

Know
Before
You
Go

AUSTRALIA

A Guide to Keep You Safe Abroad

Provided by Sexual Assault Support and
Help for Americans Abroad (SASHAA)

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SASHAA
Sexual Assault Support &
Help for Americans Abroad

Let's be perfectly clear, the number one way to prevent sexual assault is to **not rape**. While the responsibility of ending sexual gender-based violence is on the perpetrators, this guide will offer general safety tips, country-specific information, and resources to help prevent and prepare travelers for the possibility of sexual assault abroad.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS:

1. Use the **buddy system** and travel with friends!
2. Be aware of **social and cultural norms**. For example, looking at someone in the eyes when you speak to them is perfectly normal in the U.S., but in another country that could signify you're interested in the person.
3. **Recognize controlling behavior** when entering a relationship. Most rape survivors recall feeling "uncomfortable" about some of their partner's behaviors such as degrading jokes/language or refusal to accept "no" as an answer, whether in a sexual context or otherwise.²
4. **Avoid secluded places** where you could be more vulnerable. Meet new people in public spaces and let a trusted friend know where you'll be beforehand.
5. **Trust your gut**. Many victims have a "bad feeling" right before an assault takes place.



ALCOHOL AND DRUG AWARENESS:

- Always be sure to watch your drink being poured and carry it yourself, even to the bathroom.
- Be aware of "drug-facilitated sexual assault drugs," also referred to as 'roofies' or 'club drugs,' which may turn your drink bright blue, cloudy, or slightly salty. Effects such as impaired judgment, lost sense of sight, sound, or consciousness can be felt within 15 minutes and up to 4 hours.³
- Australia's legal drinking age is 18 and alcohol is widely consumed in many recreational and social situations, so much that health professionals continue to urge the government to raise the legal age to 21 because one in five hospitalizations of people under 25 is alcohol related.⁴

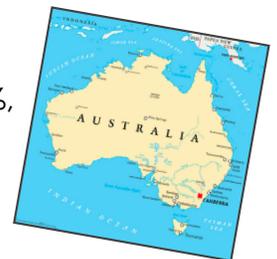
CULTURAL INFORMATION:

Major Religions: Christianity 61.4%, Unaffiliated/Not Stated 30.55%, Buddhism 2.46%, Islam 2.21%, Hinduism 1.28%, Other 2.4%.⁵

Legal System: The legal system of Australia has two components, agreed upon by the six states: Statutory and Common Law. Judges and juries both hear cases.⁶

Social/Cultural Norms: Australia has many heritages, including European, South Asian, and aboriginal tribes. Australians value modesty and sincerity, even if straight-to-the-point and formal in business settings, they are informal in personal settings. Dress is similar to Europe or North America.⁷

Gender Equality: A 2015 survey by the World Economic Forum ranked Australia 36th out of 142 countries in terms of gender equality. Men still dominate managerial positions and the political realm, but women have equal access to healthcare and education.⁸



Sexual Assault and the Law: Australian Context

Australia has some of the most progressive sexual assault laws in the world. Although the exact terminology varies from state to state, sexual assault as defined in the law is not gender-specific, and “generally includes penetration of the genitalia by a penis, object, part of a body or mouth” without consent. Under current legislation, compelling someone into performing sexual acts, marital rape, and sexual acts performed after withdrawn consent are also illegal.⁹

If You Experience Sexual Assault...

Don't blame yourself! **Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim.** You may be unsure of how to proceed, and that's okay. First, consider taking the following actions:

1. If you are in a safe place, **call someone you trust** to be with you. If you are not safe, call someone you trust to come and get you.
2. Do **self-collection of evidence**. Put all of the clothes you were wearing, bed sheets, and so on in a paper bag. If you have any injuries, **take pictures**. If there is semen present, collect what you can in a hotel glass or cup and put it in the paper bag.
3. **Call a SASHAA advocate** internationally toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can help you through the ordeal, honoring your decisions. (See Resources)

Medical Care and Reporting Sexual Assault in Australia

Medical Examinations are available for victims of sexual assault with or without a police report. The examination includes a gynecological exam, a clinical exam, biological samplings, STI/STD testing, a toxicology report (if necessary), and managing of any injuries sustained during the assault. The examination is performed by a doctor or nurse, and contraceptives and prophylaxis should be offered during the exam. Examiners are only required to report to the police if the victim is under 16 years of age.¹⁰ When reporting to the police, the victim will be asked to give a statement, and is allowed to have another person in the room for support. Generally, no further action will be taken without the consent of the victim, but if the victim agrees and if there is sufficient evidence, the case will be brought to trial.¹¹

LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



It is safe for LGBTQ community members to report assault in Australia. Although the rights of LGBTQ community members vary from state to state (some recognize same-sex marriage, some recognize same-sex adoption, some states require surgery for a legal gender change), Australia shows a general attitude of tolerance toward LGBTQ people. Discrimination based on sexuality or gender is illegal, and according to a 2013 poll, 79% of Australians agreed that society should accept homosexuality.¹²

POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION

Q: Is abortion legal in Australia?

A: Abortion laws vary from state to state. Queensland and North Territory have the most conservative laws, which require women to get approval for an abortion from a panel of doctors. However, in all states abortion is lawful if the pregnancy will cause mental or physical stress on the mother.¹³

Q. Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

A: Yes; emergency contraceptive and PEP are available, and medical examiners are required to offer both. The only exception to the EC requirement is if a form of contraceptive was effectively used during the assault, and even then medical examiners usually still offer EC.¹⁴

Resources

SASHAA

SASHAA International Crisis Line:

To call our confidential, toll-free, International Crisis Line first dial the country specific AT&T access code for **Australia (Optus: 1-800-551-155, or Telstra: 1-800-881-011)**. Then, at the prompt, enter our phone number: **866-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)**.

Crisis Email:

To reach a SASHAA advocate, you can email us at crisis@866uswomen.org. All crisis emails will be responded to within 24 hours. However, if you need to get in touch with us immediately, please call the international toll-free crisis line.

Live Chat:

SASHAA online chat services are available 24/7 at our website <https://sashaa.org>.

ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTERS

National Counseling Hotline for all of Australia

Tel: 1800 737 732

Canberra Sexual Health Centre

(02) 6244 2184 (BH)

Northern Territory Crisis Line

Tel: 1800 019 116 or 08 8981 9227

Queensland Sexual Assault Help Line

Tel: 1800 010 120 or Support line: 1800 737 732

South Australia-Rape & Sexual Assault Service

Tel: (08) 8226 8777 or 1800 817 421

Tasmania/Southern-Sexual Assault Service (SASS)

"Ingomar", 34 Patrick Street, Hobart, TAS 7000

Tel: (03) 6231 1811 or 1800 697 877

Victoria-Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs)

Tel: 1800 806 292

Western Australia Sexual Assault Resource Centre

Tel: 1800 199 888 or Crisis Line: (08) 9340 1828

US EMBASSIES/CONSULATES

Canberra (Embassy):

Moonah Place, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6214-5600

Melbourne (Northern Territory, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia Consulate):

553 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, VIC 3004

Tel: (03) 9526-5900

Perth (Western Australia Consulate):

16 St. Georges Terrace, Level 4, Perth, WA 6000

Tel: (08) 6144-5100

Sydney (Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, and Norfolk Island Consulate):

MLC Centre, 19-29 Martin PL. Level 10, Sydney, NSW

Tel: (02) 9373 9200

POLICE

The local equivalent to "911" in Australia is "000" and will contact police, fire, and medical responders.

RAPE CRISIS CENTERS

Canberra:

Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care

Canberra Sexual Health Centre Canberra Hospital

Tel: (BH) +61 2 6244 2184 or (AH) +61 2 6244 2222

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)

Tel: +61 2 6247 8071 / Email: crcc@rapecrisis.org.au

Northwest Territory Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Darwin 08 8922 7156 / Alice Springs 08 8951 5880

New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre

(02) 9819 6565 or 1800 424 017

Queensland-Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC)

Tel: +61 8 9340 1820

Tasmania-Sexual Assault Support Service

Tel: +61 3 6231 1817

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