



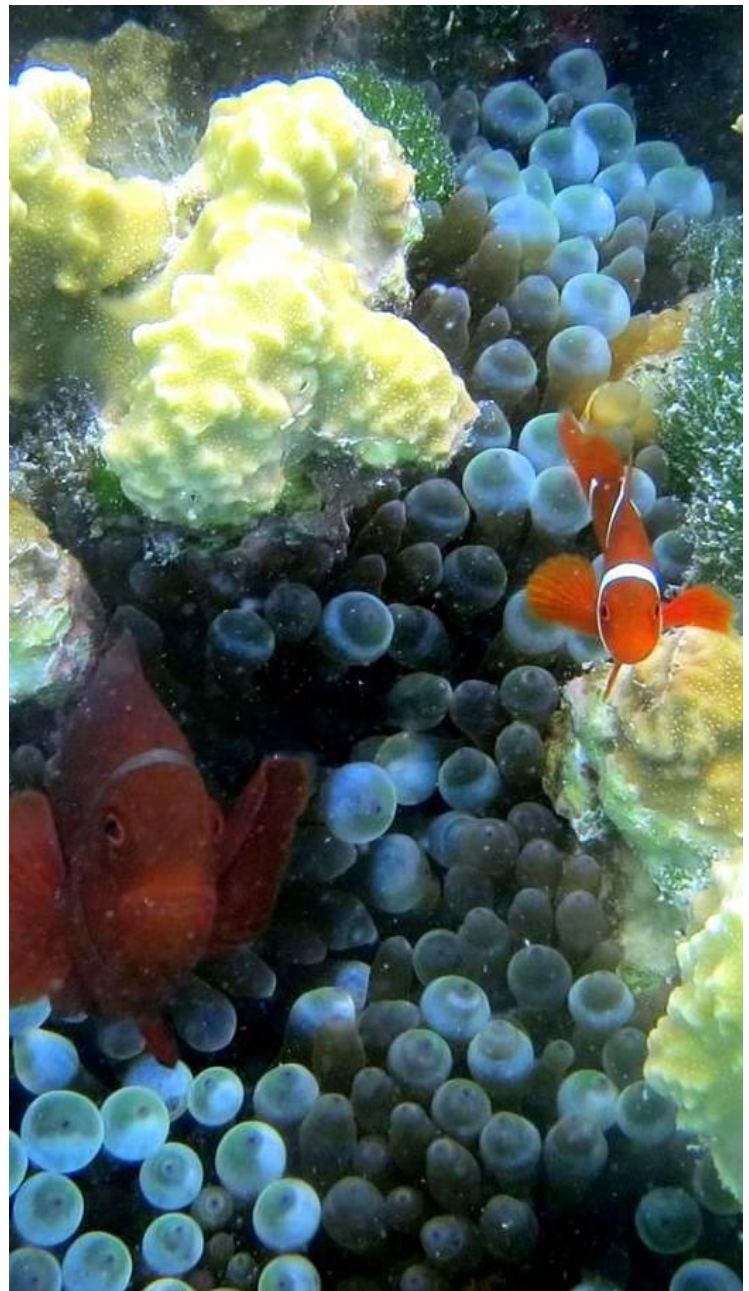
COUNTRY OVERVIEW

& PACKING GUIDELINES

Australia: Rainforest, Reef, and Cultural Ecology
Spring 2024

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

[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	

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°+), 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 20 years, north Queensland palettes have become more adventurous, and Cairns boasts a diversity of restaurants featuring cuisines from around the world. 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 so some flexibility with dietary choices is expected.

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.

SIT no longer requires vaccination to participate on programs except for locations where host country governments require it.

However, we strongly encourage students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 per CDC recommendations. SIT continues to closely monitor COVID-19 conditions in each program location and will advise students on any location-specific COVID-19 requirements and regulations prior to and during their program.

Students are thoroughly briefed on safety considerations during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester if and when circumstances change. For instance, coming prepared with face masks for personal use if individual venues/location requirements deem in necessary after arrival. 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](#).

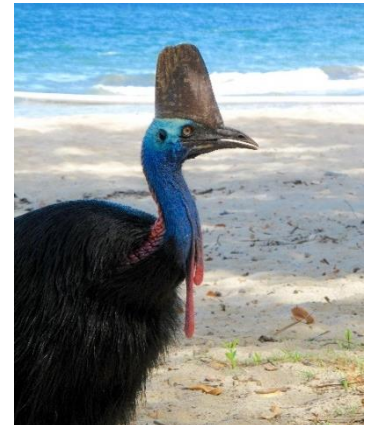
There are risks to your personal safety and property at the program base in Cairns and in the field such as there are anywhere in the world (including the U.S.). Street crime and robberies are not uncommon in many parts of Cairns, (usually at night). Because nightlife in Cairns is often focused around 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.** Students from states where marijuana and cannabis products are legal need to be aware that all cannabis products are illegal in Australia and punishments for possession can be severe.

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. One important safety rule (and local law) here is always wearing seat belts in vehicles while they are moving. This is enforced on our excursions, and you should wear seat belts in taxis and all other public transport if they are available. You are expected to fully comply with the rules and instructions of the AD and program staff.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students should expect to move around a lot during this program. So, you should aim to pack light; don't bring clothes or items unless you are sure you will likely use them. Your base will be at the Global Backpackers on the Esplanade, 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 cell phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls, including a data plan so that your phone is operational when you are away from wifi. If needed, during orientation SIT Study Abroad staff can assist students in purchasing a local SIM card, and how to acquire minutes for calls and texting. Full compliance with this policy is expected.

Wireless internet is nearly ubiquitous these days, and you can use Global'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 14 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 Global Backpackers, Cairns address. URGENT packages (i.e. critical documents) using a courier service may be sent directly care of the Global Backpackers manager, Kim Shearer. 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's 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:

Student Name

World Learning-SIT Program,
c/o Global Backpackers
67 The Esplanade
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 Kim Shearer
Global Backpackers
67 The Esplanade
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. Please use the students cell phone in country number.

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\$32 per day and is based on the principle that students will prepare most of their own meals in the hostel's kitchen, with the occasional meals out. 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 or buying drinks like juice or soft drink in larger, more

economical sizes from supermarkets. 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 \$1200 to \$2,300**. You will need money for travel to your ISP site, phone calls to researchers and photocopying materials. Minimum ISP/Internship expenses are US\$200 but can range up to \$1000.

The total amount needed varies greatly from project to project depending on both the nature and location of the project. Projects closer to Cairns are generally cheaper than those further away. If you are considering a project in western or northern Australia or Tasmania, you may need to allow up to \$600 for the round-trip airfare.

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 project or a specific personal expense.

Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	1200 USD
Books, printing, supplies:	100 USD
Up-front medical costs:	50-70 USD/visit
COVID-19 Test(s) (may be required for entry; subject to change and costs may vary)	\$100-250
Potential ISP/Internship travel expenses:	500 USD
Typical Internet/ phone usage:	100 USD
Estimated total:	2000 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.

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. After the 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.

SIT has suspended independent travel for this program. SIT defines “independent travel” as travel that is independently organized by a student(s) and is unrelated to program activities; and involves an overnight stay.



PACKING GUIDELINES

LUGGAGE

Please pack lightly and include only necessary items. There is a general tendency to overpack; those students that have brought too much in the past have regretted it, as it makes their daily lives more complicated as they have more stuff to manage (and move and store when required). 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. You need to bring three bags in total. First, you should carry your belongings in a large backpack or a medium-sized suitcase (30"x20"x15" is an ideal size for a suitcase and is the maximum size allowed by many airlines). Second, inside your luggage, you also need to bring an empty, small fold-up carry bag that zips close (cheap bags that zip close can also be purchased locally in Cairns). You will need this "extra bag" to store any excess belongings while on excursions and on ISP. If you don't bring this, we won't be able to store stuff for you. Third, you must bring a small day pack. You can use this as your carry-on luggage. If you bring more than one large bag you may need to leave it at whenever we go on excursion, as it may not fit in the bus trailer. If your suitcase is larger than the recommended size it may cause disruption to the group and we may not be able to accommodate it in the luggage trailer, resulting in you having to re pack or leave it behind.

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 numerous times 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 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 (ie "Tupperware"), which can be multipurpose and hold your cutlery and sandwiches and any leftovers when you cook at the backpackers). You will be using these from day one mostly at lunches where the sandwich is our main menu item. 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>.



Marine Ecology Field Leader, Vanessa Messmer, collecting Crown of Thorns Starfish at Lizard Island

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. In a pinch, cheap sleeping bags and pads can be purchased in country. 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 fieldwork. These are generally cheaper to purchase in the U.S.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

Bring a laptop with word processing and spreadsheet capabilities (it helps if it has a USB port as all our program resources are given to you on a USB). Your laptop is your personal property and responsibility. Before leaving home, remember to back up your computer to the cloud or on a hard drive that you leave at home to safeguard all your data in case your computer is lost or stolen. It is also recommended that you insure your computer, smart phone, and other valuables for full coverage in the event of loss or theft. SIT is not responsible for theft, loss, or any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country.

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 USB 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 personal music players, there will be times during the semester when you will NOT be allowed to use it.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

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 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. These are in easy walking distance from Global Backpackers. 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 \$10 a day) while we are at Lizard Island. If you wear prescription glasses, you may need to buy prescription lenses for your mask, which is easily accomplished at any dive shop in Cairns.

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

PACK ANYTHING THAT CAN'T GET WET IN CLEAR PLASTIC BAGS FOR PROTECTION. IT MIGHT BE RAINING ON ARRIVAL

- Hat for sun protection
- 1 pair of sneakers
- 1 pair of flip-flops (easily purchased here)
- 1 pair of lightweight hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes
- 1 lightweight sweater or jacket
- 1 lightweight long sleeved shirt for field work
- Lightweight rain jacket
- 8 T-shirts/tops (4 for the field, 4 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/International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (see the [Safety, Security, and Health](#) document for more information)
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination and/or booster encouraged
- 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 antihistamines (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 (*all available locally for reasonable prices*)

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 if you want
- 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 so buy here if required unless you have a particular brand you like*)
- Mess kit or own plastic plate, knife, fork, spoon, and cup- for use when we have picnic lunches and on camping trip
- Water bottle (*two are better or you can use an empty drink bottle once you arrive*)
- Flashlight (called a Torch in Australia)
- Sunglasses
- Travel alarm clock (or your phone if you prefer)
- 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 if you don't have for Lizard Island)
- Gifts- small gifts if you want
- Photos of friends/family from home to share
- Ziploc bags (for waterproof storage and organizing gear, also readily available in country)

OPTIONAL

- Mask and snorkel; Mask, snorkel and fins and wetsuit can also be rented at Lizard Island for about \$100 (\$10 per day) 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.