventurous, and Cairns boasts a diversity of restaurants featuring cuisines from around the world. During the homestay period, students are required to have breakfast and dinner with their families, and occasional lunches with the group. While on excursion, students will contribute to meal planning, preparations and clean-up, so if you have

a particularly favorite recipe, please bring a copy along.

Vegetarians and vegans without special requirements can be accommodated when camping or when the group is cooking, but special diets cannot always be accommodated while students are in the homestay. We try to match students with appropriate families, but cannot always manage such arrangements.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. To help you do that, we have provided [Health Guidelines and Requirements](#) for your program.



It is very important that you read the Health Guidelines and Requirements document as early as possible and examine it with your

medical provider. The guidelines include recommended immunizations; a suggested calendar for immunizations and other prophylaxes; and valuable information on how to avoid exposure to common carriers of disease.

Students are thoroughly briefed on safety considerations during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester if and when circumstances change. For information regarding safety and security, emergency communications, SIT policies, health and personal property insurance, and general program tips, please read the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document and [Student Handbook](#).

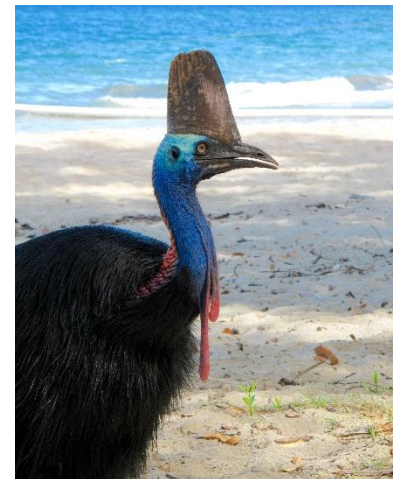
There are risks to your personal safety and property at the program base in Cairns and in the field such as there are anywhere in the world (including the U.S.). Street crime and robberies are not uncommon in many parts of Cairns, (usually at night). Because nightlife in Cairns is often focused around both tourists and locals drinking excessive amounts of alcohol until the early hours of the morning, most crimes involve alcohol consumption on the part of

the perpetrator, victim, or both. Although alcohol is an accepted and common part of many social activities in Australia (as well as being linked to most social problems), **excessive alcohol consumption while on the program is against the program's rules and will NOT be tolerated.**

You are expected to maintain complete control of your faculties and personal behavior at all times. Inappropriate social behavior, involving alcohol or otherwise, will be subject to disciplinary action. Also, be aware that the program requires full participation in all group activities, many of which start early in the morning, especially on field excursions. This means that you need to have sufficient sleep in order to participate fully in the program. Students who are too tired (for any reason) to participate fully in any aspect of the program will be disciplined. Students are expected to behave at all times with courtesy and common sense and to maintain proper safety protocols and awareness of their environment in order to generally minimize risk and be able to make the most out of the program experience.

Although many Australians are progressive in their thinking on gay/lesbian issues, they are generally conservative regarding public displays of affection between both heterosexual and homosexual couples.

From the moment you step off the plane you need to be aware that although people are speaking English, the rules in Australia are different. These include things from driving (on the left side of the road) and pedestrian rules to social norms. You must pay attention to your surroundings at all times in order to help maintain your personal safety. If you dress in a provocative manner, you are likely to receive attention and comments. We spend a significant amount of time during orientation discussing guidelines for personal safety and risk minimization during the program. You are expected to fully comply with the rules and instructions of the AD and program staff.



HOMESTAYS

As many SIT Study Abroad alumni will tell you, the homestay experience can be one of the most rewarding and most challenging aspects of the program. We hope you will come prepared for the experience and committed to moving beyond cultural immersion as you begin to question, distinguish, and analyze the host culture vis-à-vis your own culture and come to a deeper understanding of both.

Family structures vary in every culture. SIT Study Abroad values the diversity of homestay families, and your family may include a single mother of two small children or a large extended family with many people coming and going all the time. Additionally, please bear in mind that, in many countries, the idea of what constitutes a “home” may be different from what you expect. You will need to be prepared to adapt to a new life with a new diet, a new schedule, new people, and new priorities and expectations.

Each program’s homestay coordinator will be responsible for placing students in homestays. These placements are made first based on health concerns, including any allergies or dietary needs, to the extent possible.



Please note: in order to ensure the best fit for students and families, SIT may make final adjustments to homestay placements after student arrival in country. Therefore, SIT will not provide information about your homestay family before you depart for the program.

On this program, you will be staying in one two-week homestay with an Australian family in the Cairns area. The homestay is directly after the program orientation and it is designed to help you

become more familiar with the local area and its people. Students live in a range of suburbs surrounding Cairns city, and travel to and from



lectures and other program activities during homestay by public bus or through walking, riding bikes, or getting lifts with their homestay families.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Students should expect to move around a lot during this program. Your base will be at the Bounce Cairns, 117 GRAFTON ST, CAIRNS; on excursion, you will stay in hostels and field stations with some “car” camping (five to six days) on the Aboriginal camping trip. Though we often spend long days outdoors, we return to a base camp or field station and so there is no “backpacking” camping on the program.

During the ISP period, you have your choice in housing; past students have stayed at hostels, serviced campgrounds (called caravan parks in Australia), at field stations or boarding houses organized by ISP advisors, or with former homestay families. Your decision will largely depend on the constraints of your ISP topic, the lodging options available at your research location, and your preferences. Your Academic Director will provide guidance and recommendations as much as possible, but you are responsible for making your own arrangements.

TRANSPORTATION

We will be using a chartered bus for most excursions. To arrive at Lizard Island Research Station, we will have a one-hour flight using two small planes to transport the group and luggage. We will also be riding small boats daily. Individuals who

are susceptible to motion sickness should be prepared for the days on the water and the short flight.

COMMUNICATION

While you may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during the term abroad, please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during the term. Many students recommend making an appointment to call home or to receive a call. You should also consider the impact of constant communication with friends and family at home on your cultural immersion.

PHONES AND E-MAIL

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that purpose students are required to either (a) bring an open, unlocked smart phone from the U.S. to the program that is able to accept a local SIM card, and is compatible with and usable at the program location, (b) work with the academic director within the first week upon arrival in country to purchase a smart phone locally, or (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone. During orientation, with assistance from SIT Study Abroad staff, students will learn how to use their cellphone, how to purchase and use an appropriate local SIM card, and how to acquire minutes for calls and texting. SIT Study Abroad requires that each student have a local number for communication with the homestay family and program staff.

While we recognize that alternative communication methods can be free or cheaper than cell service i.e. Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp, etc. those programs alone do not satisfy our need for regular communication with the local program staff and partners, nor do they meet our emergency communication needs. Therefore, local cellular capacity on each student's phone is required for the duration of the program. Students are required to maintain a minimum amount of phone credits at all

times for emergency calls. Full compliance with this policy is expected.

Wireless internet is nearly ubiquitous these days, and you can use Bounce's free of charge. You can email people at home on your safe arrival in country, and Skype generally works well, especially if you turn the video off.

You should inform your family and friends that the group will not always be in locations where there is easy access to telephones, thus you should not make prior commitments to call people at set times until you arrive in Australia. Cairns is 15 hours ahead of EST, 14 hours ahead during Daylight Savings Time (April - October). Our time zone in Cairns is AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time).



MAILINGS

Unlike receiving a package here in the US, receiving a package at your program site is usually **expensive** and **problematic**. Customs agents must inspect all packages and you, as the recipient, are responsible for duty and storage fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient is nearly back in the US by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged.

For this program, **U.S. Postal Service Express services are available in country**. When given the option, it's always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.



For this program, please note that mail takes at least 10 days to arrive and express mail is not much faster. Generally U.S. Postal Service Express Mail is the cheapest and most reliable method, as it is delivered through the Australian Postal system (unlike most other couriers). This makes it much easier to collect

the packages. Any NON-URGENT packages should be sent via US Post to the Bounce Cairns address. URGENT packages (i.e. critical documents) using a courier service may be sent directly care of the Bounce Cairns manager. Keep in mind that you may be traveling with the group when a letter or package arrives, so it is conceivable that you may not get a letter or parcel for up to three weeks after it is sent.

Any parcels should be sent to you by airmail since surface mail can take three months and is likely to arrive after you have left the country. Also, please make friends and relatives aware of the program finishing dates, as packages and letters that arrive after your departure cannot be forwarded or returned internationally without additional postage.

If it is necessary for someone to send you mail then posted letters should be sent to the following address: (IMPORTANT- The Northern Greenhouse is being renamed in the next 3 months. It will probably be named "Bounce Cairns" but that isn't finalized. When searching for your accommodation in Cairns USE THE STREET ADDRESS → 117 GRAFTON ST, CAIRNS).

Student Name

World Learning-SIT Program,
c/o Bounce Cairns
117 Grafton Street
Cairns QLD 4870]

Packages should be sent to the following address via **U.S. Postal Service Express**.

Student Name

World Learning-SIT Program,
c/o Manager
Bounce Cairns
117 Grafton Street

Cairns QLD 4870
Or
Student Name
c/o Tony Cummings
8 Pine Street
Yungaburra, QLD 4884
Australia

The delivery services listed above sometimes require a phone number to mail a package internationally. If the student has a cell phone in country, please use that number. In instances in which student participants do not have individual cell phones, please contact the SIT Study Abroad Office of Student Affairs at 802-258-3212 or call toll-free at 1-888-272-7881.

MONEY

In addition to tuition, SIT Study Abroad program fees cover room and board throughout the program. When room and/or board are not taken with the group, students will be given a stipend to cover related expenses. SIT will cover daily commuting costs, if any, and excursions that are part of the normal program itinerary. During the ISP period, students will receive a stipend for basic room and board only, based on the cost of living at the program base. **Any domestic travel, interpretation services, or supplies necessary for the ISP are the students' responsibility.** Please plan accordingly.

While you are in Cairns between excursions, you will be provided a stipend for purchasing meals. The daily food stipend allowance provided by the program is approximately AUD\$28 per day, and is based on the principle that students will prepare some of their own meals in the hostel's kitchen. This stipend is certainly enough to feed students in Cairns, but drinks are generally expensive in Australia (a can of soft drink from a shop can cost you up to \$4.00), and so the stipend assumes that you will be drinking water with your meals. In rare instances, there have been some students who have spent little to no personal funds while on the program. As a general rule however, students do spend personal funds above and beyond the stipend/living allowance. The amount of personal funds required varies widely between groups and students. You should bring a Visa or MasterCard credit card for emergencies, such as paying for medical bills. Other credit cards are not widely

accepted in Australia. ATMs are also available for Cirrus and Plus systems and are widely available. Withdrawing funds directly from ATMs is the best, safest and cheapest way to access and exchange money, as changing cash and travelers' checks in banks within Australia often incurs up to a \$15.00 fee, and the exchange rate given at ATMs is almost always better than you'll get in the bank or money changers for cash or travelers' checks.

Check current exchange rates:

<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. If you don't inform these companies that you will be away, they will often assume the card has been lost or stolen and will put an immediate hold on the card. You should also check on costs of withdrawal, as these costs vary and can sometimes be very expensive. Renewing and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen.

Following are suggestions for spending money during the program, including estimates for textbooks, ISP-related expenses, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Figures are based on recent student evaluations, though individual spending habits vary widely and **these costs are averages**.

A suggested total amount of money to budget ranges from **US \$325 to \$850**. To determine where you might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical semester at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program, including travel costs for your planned ISP or a specific personal expense.

Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	\$600
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Books, printing, supplies:	\$50
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Up-front medical costs:	Credit card
Potential ISP travel expenses:	\$250
Non-program wi-fi usage:	\$25
Estimated total:	\$925 USD

VISITORS AND FREE TIME

SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the program and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that relatives and friends are aware of this policy and that visits are scheduled for dates after the formal conclusion of the program. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. See the Attendance and Participation section of the [Student Handbook](#).

Please note that any visitors during the course of the program must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and, due to cultural and contractual understandings with SIT, should not be asked to host students' guests.

During the program, students follow an intense schedule of classes and field-based learning assignments, even during the ISP. Free time for pursuing an independent interest or hobby during the program will be limited. Your admissions counselor can advise you about particular interests you may have. For example, if you must keep in shape for your next athletic season, or if you play a musical instrument and want to know whether to bring it, we can help you to understand your schedule and any concerns or limitations that may exist. Please note that you will not have a long break during the program, such as Thanksgiving or Spring Break.

Students are not allowed to leave Australia at any time during the program. They are also not allowed any independent travel during the homestay portion of the program. After the fall semester program some students face conflicting desires of extending their travels or going home for the end of the year holidays. Students are strongly encouraged to

discuss plans/possibilities with family and friends before leaving for Australia. Former students highly encourage post- or pre- program travel because there is little free time during the program.

Further details regarding the independent travel policy can be found in the [Student Handbook](#).



PACKING GUIDELINES

LUGGAGE

Please pack lightly and include only necessary items. You should be able to carry all your luggage significant distances on your own. Try to minimize both the number of bags and weight of your bag(s) since you will likely be acquiring more belongings while abroad. Bring whatever kind of luggage you are most comfortable with moving, carrying, and storing (you must be able to lift your luggage at least to your waist height). You should not have more than one suitcase and one small bag. You have to move and store your bags often, and so the less gear you bring, the easier your life will be. Many students from past semesters have regretted bringing too much gear.



If carrying prescription medications, you should carry a letter from your doctor to prevent any concerns at customs or in transit. (Please see the “General Health Tips” section in the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) pre-departure document.)

Please check the current requirements of the Transportation Security Administration (<http://www.tsa.gov>) as well as those of the airline on which you are flying for domestic and international baggage restrictions.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Plan to dress lightly and casually. A long-sleeved shirt will come in handy for protection from insects

and stinging plants during fieldwork. Generally, Australians dress as casually as Americans – jeans, tee shirts, swimsuits, and flip-flops (known by Aussies as “thongs”).

You should bring at least one set of nice clothes for special occasions. Although you do spend extensive time in the outdoors (about 30 field days), you will also be spending at least one-third of the semester in Cairns (some people will spend much more time in towns, depending upon their ISP.) Close-toed shoes (lightweight hikers or sneakers should do) are required for entrance into most nightclubs (especially for men), and 'smart casual' is the general standard for other venues if you 'go out.' You may consider a pair of lightweight pants instead of jeans. Jeans are heavy to carry and don't dry well in the wet tropics. That said, some students this past semester said they wished they had brought a pair of blue jeans along with them; frankly, you need to decide on the best clothes for you both in town and the field because you have to carry them, wash them, and dry them. You just want to bring clothes that you will wear often, and can mix and match if you are worried about wearing the same clothes on numerous during the semester.

During the program, you do not do overnight hikes or camping away from vehicles, so top-quality expedition gear, backpacks, hiking shoes, and clothes are not necessary if you don't already own them. You should expect to be doing fieldwork in rain and mud, and have little to no access to amenities like washers and dryers for up to a week at a time. You should consider bringing at least one set of clothes for fieldwork that you won't mind discarding at the end of the semester.

You should bring rain gear and warm layers (generally it shouldn't ever get colder than 42 degrees Fahrenheit). Light, breathable rain gear is best, otherwise it will get moldy. Fancy or expensive rain gear is not necessary. If you sweat easily, then you will sweat in anything heavy-duty so your best bet is a lightweight anorak or shell. You may also want to purchase an umbrella upon arrival, as raingear can become quite stifling in the tropical heat. Many students choose to wear rain gear as a

way to keep warm if the weather is a bit chilly; many choose to simply wear shorts and get wet when the weather is warm and rainy.

Warm clothing and layers will be used when the group visits the Tablelands and the uplands “back-o-Cairns” during orientation, and the rainforest trip. A set of polypropylene long underwear and a thermal top or sweater are handy items to use in layering your clothes for those few times during the semester when the group might encounter temperatures below 40° F (remember, your ISP may be somewhere cooler than north Queensland). Layers and warm clothes are as much about comfort as they are about safety; don’t overlook their importance. If you are thinking about stopping in New Zealand or southern Australia on your way home from the program, you will definitely want to have some warmer clothes with you. Weather rarely cancels outdoor program activities unless it becomes a safety issue. It is also a good idea to have something warm to put on for the flight and other air-conditioned buildings.

EQUIPMENT

You must arrive with a mess kit (plate/bowl, knife, fork, spoon, and cup; some past students have used plastic containers with lids, which can be multipurpose and hold your cutlery and sandwiches). You will be using these from day one. If you like to cook, bring your favorite recipe in case it may be added to the menu.

Your first aid kit must include two Ace Bandages or other pressure bandage and some Sudafed or other antihistamine. It is mandatory that you carry these with you at all times in the field. Bring a small amount of whatever brand of antibiotic cream you prefer, a few band-aids and any pain relievers you use for headaches. The program has an extensive first aid kit that we take on all excursions, but you should have a few of the basics so you can look after yourself for minor bumps, scrapes, or the occasional aches and pains.

Binoculars are an essential tool of observing nature and it is a course requirement that you have a pair to use throughout the semester on field trips and assignments. Being able to use binoculars to

identify and observe biota in the field is a skill all field scientists must have and so we endeavour to teach you this important skill. We recommend bringing a pair with at least 7x, 8x, or 10x magnification. If you don’t know what that means, have a look at this website:

<http://brandwein.org/preserve/activities/binoculars>.



You are required to have binoculars for one of the first course assignments of the program. If you don’t have binoculars for this assignment you will not be able to complete it, and this will be reflected in your grade. If you don’t bring binoculars you will need to purchase them in country.

A sleeping bag and pad are necessary for the camping trip. A light, 3 season sleeping bag is best, but students should be prepared to sleep in layers for any cold nights in the uplands. Tents and other camping gear are provided when necessary.

Notebooks and other supplies are readily available in Australia. If you have a specific preference, bring these with you.

Please make sure that you have a waterproof watch (with a stopwatch function) for your field work. These are generally cheaper to purchase in the U.S.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility. It is

recommended that you insure your computer, smartphone, or other valuables for full coverage in the event of loss or theft. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country, theft, or loss.

Past students that have brought their laptops haven't regretted bringing them, especially during ISP (though if you plan on traveling after the program, you will need to weigh your decision based on what you feel is best for you). Some past students have lost valuable data by not backing up before they leave home, and it is very common for at least one person (and sometimes more) to have computer problems or even fatal computer crashes while on the program, so please make sure you have service numbers, etc. with you.

It is also recommended that you bring a flash drive so that you can make electronic copies of any work-related documents or digital photos that you acquire on the program. You should also be familiar with anti-virus software and use it regularly.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>. Electric converters are generally not required for Australia, as most appliances like laptops and digital cameras should have 110-240v capabilities (and is marked as such on the power pack). An adapter plug to change the prong type for the outlet is necessary, and can be purchased in Australia for about \$10.

If you bring an iPod or other personal music player, there will be times during the semester when you will NOT be allowed to use it.

GIFTS

As you might imagine, it is best to be prepared with a gift to offer your homestay family in gratitude for their hospitality and as a means to share a part of your culture with them. We suggest one or two gifts that the whole family can enjoy. You may also wish to consider gifts for people outside your homestay family. Try to choose gifts that represent you or the part of the country and/or community you live in. Think about what your city, state, or local artisans produce. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas. Pack a couple of small gifts for children, such as small games, bubbles, or a

Frisbee. Even if your homestay family does not have small children, chances are that you will engage with children in your homestay community. Once you are on the program and learn more about the local culture, you will discover other ways to thank your family. Remember to bring pictures of your friends and family to share.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

In an emergency, you can buy most items here (though shopping during the program is not always convenient). Cairns is a well-developed, modern, international tourist destination, so in a pinch you can buy just about anything here that you can in your hometown. There are plenty of shops (like Kmart and Target) and secondhand stores in Cairns where you can buy cheap, good quality, used clothes. Some students have commented that they can't find clothes they like here, while other students are quite happy to try and wear what the locals wear.

Bring some shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, sunburn protection (30+), sanitary supplies, etc. These items can be heavy and space-consuming and they can easily be bought in Australia, even some of the same brands you regularly use in the U.S. can be found in Australia. It is probably a good idea to pack any liquids or gels in plastic bags in case there is any leakage in your checked bags during transit.

Cairns is a diving city, so snorkeling gear can be easily purchased in country though it is generally not cheap (i.e. around \$100-\$250 for a good quality set). You do not need fins, but if you think you might conduct a snorkeling ISP then you may want to bring some or purchase them in Australia. You can also rent snorkeling gear on Lizard Island for a nominal fee (about \$9 a day) while we are at Lizard Island.

You can do your laundry by hand while on excursion, and by machine while in Cairns and at Lizard Island Research Station.

ALUMNI CONTACTS

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact:

<http://studyabroad.sit.edu/admitted-students/contact-a-former-student/>.

Don't miss the Packing List on the next page!

These packing guidelines are based on suggestions from past students and your academic director.

PACKING LIST

GENERAL

- Hat for sun protection
- 1 pair sneakers, 1 pair of flip-flops or other water shoes
- 1 pair of lightweight hiking boots (recommended)
- 1 lightweight sweater or jacket
- Lightweight rain jacket (not Gore-tex)
- 10 T-shirts/tops (5 for the field, 5 for town)
- 2 pairs of lightweight pants (1 for the field, 1 for town)
- 4 pairs of shorts (2 for the field, 2 for town)
- 1 lightweight, casual skirt (women)
- Underwear – two-week supply
- 7 pairs of socks
- 2 swimsuits
- 1 set of nice clothes for wearing out in town

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Yellow WHO Card (see the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document for more information)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (*if applicable*)

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly, including birth control (drugs for use other than for medical purposes is strictly forbidden on your program and strict penalties are in effect)
- A list of any medications you are currently taking with the generic name of each (if there is one)
- Small first aid kit with 2 Ace Bandages (or other pressure bandage) and anti-histamines (these are required)
- Extra pair of glasses or contact lenses with solution
- Sunscreen (a small re-fillable container) and any other toiletries (soap, shampoo) you prefer

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Visa or MasterCard for emergencies
- Binoculars (see Equipment section)
- Daypack (adequate for excursions)
- Bath towel, soap & washcloth (some past students have recommended a “pack towel” as well).
- camera

- Lightweight sleeping bag (with stuff bag)
- Foam pad or Thermo-rest
- Insect repellent with DEET of 20/30% for use on skin and 100% DEET or Permethrin for use on clothing (readily available in Cairns unless you have a particular brand you like)
- Mess kit or own plastic plate, knife, fork, spoon, and cup
- Water bottle (two are better or you can use an empty drink bottle once you arrive)
- Flashlight
- Sunglasses
- Travel alarm clock
- A waterproof watch with a second hand or timing device (this is required for marine research and you'll need to buy one before or after arrival)
- Homestay gifts
- Photos of friends/family from home to share with homestay family
- Ziploc bags (for waterproof storage, also readily available in country)

OPTIONAL

- Mask and snorkel; Mask, snorkel and fins and wetsuit can also be rented at Lizard Island for about \$75 during the marine module so unless you think you might be snorkeling during ISP, it is not essential that you bring your own snorkeling gear to complete the marine portion of the program..

Remember to place all valuable items and any prescriptions in your carry-on luggage while traveling and all sharp items in your checked luggage.