

Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	316
Activities	319
Business Hours	319
Children	320
Climate	320
Customs Regulations	321
Dangers & Annoyances	321
Discount Cards	323
Embassies & Consulates	323
Festivals & Events	323
Food	323
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	324
Holidays	324
Insurance	324
Internet Access	324
Legal Matters	325
Maps	325
Money	325
Post	326
Solo Travellers	327
Telephone	327
Time	328
Tourist Information	328
Tours	329
Travellers with Disabilities	329
Visas	330
Women Travellers	330
Work	330

ACCOMMODATION

Tasmania offers everything: serene camping grounds, grungy hostels, gourmet breakfasts in guesthouses, ecoresorts, colonial high-ceilinged hotels and clean motel lodgings. It's worth noting that despite this variety, main tourist centres are often fully booked

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

in summer, at Easter and during other public holidays, so it's wise to book ahead.

More and more, mainland Australians are embracing the idea of the weekend escape, which means that accommodation from Friday night through to Sunday can be in greater demand (and pricier) in major tourist centres. If you have the luxury of time, be on the lookout for midweek packages.

High-season prices are quoted in this book unless otherwise indicated. Use our prices as a guide and remember that stand-by (walk-in) rates and low-season rates (not to mention weekend specials and the like) can be lower than anything quoted in this book. Walk-in rates are best queried late in the day; also check websites such as www.wotif.com for last-minute deals.

The listings in the Sleeping sections of this guidebook are ordered from budget to mid-range to top end. We generally treat any place that charges up to \$50/100 per single/double as budget accommodation. Midrange facilities are \$100 to \$180 per double, while the top-end tag is applied to places charging more than \$180 per double.

In most areas you'll find seasonal price variations. Over summer (December to February) and at other peak times, particularly school and public holidays, prices are usually at their highest. The cooler winter months (June to August) experience significantly less tourist traffic and there can often be decent savings on accommodation prices.

A few notes about facilities: if you're travelling around Tasmania in the cooler months, you may find your accommodation very cold when you arrive, particularly if you're staying in a cottage or self-contained unit. Ask about heating when you make your booking, and if you know your arrival time, ask your hosts to light a fire or turn on the heating in advance. The good news is that many establishments have electric blankets on their beds. Conversely, air conditioning is rare apart from in big-city hotels. Most accommodation in Tasmania offers nonsmoking rooms (many places, especially hostels and guesthouses, are entirely nonsmoking). If you have a car, ask about parking when booking accommodation for central Hobart and Launceston.

PRACTICALITIES

- If you're after news, the main local newspapers are *Mercury* (www.news.com.au/mercury), covering Hobart and the south, and the *Examiner* (www.examiner.com.au) in Launceston and the north.
- *Tasmania 40° South* (www.fortysouth.com.au) is a glossy quarterly magazine (\$12.50) packed with articles about the state.
- On TV, watch the ad-free ABC, the government-sponsored and multicultural SBS, or one of two commercial stations, namely WIN (the equivalent of Channel Nine on the mainland) and Southern Cross (broadcasting programs from the mainland's Channels Seven and Ten).
- Plugs have three flat pins; the electricity supply is 220-240V AC, 50Hz.
- For weights and measures, the metric system is used.

If you are interested in eco-accommodation, the 'Natural State' has a growing number of options. These green-friendly businesses are listed in the GreenDex in the back of this book (p368).

The **Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania** (RACT; ☎ 13 27 22, 6232 6300; www.ract.com.au) has an annual statewide accommodation directory *Experience Tasmania* (\$8) that suits all budgets. It's available from the club shop (and its affiliates, such as the RACV in Victoria or NRMA in New South Wales). Alternatively, check the online listings on the useful website **Travelways** (www.travelways.com.au). **Tourism Tasmania** (www.discovertasmania.com) also lists myriad options, from apartments to camping (click on Accommodation).

Camping & Caravan Parks

There are plenty of magical places in Tasmania where you can camp for free or at little cost. For details of over 145 camp sites in reserves, conservation areas and roadside bays, check out the *Camping Guide to Tasmania* (3rd edition), compiled by Craig Lewis and Cathy Savage (about \$15), or go online to the website of the **Parks & Wildlife Service** (PWS; www.parks.tas.gov.au) – click on Outdoor Recreation, then Camping and Caravanning. Camping in most national parks requires you to purchase a park pass (see p64) and then pay a small (unpowered) site fee (\$15/10/5 per family/couple/child, additional adult \$5). Quite a few parks don't have site fees, though this can mean they have minimal facilities.

Tasmania has a large number of camping and caravan parks (sometimes calling themselves 'tourist parks'), which generally comprise the state's cheapest form of accommodation and are conveniently close to town centres (with the notable exception of

Hobart). Nightly costs for two campers are anywhere between \$15 and \$26, slightly more for a powered site. In general, caravan parks are well maintained and represent good value, with almost all of them equipped with hot showers, kitchens and laundry facilities. Some parks offer cheap dormitory-style accommodation and more expensive on-site cabins. Cabin sizes and facilities vary, but expect to pay \$70 to \$140 for two people in a cabin with kitchenette.

If you intend to do a lot of caravanning/camping, consider joining one of the major chains such as **BIG4** (☎ 9811 9300, 1800 632 444; www.big4.com.au), which offers 10% discounts for members at its six Tasmanian parks including Hobart, Bicheno and Coles Bay.

A good general resource for campers and caravanners is the free *Caravan and Holiday Park Guide to Tasmania* brochure (available from most large visitors centres), and the website www.caravantasmania.com.au, which lists the majority of sites around the state.

Guesthouses & B&Bs

Tasmania is the land of the B&B. New places are opening all the time, with everything from restored convict-built cottages, rambling old houses, upmarket country manors and beachside bungalows. Note that some places advertise themselves as B&Bs but are in fact self-contained cottages with breakfast provisions supplied, or (beware) a suburban home with a room set aside, a decanter of oxidised port and a chocolate from last Easter.

Only in the cheaper B&Bs are you likely to have to share the bathrooms and the toilets. Breakfast might be 'continental' (think cereal and toast), 'hearty' (add muffins or fruit) or

'full cooked' (eggs and bacon, sausages or ham) and is often supplied in the form of provisions that you cook and serve yourself. Some B&B hosts, especially in isolated locations or in small towns where restaurants are limited, may cook dinner for guests (usually 24 hours' notice is required). Rates can range anywhere from \$90 to \$280 per double, although there is a dearth of B&B accommodation at the lower end of this price range.

The best online information is at **Bed & Breakfast and Boutique Accommodation of Tasmania** (www.tasmanianbedandbreakfast.com), with links to over 140 B&Bs; if you want to go upmarket, try www.beautifulaccommodation.com/tasmania.

Hostels

The YHA network in Tasmania has shrunk a little bit, but youth hostels and/or backpackers facilities can be found in major towns.

To stay in a hostel you often need to supply your own bed linen – for hygiene reasons, a regular sleeping bag will not do. If you haven't got sheets they can be rented at many hostels (for around \$3 to \$5).

INDEPENDENT HOSTELS

Tasmania has plenty of independent hostels and the standard can vary enormously. Look out for ones that are purpose-built, as these often have the best facilities. Other good places tend to be smaller, more intimate hostels where the owner is also the manager (this is the norm in Tasmania). Some places are run-down hotels or pubs trying to fill empty rooms (the unrenovated ones are often gloomy and depressing); others are converted motels where each four-to-six-bed unit has a fridge, TV and bathroom, but communal areas and cooking facilities may be lacking.

Independent backpackers establishments typically charge \$22 to \$29 for a dorm bed and \$50 to \$80 for a twin or double room (usually with shared bathroom).

YHA HOSTELS

At the time of research, Tasmania had 10 hostels as part of the **Youth Hostels Association** (YHA; www.yha.com.au). YHA hostels provide basic accommodation, usually in small dormitories (bunk rooms), and often also have twin and double rooms. They usually have 24-hour access, cooking and laundry facilities, and a communal area with a TV. Many have in-

formative noticeboards (including rideshare) and lots of brochures.

Nightly charges start at \$24 for members; most hostels also take non-YHA members for an extra \$3. Australian residents can become full YHA members for \$32 for one year; join online, at the Hobart or any state office, or at any YHA hostel. Families can also join and kids under 18 receive free membership.

The YHA is part of the **International Youth Hostel Federation** (IYHF; www.hihostels.com), also known as **Hostelling International** (HI), so if you're already a member of that organisation in your own country, your membership entitles you to YHA rates in the relevant Tasmanian hostels. Visitors to Australia should purchase an HI card preferably in their country of residence, but can also buy one at major local YHA hostels at a cost of \$37 for 12 months; see the HI website for further details.

Hotels & Motels

Hotels in Tasmania's cities are generally comfortable and anonymous, in a multistorey block. Aimed at business travellers and tourists, they tend to have a restaurant/café, room service, gym and various other facilities. The exception is pubs (see opposite), which often have a little more character. We quote 'rack rates' (the official advertised rates) throughout this book; ask about discounts.

For comfortable midrange accommodation, motels (or motor inns) are the places to stay. These places tend to be squat structures that congregate just outside the CBD or on the highways at the edge of town. Most are modernish (though the décor can sometimes be stuck in a 1970s time warp) and have similar facilities (tea- and coffee-making, fridge, TV, bathroom). Prices vary and there's rarely a cheaper rate for singles, so they're a better option if you are travelling as a couple or a group of three. The price will indicate the standard, but you'll mostly pay between \$90 and \$140 for a room.

Some useful accommodation groups and websites:

Best Western (☎ 13 17 79; www.bestwestern.com.au) A midrange chain with eight properties (predominantly motels) throughout the state.

Federal Hotels & Resorts (☎ 1800 130 002; www.federalresorts.com.au) Upmarket hotels and resorts in Hobart, Launceston, Strahan, Cradle Mountain and Freycinet National Park.

Grand Hotels International

(www.ghihotels.com) Operates the swish Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart and Launceston; also has less ritzy Chancellor Inns in places such as Scamander, Burnie and Queenstown.

Innkeepers Collection (☎ 1300 130 269, 6224 3579; www.innkeeper.com.au) Large, Tasmania-wide accommodation group that includes hotels, motels, lodges and apartments.

Pubs

In many smaller towns, staying at a pub means that you'll be in the social heart of the community. Pub rooms are invariably cheap, upstairs, small, older in style and plain, with a long amble down the hall to the (shared) bathroom. That said, plenty of ageing hotels have been renovated in recent times.

You can sometimes rent a single room at a pub for not much more than you'd pay for a bed in a hostel dorm. Standard pubs have singles/doubles with shared facilities starting at around \$35/70; a minimal continental breakfast (instant coffee, white bread and Vegemite) is often included in the price. Few pubs have a separate reception area – just ask in the bar whether there are rooms available. But if you're a light sleeper, never book a room above the bar, especially on Friday and Saturday nights.

The useful website www.tassiepubs.com.au has details of hotels offering pub accommodation.

Self-Contained Apartments & Cottages

Holiday units are largely self-contained, with many rented on either a daily or weekly basis. They often have two or more bedrooms, making them cost-effective for groups. The prices given in this guide are for single-night stays and are mostly in the range from about \$120 to \$150 a double – the larger units (which are often referred to as 'villas' or 'chalets') regularly cost over \$150 per double, while historic cottages can be anything up to about \$200 a double, higher in the pricier parts of Hobart or historic towns such as Richmond. Unlike prices for holiday units, prices for historic cottages usually include breakfast (with cook-your-own provisions supplied).

TasVillas (☎ 6344 3222; www.tasvillas.com) is a network of self-contained, self-catering accommodation throughout the state. **Cottages of the Colony** (www.cottagesofthecolony.com.au) has links to self-contained historic cottages.

Other Accommodation

In country areas, farmers may be willing to rent out a room in exchange for some labour or just to supplement their income (see p331).

If you want to stay a bit longer in Tasmania, noticeboards in universities, hostels, bookshops and cafés are good to check out. In the cities, it's sometimes possible to stay in the hostels and halls of residence normally occupied by university students, though you'll need to time your stay to coincide with the longer uni holiday periods (from November to February). Another place to look for a shared flat or a room is in the classified advertisements section of the daily newspapers: Wednesday and Saturday are usually the best days.

ACTIVITIES

See the Tasmania Outdoors chapter, p56.

BUSINESS HOURS

Most shops and businesses are open from 9am to 5pm or 5.30pm Monday to Friday, and to either noon or 5pm on Saturday. Sunday trading is becoming more common but is limited to the major cities. In most large towns there is usually one late shopping night each week (normally Friday), when traders keep their doors open until 9pm. You'll find milk bars (general stores) and convenience stores often open until late and usually open over the weekend.

Banks are normally open from 9.30am to 4pm Monday to Thursday, and until 5pm Friday. The exception is in small towns where they may be open only one or two days a week.

Post offices are generally open from 9am to 5pm weekdays, but you can also buy stamps from newsagencies.

Restaurants typically open at noon for lunch and between 6pm and 7pm for dinner; most dinner bookings are made for 7pm or 7.30pm. Restaurants are typically open until at least 9pm but tend to serve food until later on Friday and Saturday. That said, the main restaurant strips in large cities keep longer hours throughout the week. Cafés tend to be all-day affairs that either close around 5pm or continue their business into the night (often to around 8pm). Pubs usually serve food from noon to 2pm and from 6pm to 8pm. Pubs and bars often open for drinking at lunchtime and

continue well into the night, particularly from Thursday to Saturday.

Keep in mind that nearly everything is closed on Christmas Day.

CHILDREN Practicalities

Most Australians have a relaxed attitude about breast-feeding or nappy changing in public; it's common to change the baby's nappy in the open boot of the car. Hobart and most major towns have centrally located public rooms where mothers (and sometimes fathers) can go to nurse their baby or change its nappy; check with the local visitors centre or city council for details.

Many motels and better-equipped caravan parks will be able to supply cots and baby baths and offer playgrounds, sandpits, minigolf, games rooms or swimming pools (lots of grass to run around on, at the very least). Top-end and some midrange hotels are well versed in the needs of guests with children; some may also have in-house children's videos and child-minding services. B&Bs, on the other hand, often market themselves as blissfully child-free – it's a good idea to ask if this is the policy.

It can be difficult to dine with kids in some better restaurants and booking in for the earliest sitting is one way to tackle this. While some cafés lack a specialised children's menu, many will provide small serves from the main menu if you ask. Some also supply highchairs.

Child concessions (and family rates) often apply for such things as accommodation, tours, admission fees, and air and bus transport, with discounts as high as 50% of the adult rate. However, the definition of 'child' can vary: from under 12 to under 18 years. Accommodation concessions generally apply to children under 12 years sharing the same room as adults. On the major airlines, infants travel free provided they don't occupy a seat – child fares usually apply between the ages of two and 11 years.

Items such as infant formula and disposable nappies are widely available in urban centres. Major car-hire companies will supply and fit booster seats for you for a minimal rate, sometimes for free. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* contains plenty of useful information for travel with ankle biters.

Sights & Activities

Tasmania is a naturally active kind of place. Take a boat cruise up or down the river, assail

the heights of the local mountain, rent a bike and explore the cycling paths, or pack the kids into the van and go surfing. The minute you head out of town, the child-friendly options increase, with an abundance of animal parks, beaches, caves, nature walks and mazes to explore. There's almost always a forest or national park trail in the immediate vicinity. There's also an array of active pursuits available (nature walks, cruises, kayaking), although such activities may well mean a bit more financial outlay from parents.

Nearly all tourist attractions offer significant discounts for children, with the very young often admitted free. If the weather is poor in Hobart and you're confined to indoor pursuits, rainy-day attractions to satisfy your child (or inner child) include the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery (p87), the Maritime Museum of Tasmania (p87), the Cadbury Chocolate Factory (p88) and the Discovery Centre at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (p89).

Not all of Tasmania's historic buildings and museums will hold the interest of kids, but there are still plenty of historical, natural or science-based exhibits to get them thinking – these range from wildlife parks and aquariums to ghost tours.

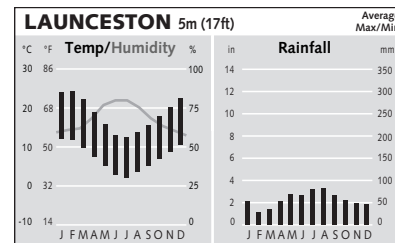
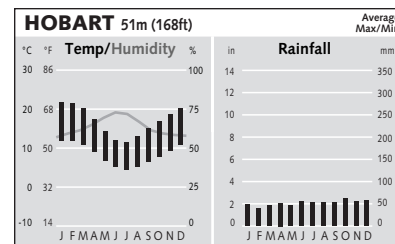
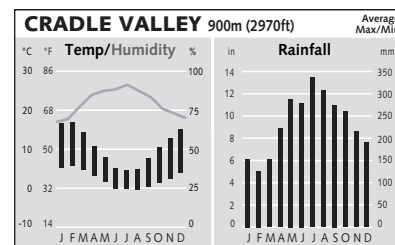
CLIMATE

Because Tasmania is small and also an island, it enjoys a maritime climate, which means that it's rarely extremely hot or extremely cold (of course, this is relative – many Australians find it a lot colder than anywhere on the mainland, and storms can deposit wintry conditions any time of year, including at the height of summer).

Tasmania experiences four distinct seasons. Summer (December to February), with its generally warm days and mild nights, is the most pleasant time of year. In general, the east coast of Tassie is nearly always warmer and milder than other parts of the state, and it may surprise you to learn that Hobart is Australia's second-driest capital (after Adelaide).

Bear in mind though that Tasmania is in the path of the 'Roaring 40s', a notorious current of wind that encircles the globe and produces very changeable weather. It's not surprising, then, that the west and southwest can be blasted by strong winds and drenched by heavy rain.

See p17 for more information on the seasons.



CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

For comprehensive information on customs regulations, contact the **Australian Customs Service** (☎ 1300 363 263, 02-6275 6666; www.customs.gov.au).

Overseas travellers entering Australia can bring most articles in free of duty, provided that they are for personal use and that you'll be taking them with you when you leave.

LIQUID REGULATIONS

Since 2007, all passengers flying to and from Australia on international flights are only permitted to carry small quantities of liquids, gels or aerosols in their cabin or carry-on luggage. Small containers of 100mL are permitted and must be sealed in a transparent plastic bag. Domestic travel is not affected by these regulations.

There's a duty-free quota per person (over 18) of 2.25L of alcohol, 250 cigarettes and dutiable goods up to the value of \$900.

When it comes to prohibited goods, you should be particularly conscientious about drugs, which customs authorities are adept at sniffing out, and all food, plant material and animal products (see www.aqis.gov.au/whatcanti).

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES Animal Hazards

You're unlikely to see many of Australia's more notorious creatures in the wilds of Tasmania, much less be attacked by one. For more information see p346.

INSECTS

For four to six warmer months of the year you'll have to cope with the mosquitoes (mozzies), which are most active around sunset; insect repellents go some way towards deterring these pests, and calamine lotion can soothe the bites, but it's best to cover up. Ticks, parasites that feed on human or animal blood, are found in moist bushy areas and can be avoided by covering up in light clothing; most people experience little or no symptoms of bites, but occasionally paralysis or allergic reaction to their toxins can occur. If you find a tick lodged somewhere on your body, gently remove it with a pair of fine-pointed tweezers by grasping as close to the skin as possible.

LEECHES

Leeches may be present in damp rainforest conditions. Trekkers often get them on their legs or in their boots. Salt or a lighted cigarette end will make them fall off. Do not pull them off, as the bite is then more likely to become infected. Clean and apply pressure if the point of attachment is bleeding. An insect repellent may keep them away and gaiters are a good idea when you're trekking.

SHARKS

Don't let paranoia keep you out of the beautiful oceans – attacks are rare, with only four deaths in the last 50 years in Tasmanian waters.

SNAKES

Tasmania's bushland is home to three species: tiger, white-lipped and lowland copperhead snakes (see www.parks.tas.gov.au/wildlife/reptile/snakes.html). Although all snakes in

INTERSTATE QUARANTINE

There are stringent rules in place to protect the 'disease-free' status of the agriculture of this island state, and fresh fruit, vegetables and plants cannot be brought into Tasmania. Tourists must discard all such items prior to their arrival (even if they're only travelling from mainland Australia). There are sniffer dogs at Tasmanian airports, and quarantine inspection posts at the Devonport ferry terminal; while quarantine control here often relies on honesty, officers are entitled to search your car for undeclared items.

Tasmania are venomous, they are not aggressive and, unless you have the bad fortune to stand on one, it's unlikely you'll be bitten. February is the month when snakes are at their most active.

To minimise your chances of being bitten, always wear boots, socks and long trousers (ideally gaiters) when walking through undergrowth where snakes may be present. Don't put your hands into holes and crevices, and be careful when collecting firewood. Most importantly, if you see a snake, leave it alone.

For information on treating snake bites, see p347.

SPIDERS & ANTS

There are only a couple of spiders to watch out for in Tasmania. Of least concern is the large, grey brown huntsman spider, which is quite common in the bush and often enters homes. Contrary to popular opinion, it can bite (resulting only in transient swelling and pain) but is generally shy and harmless. The white-tailed spider is a long, thin, black spider with (you guessed it) a white tip on its tail. It has a fierce bite that can lead to local inflammation. It is a ground scavenger rather than a web dweller, and can sometimes crawl into piles of stuff left on the floor. A spider found only in Tasmania is the Tasmanian cave spider, a relict species with its closest Gondwanan relatives in South America (see www.amonline.net.au/factsheets/cave_spider.htm).

Jack jumper ants have a brown body and orange pincers; they are quite aggressive and can sometimes 'jump' from the vegetation. They sting rather than bite. These critters are more common in Tasmania than in the other

Australian states and their painful sting can cause a severe allergic reaction. Signs of an ant nest can include small pebbles at the entrance to the hole – try not to pitch your tent on one!

Bushfires & Blizzards

Bushfires are a regular occurrence in Australia and Tasmania is no exception. In hot, dry and windy weather, be extremely careful with any naked flame – cigarette butts thrown out of car windows have started many a fire. On a total fire ban day it's forbidden to use even a camping stove in the open. Locals will not be amused if they catch you breaking this particular law; they'll happily dob you in, and the penalties are severe.

When a total fire ban is in place (common from November onwards), bushwalkers should delay their trip until the weather improves. Get updates from the **Tasmania Fire Service** (www.fire.tas.gov.au). If you're out in the bush and you see smoke, even a long way away, take it seriously – bushfires move very quickly and change direction with the wind. Go to the nearest open space, downhill if possible. A forested ridge, on the other hand, is the most dangerous place to be.

At the other end of the elemental scale, blizzards can occur in Tasmania's mountains at any time of year. Bushwalkers need to be prepared for such freezing eventualities, particularly in remote areas. Take warm clothing such as thermals and jackets, plus windproof and waterproof garments. Carry a high-quality tent suitable for snow camping and enough food for two extra days, in case you get held up by bad weather. See p347 for information on hypothermia and how to minimise its risk.

Crime

Tasmania is a relatively safe place to visit but you should still take reasonable precautions. Don't leave hotel rooms or cars unlocked, and don't leave your valuables unattended or visible through a car window. Avoid walking around in the cities by yourself after dark.

Swimming

Surf beaches can be dangerous places if you aren't used to the conditions. Undertows (or 'rips') are the main problem. If you find yourself being carried out by a rip, the important thing to do is just keep afloat; don't panic or try to swim against the rip, which will exhaust you. In most cases the current stops within a

couple of hundred metres from the shore and you can then swim parallel to the shore for a short way to get out of the rip and make your way back to land.

DISCOUNT CARDS

The **International Student Travel Confederation** (ISTC; www.istc.org) is an association of specialist student travel organisations. It's also the body behind the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), which is issued to full-time students aged 12 years and over, and gives the bearer discounts on accommodation, transport and admission to various attractions.

Senior travellers and travellers with disabilities who reside in Australia are eligible for concession cards; most states and territories issue their own version and these can be used Australia-wide (for more, see p329).

See Tasmania Card

The **See Tasmania Smartvisit Card** (☎ 1300 661 711; www.seetasmaniocard.com) might be of interest to short-term visitors. Purchase of the card allows free or discounted entry to some 60 attractions and activities around the state (including national parks, National Trust properties and big-ticket drawcards such as the Port Arthur Historic Site and the Tahune AirWalk), plus a book and maps to help you plan your travels. The card is not cheap, however (\$159/89 per adult/child for three days, \$229/155 for seven days, and \$299/189 for 10 days, where children are aged four to 15), and it's worth noting that it can only be used on consecutive days. Before purchasing, do some research to determine if it's a worthwhile investment – you should be intending to do a lot of sightseeing in a relatively short time. Cards can be purchased online from many travel agents in Tasmania.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

The principal diplomatic missions to Australia are in Canberra. There are also representatives in other major cities, particularly from countries that have strong links with Australia, such as the USA, the UK and New Zealand.

Consular offices in Hobart include the following. For a complete listing, look in the Tasmanian **Yellow Pages** (www.yellowpages.com.au).

Denmark (☎ 62730677; 18 Bender Drv, Derwent Park)

France (☎ 6223 8239; 143 Hampden Rd)

Germany (☎ 6223 8239; 143 Hampden Rd)

Netherlands (☎ 6225 3951; 439A Sandy Bay Rd)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Tourism Tasmania (www.discovertasmania.com/events) lists everything going on in Tassie, so you can plan your trip around festivals and shows, sport, exhibitions, performances or markets. See also the Festivals & Events sections of the Hobart (p94) and Launceston (p207) chapters; other destination chapters will mention festivals and events on the ground.

Major statewide or region-specific festivals include the following.

March

Taste of the Huon (www.tasteofthehuon.com) Two-day festival in early March celebrating the food, wine, music and crafts of the Huon Valley, D'Entrecasteaux Channel area and Bruny Island.

Ten Days on the Island (www.tendaysontheisland.com) Tasmania's premier cultural festival is held in odd-numbered years and usually runs from late March until early April.

Three Peaks Race (www.threepeaks.org.au) Every Easter (March and April), over four days, competitors sail from Beauty Point north of Launceston to Hobart. Each yacht sends two runners to scale Tasmania's highest peaks: Mt Strzelecki on Flinders Island, Mt Freycinet and Hobart's Mt Wellington.

April

Anzac Day National public holiday (25 April) commemorating the landing of Anzac troops at Gallipoli in 1915. Memorial marches by returned soldiers are held all over the country.

Targa Tasmania (www.targa.org.au) Six-day rally of exotic cars that hoons around the entire state, appropriating 200km of roads as it goes.

September

Blooming Tasmania Beginning in spring and lasting over six months, this is a coordinated set of festivals, displays and open gardens around the state. A special brochure is produced every year detailing when each festival occurs and when gardens are open to the public (available online at www.discovertasmania.com – click on Activities & Attractions, then Outdoor Activities, and go to Gardens).

October

Royal Shows The royal agricultural and horticultural shows of Hobart, Burnie and Launceston are held during this month.

FOOD

The innovative food offered in top-quality Tasmanian eateries doesn't always cost a fortune. Best value are the modern cafés, where you can get a good meal in casual

surroundings for under \$20. A full cooked breakfast at a café costs around \$14. Some inner-city pubs offer upmarket restaurant-style fare, but most pubs serve standard (often large-portion, meat-heavy) bistro meals, usually in the \$15 to \$25 range, in the dining room or lounge bar. Bar (or counter) meals, which are eaten in the public bar, usually cost between \$10 and \$15. Top restaurants have main meals (generally showcasing the state's fantastic produce) in the \$24 to \$36 price range.

For general opening hours, consider that breakfast is normally served between 6am and 11am, lunch starts around noon and lasts until 2pm or 3pm, and dinner usually starts after 6pm.

See the Food & Drink chapter (p40) for more information on Tassie food.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

It wasn't always so, but Tasmania is now considered by gay- and lesbian-rights groups to have greater equality in criminal law for homosexual and heterosexual people than most of the other Australian states.

The **Gay and Lesbian Community Centre** (GLC Centre; www.glectas.org), based in Hobart but with Tasmania-wide links, is one source of information on upcoming events. There is a **Gay Information Line** (☎ 6234 8179) with a host of contact numbers for support groups, plus details of coming events and gay-friendly bars and restaurants. There's also a fair bit of high-quality gay-owned accommodation in Tasmania: see www.gaystayaustralia.com.

HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays

The holidays listed are statewide unless indicated:

New Year's Day 1 January

Australia Day 26 January

Hobart Regatta Day 2nd Monday in February (southern Tasmania)

Launceston Cup Last Wednesday in February (Launceston only)

Eight Hour Day 2nd Monday in March

Easter March/April (Good Friday to Easter Tuesday inclusive)

Anzac Day 25 April

Queen's Birthday 2nd Monday in June

Burnie Show 1st Friday in October (Burnie only)

Launceston Show 2nd Thursday in October (Launceston only)

Hobart Show 3rd Thursday in October (southern Tasmania)

Recreation Day 1st Monday in November (northern Tasmania)

Devonport Show Last Friday in November (Devonport only)

Christmas Day 25 December

Boxing Day 26 December

School Holidays

The Christmas holiday season, from mid-December to late January, is part of the summer school vacation and is the time when accommodation often books out. There are three shorter school holiday periods during the year, but they vary by a week or two from year to year, falling from early to mid-April, late June to mid-July, and late September to early October. For a useful list of school holidays in all Australian states, see www.dest.gov.au/portfolio_department/calendar_dates.

INSURANCE

Don't underestimate the importance of a good travel insurance policy that covers theft, loss and medical problems. Most policies offer lower and higher medical expense options; the higher ones are chiefly for countries that have extremely high medical costs, such as the USA. There is a wide variety of policies available, so compare the small print.

If you plan on doing any outdoor activities in Tasmania, make sure the policy you choose fully covers you for scuba diving, motorcycling, skiing and even bushwalking (some policies specifically exclude designated 'dangerous activities').

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals direct rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later, make sure you keep all documentation. Check that the policy covers ambulances and emergency medical evacuations by air.

Worldwide travel insurance is available at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services. You can buy, extend and claim online any time, even if you're already on the road.

See also Before You Go (p344) in the Health chapter. For information on insurance matters relating to rental cars, see p339.

INTERNET ACCESS

Whether you use internet cafés or bring along your own laptop, it's easy to get connected in Tasmania. You'll find cafés in the main towns, and kiosks or terminals at many hostels and hotels. As part of a government-funded tele-

communications scheme, online access centres have been set up in 66 of the state's towns. They are intended primarily for rural Tasmanians, but also provide net access for visitors. For a complete listing of these centres, which charge reasonable rates and are located primarily (but not exclusively) in libraries and schools, pick up the *Tasmanian Communities Online* brochure at many visitors centres, or visit the scheme's website at www.tco.asn.au.

LEGAL MATTERS

Most travellers will have no contact with the Tasmanian police or any other part of the legal system. Those that do are likely to experience it while driving. There is a significant police presence on the state's roads, with the power to stop your car and ask to see your licence (you're required to carry it), check your vehicle for roadworthiness, and also to insist that you take a breath test for alcohol (note that the legal limit in Australia is 0.05%). Needless to say, drink-driving offences are taken seriously here.

If you are arrested, it's your right to telephone a friend, relative or lawyer before any formal questioning begins. Legal aid is available only in serious cases and only to the truly needy (for links to Legal Aid offices see www.legalaid.tas.gov.au). However, many solicitors do not charge for an initial consultation.

MAPS

The selection of maps available is wide, but many are of average quality. One of the best road maps of the state (1:500,000) is produced by the **Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania** (RACT; ☎ 13 27 22; www.ract.com.au) and is on sale in the organisation's offices around the island. This sheet map includes detail of main city centres.

For more detail, including contours, the maps (1:250,000) published by the state government's Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW), more specifically its map publication arm **Tasmap** (www.tasmap.tas.gov.au), are recommended. The state is covered in four sheets, which are available from map retailers or online. DPIW also produces 1:25,000 topographic sheets appropriate for bushwalking, ski touring and other activities requiring large-scale maps. Many of the more popular sheets, including day walks and bushwalks in national parks, are usually available over the counter at shops specialising in bushwalk-

ing gear and outdoor equipment, and also at urban and national park visitors centres, **Service Tasmania** (Map p82; ☎ 1300 135 513; www.service.tas.gov.au; 134 Macquarie St, Hobart; ☎ 8.15am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) and the **Tasmanian Map Centre** (Map p82; ☎ 6231 9043; www.map-centre.com.au; 100 Elizabeth St, Hobart; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat).

The best atlas is the *Tasmania Country Road Atlas* (\$31), published by UBD. It contains clear, detailed maps of over 45 significant towns in the state. It's available from petrol stations, newsagencies, bookshops and visitors centres, at Service Tasmania or the Tasmanian Map Centre.

MONEY

Australia's currency is the Australian dollar, made up of 100 cents. There are 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2 coins, and \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 notes. Although the smallest coin in circulation is 5c, prices are often still marked in single cents and then rounded up to the nearest 5c when you come to pay.

See p17 to get an idea of expenses in Tasmania.

ATMs, Eftpos & Bank Accounts

In the smaller Tasmanian towns, banks are often open only two or three days a week. Local post offices act as agents for the Commonwealth Bank, although they are open only restricted weekday hours. Even the 24-hour ATMs, most of which accept cards from other banks and can be used to withdraw up to \$1000 a day (cash amount varies depending on the bank), can be few and far between outside the state's largest centres. However, there's usually at least one pub, supermarket, general store, petrol station or newsagent in town that offers an Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale (Eftpos) service.

Credit Cards & Debit Cards

Australia is well and truly a card-carrying society – credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted for everything from a hostel bed or a restaurant meal to an adventure tour, and a credit card is pretty much essential (in lieu of a large deposit) if you want to hire a car. They can also be used to get cash advances over the counter at banks and from many ATMs, depending on the card, but be aware that these incur immediate interest. Charge cards such as Diners Club and

American Express (Amex) are not as widely accepted.

Apart from losing them, the obvious danger with credit cards is maxing out your limit and going home to a steaming pile of debt and interest charges. A safer option is a debit card with which you can draw money directly from your home bank account using ATMs, banks or Eftpos machines around the country. Any card connected to the international banking network – Cirrus, Maestro, Plus and Eurocard – should work, provided you know your PIN. Fees for using your card at a foreign bank or ATM vary depending on your home bank; ask before your leave. Companies such as Travelex offer debit cards (Travelex calls them Cash Passport cards) with set withdrawal fees and a balance you can top up from your personal bank account while on the road – nice one!

The most flexible option is to carry both a credit and a debit card.

Exchanging Money

Changing major forms of foreign currency or travellers cheques is usually no problem at banks throughout Australia or at licensed moneychangers such as Travelex or Amex in the major cities.

See the table on the inside front cover of this book for exchange rates at the time of publication.

Taxes & Refunds

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a flat 10% tax on all goods and services – accommodation, eating out, transport, books, furniture, clothing (but basic foods such as milk, bread, fruits and vegetables are exempt). By law, the tax is included in the quoted or shelf prices, so all prices in this book are GST-inclusive. International air and sea travel to/from Australia is GST-free, as is domestic air travel when purchased outside Australia by nonresidents.

If you purchase goods with a total minimum value of \$300 from one store no more than 30 days before you leave Australia, you are entitled under the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) to a refund of any GST paid. The scheme only applies to goods you take with you as hand luggage or wear onto the plane or ship. For more details, contact the **Australian Customs Service** (☎ 1300 363 263, 02-6275 6666; www.customs.gov.au, click on Travellers).

Travellers Cheques

If your stay is short, then travellers cheques are safe and generally enjoy a better exchange rate than foreign cash in Australia. Also, if they are stolen (or you lose them), they can readily be replaced. There is, however, a fee for buying travellers cheques (usually 1% of the total amount) and there may be fees or commissions when you exchange them.

Amex, Travelex and other well-known international brands of travellers cheques are easily exchanged. You need to present your passport for identification when cashing them. Fees per transaction for changing foreign-currency travellers cheques vary from bank to bank.

Buying travellers cheques in Australian dollars is an option worth looking at. These can be exchanged immediately at banks without being converted from a foreign currency and aren't subject to commissions, fees and exchange-rate fluctuations.

POST

Australia's postal services are efficient and reasonably cheap. **Australia Post** (www.auspost.com.au) post offices are usually open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. There are also many post office agencies lurking within general stores and newsagencies.

It costs 50c to send a standard letter or postcard within the country. International destinations are divided into two regions for letters: Asia-Pacific and Rest of the World; airmail letters up to 50g cost \$1.30/1.95 respectively. The cost of a postcard (up to 20g) is \$1.25 across the board.

Sending & Receiving Mail

All post offices will hold mail for visitors, and some city GPOs (main or general post offices) have busy poste restante sections. You need to provide some form of ID (such as a passport) to collect mail.

There are four international parcel zones and rates vary by distance and class of service. Airmail offers reliable delivery to over 200 countries in three to 10 working days. If it's not urgent, the cheapest way to send larger items back home is by sea mail (everywhere except New Zealand and Asia).

Express Post delivers a parcel or envelope interstate within Australia by the next business day; otherwise allow two days for urban deliveries, longer for country areas.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Solo travellers are quite a common sight throughout Tasmania and there is certainly no stigma attached to lone visitors. Women travelling on their own should exercise caution when in less populated areas, and might find that guys get annoyingly attentive in some drinking establishments; see also Women Travellers (p330).

TELEPHONE

Many mainland visitors to Tasmania take their mobile (cell) phone along for the journey, figuring it will be useful for staying in contact with folks back home, phoning ahead to secure accommodation, or making all-important dinner reservations at Tassie's finest restaurants. If you're not on the **Telstra** (www.telstra.com.au) mobile network, coverage can be patchy. Other network coverage is all but nonexistent outside of Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport. If you plan to spend some time touring Tasmania, it might be worth purchasing a Telstra prepaid SIM card for your mobile phone – you'll still struggle to find a signal in the more remote parts of the state, but overall coverage will be a vast improvement over that of **Optus** (www.optus.com.au) or **Vodafone** (www.vodafone.com.au).

Information & Toll-Free Calls

Numbers starting with ☎190 are usually recorded information services, charged at anything from 35c to \$5 or more per minute (more from mobiles and payphones).

Toll-free numbers beginning with ☎1800 can be called free of charge from anywhere in the country, though they may not be accessible from certain areas or from mobile phones. Calls to numbers beginning with ☎13 or ☎1300 are charged at the rate of a local call – the numbers can usually be dialled Australia-wide, but may be applicable only to a specific state or STD (Subscriber Trunk Dialling) district. Telephone numbers beginning with either ☎1800, ☎13 or ☎1300 cannot be dialled from outside Australia.

To make a reverse-charge (collect) call from any public or private phone, just dial ☎1800-REVERSE (1800 738 3773), or ☎12550.

International Calls

Most payphones allow ISD (International Subscriber Dialling) calls, the cost and international dialling code of which varies de-

pending on the service provider. International calls from Australia are cheap and subject to specials that reduce the rates even more, so it's worth shopping around – look in the *Yellow Pages* for a list of providers.

The **Country Direct service** (☎ 1800 801 800) connects callers in Australia with operators in nearly 60 countries to make reverse-charge (collect) or credit-card calls.

When calling overseas, you need to dial the international access code from Australia (☎ 0011 or ☎ 0018), the country code and the area code (without the initial 0). So for a London number you'd dial ☎ 0011-44-171, then the number. Also, certain operators will have you dial a special code to get access to their service.

If calling Australia from overseas, the country code is ☎ 61 and you need to drop the 0 in the state/territory area codes.

Local Calls

Calls from private phones cost 15c to 25c while local calls from public phones cost 50c; both involve unlimited talk time. Calls to mobile phones attract higher rates and are timed. Blue phones or gold phones that you sometimes find in hotel lobbies or other businesses usually cost a minimum of 50c for a local call.

Long-Distance Calls & Area Codes

For long-distance calls, Australia uses four STD area codes. STD calls can be made from virtually any public phone and are cheaper during off-peak hours, generally between 7pm and 7am. Long-distance calls (to more than about 50km away) within these areas are charged at long-distance rates, even though they have the same area code.

Broadly, these are the main area codes:

State/Territory	Area Code
ACT	☎ 02
NSW	☎ 02
NT	☎ 08
Qld	☎ 07
SA	☎ 08
Tas	☎ 03
Vic	☎ 03
WA	☎ 08

When calling from one area of Tasmania to another, there's no need to dial 03 before the local number (and you don't need to add the 03 when calling Victoria either). Local

numbers start with the digits 62 in Hobart and southern Tasmania, 63 in Launceston and the northeast, and 64 in the west and northwest.

Mobile (Cell) Phones

Local numbers with the prefix ☎ 04 belong to mobile phones. Australia's two mobile networks – digital GSM and digital CDMA – service more than 90% of the population but leave vast tracts of the country uncovered. Major towns in Tasmania should get good reception, but elsewhere it's haphazard or nonexistent (see p327).

Australia's digital network is compatible with GSM 900 and 1800 (used in Europe), but generally not with the systems used in the USA or Japan. For overseas visitors, GSM 900 and 1800 mobiles can be used in Australia if set up at home first – contact your service provider before you travel.

It's easy and cheap enough to get connected short-term, though, as the main service providers (Telstra, Optus and Vodafone) all have prepaid mobile systems. Just buy a starter kit, which may include a phone or, if you have your own phone, a SIM card (around \$25) and a prepaid charge card. The calls tend to be a bit more expensive than with standard contracts, but there are no connection fees or line-rental charges and you can buy the recharge cards at convenience stores and newsagents. Don't forget to shop around between the three carriers as their products differ.

Phoncards

A wide range of phoncards is available. These can be bought at newsagents and post offices for a fixed dollar value (usually \$10, \$20 or \$50) and can be used with any public or private phone by dialling a toll-free access number and then the PIN on the card. Once again, it's well worth shopping around, as call rates vary from company to company. Some public phones also accept credit cards.

TIME

Australia is divided into three time zones: Western Standard Time (GMT/UTC plus eight hours) applies in Western Australia; Central Standard Time (GMT/UTC plus 9½ hours) covers the Northern Territory and South Australia; and Eastern Standard Time (GMT/UTC plus 10 hours) covers Tasmania, Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

DAYLIGHT SAVING

Daylight Saving in Tasmania begins on the first Sunday in October and ends on the last Sunday in March. This start date is three weeks earlier than the Victoria, NSW, SA, WA and ACT commencement date, and this end date is a week earlier. Daylight Saving does not operate in Queensland or the NT.

During the Tasmanian summer things get slightly screwed up when Daylight Saving time (when clocks are put forward an hour; see boxed text on above) comes into play.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The main tourism authority for the state is **Tourism Tasmania** (☎ 6230 8235, 1300 733 258; www.discovertasmania.com; GPO Box 399, Hobart 7001), which has developed one of the better tourism profiles in Australia and runs a mighty slick website.

Alternatively, call a consultant at the **Tasmanian Travel Centre** (☎ 1300 780 867; www.holidays.discovertasmania.com; www.tasttemptations.com.au), who can provide information on all things Tasmania, and can help you book accommodation, tours and transport.

For advice on independent budget travel, in person, **Tasmanian YHA Travel Centre** (Map p82; ☎ 6234 9617; www.yha.com.au; 9 Argyle St, Hobart) has info on air fares, travel passes, car rental, travel insurance, day tours and tour packages.

Local Tourist Offices

Tasmania's visitors centres are privately run and the key ones are located in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie (see the relevant chapters for contact details). As well as supplying brochures, maps and other information, they will often book transport, tours and accommodation. They are generally open from around 8.30am or 9am to 5pm or 5.30pm weekdays and slightly shorter hours on weekends.

Other centres belonging to the Tasmanian Visitor Information Network are scattered in many smaller towns across the island. The standard of service provided varies enormously from place to place, and some centres are staffed by volunteers (resulting in irregular opening hours).

At visitors centres throughout the state you can pick up the invaluable free, bimonthly newspaper, *Tasmanian Travelways* (www

.travelways.com.au). It's packed with information, including comprehensive listings of accommodation, activities, public transport and vehicle hire, all with an indication of current costs throughout the state.

The visitors centres also stock a host of other free tourist literature, including *This Week in Tasmania* (an odd name given that it's published seasonally), the monthly newspaper *Treasure Island, Explore Tasmania*, and *Tasmania: The Visitors Guide*, published twice a year.

TOURS

A number of operators offer tours both to and within Tasmania. Many travel agents arrange package deals from the mainland that include transport to Tasmania (either by air or sea), car rental and accommodation. Contact Tourism Tasmania (opposite), **Qantas Holidays** (☎ 13 14 15; www.qantas.com.au) or **TasVacations** (☎ 1800 030 160; www.tasvacations.com) to get some ideas.

Once you're in Tasmania, there are operators who can guide you to the highlights (or off the beaten track), and many more who can offer a wilderness experience or activity-based tour (for these greener listings, see the GreenDex on p368). Most trips depart from Hobart, Launceston or Devonport. Some suggestions include:

Adventure Tours (☎ 1300 654 604, 08-8309 2277; www.adventuretours.com.au/tasmania-tours/) An Australia-wide company offering one- to seven-day tours in Tasmania. Participants can choose between hostel- or motel-style accommodation; prices for a one-/three-day tour start at \$140/440.

Craclair Tours (☎ 6424 7833; www.craclair.com.au) Experienced walking tours, based in Devonport; offers guided walking tours (four- to 10-day trips) in national parks and wilderness areas, including the Overland Track at Lake St Clair. A three-day cabin-based Cradle Mountain trip costs \$750.

Island Cycle Tours (☎ 1800 064 726, 6228 4255; www.islandcycletours.com) Offers a great range of guided cycling trips – day trips from Hobart (including a descent of Mt Wellington), budget-minded walking and cycling tours (from one to 10 days), 'indulgence' trips with more creature comforts (three to seven days) and new family adventure vacations. Prices are tailored.

TASafari (☎ 1300 882 415; www.tasafari.com.au) Offers three-, five- and nine-day, eco-certified 4WD tours that visit both the well-known and more remote parts of the state. There's bushwalking, bush camping and off-road driving – a three-day tour of the state's east is \$470; five days in the west is \$790.

Tasmanian Expeditions (☎ 1300 666 856, 6339 3999; www.tas-ex.com) Offers an excellent range of activity-based tours out of Hobart and Launceston, ranging in length from half a day (\$100) to 16 days (\$2690), with a choice of bushwalking, cabin-based walks, rafting, rock climbing, cycling and sea-kayaking (or a combination!).

Tassielink (☎ 1300 653 633, 6271 7333; www.tassielink.com.au) A program of coach tours (half- and full-day trips) to major attractions around Tasmania and Launceston. A half-day trip from Hobart to Huonville is \$16; a full day to Freycinet is \$85 (\$73 concession).

Tiger Trails (☎ 6234 3931; www.tigertrails.green.net.au) Eco-tour company offering guided walks (one-day and multi-day) in pristine areas such as the Tarkine wilderness, Overland Track and Walls of Jerusalem, ranging from easy to challenging. They also host fundraiser walks.

Under Down Under (☎ 1800 064 726, 6362 2237; www.underdownunder.com.au) Offers pro-green nature-based, backpacker-friendly trips. There are tours from two to eight days, including a four-day Tassie Highlights tour (\$525).

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

In this guide particularly good or bad access is described in reviews. Disability awareness in Tasmania is pretty high. Many key attractions provide access for those with limited mobility and a good number of tour operators also have the appropriate facilities: call ahead and confirm this. There are also a number of local agencies that provide information and/or assistance to disabled travellers.

A downloadable PDF file, *The Wheelie Good Guide* on the website of the **ParaQuadt Association of Tasmania** (☎ 6272 8816; www.paraquadtas.org.au), has information about accommodation, accessible toilets, mobility maps and attractions. Another source of reliable information is the **National Information Communication and Awareness Network** (Nican; ☎ 02-6241 1220, TTY 1800 806 769; www.nican.com.au), an Australia-wide database and directory providing information on access issues, accessible accommodation, sporting and recreational activities, transport and specialist tour operators (you have to give personal details to get to the information).

For urban travel, check out the *Hobart CBD Mobility Map* from the visitor information centre. If you're planning to get out and about, the **Parks & Wildlife Service** (PWS; ☎ 1300 135 513; www.parks.tas.gov.au) publishes a useful brochure, *Parks for all People* (PDF online), which outlines access for mobility-impaired visitors to Tasmania's national parks and reserves; also

see their pamphlet *National Parks, Forests & Waterways Tasmania Visitors' Guide*.

VISAS

All visitors to Australia need a visa (New Zealand nationals are exempt but receive a 'special category' visa on arrival). Visa application forms are available from Australian diplomatic missions overseas, travel agents or the website of the **Department of Immigration and Citizenship** (☎ 13 18 81; www.immi.gov.au). On average, applications are processed within seven to 10 days, though some can be processed in two days. There are several types of visa.

Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) (subclass 976)

This is designed for people who are outside Australia and want to visit for holidays, tourism, recreation or informal studies, for up to three months. It's free but a service charge applies (\$20), and it is available to passport holders of 33 countries, including the UK, the USA and Canada, most European countries, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and Korea. ETA applications are possible online at www.eta.immi.gov.au.

Tourist Visas (subclass 676)

This visa is for people who want to visit Australia for a holiday, to see family and/or friends, or to study for up to three months, especially if they would like to extend this stay. If you are from a country not covered by the ETA, you'll also need to apply for this visa. Standard visas (which cost \$75) allow one (in some cases multiple) entry, stays of up to three months, and are valid for use within 12 months of issue. A long-stay tourist visa (also \$75) can allow a visit of up to a year in certain circumstances.

Visa Extensions

Visitors are allowed a maximum stay of 12 months, including extensions. Visa extensions are made through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and it's best to apply at least two or three weeks before your visa expires. The application fee is \$215. It's nonrefundable, even if your application is rejected.

Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Visas (subclass 410)

You can supplement your holiday through short-term employment for up to 12 months

if you are single, aged between 18 and 30, and from Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan or the UK. You can apply online (www.immi.gov.au/visitors/working-holiday) for an application fee of \$190. If you work in regional areas in Australia, you may be able to extend your visa for longer.

You can apply for this visa up to a year in advance, which is worthwhile as there's a limit on the number issued each year. Be sure to read about further conditions (which include having a return air ticket or sufficient funds for a return or onward fare).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Tasmania is generally a safe place for women travellers, although the usual sensible precautions apply. It's best to avoid walking alone late at night in major towns. The same applies to rural towns, where there are often a lot of unlit, semideserted streets between you and your temporary home. The new antismoking laws in Tassie have forced party-goers to light up outside pubs and restaurants in the evenings, and that can mean there's more action and shenanigans on the street. When the pubs close and there are drunks roaming around, it's probably not a great time to be out on your own.

Lone women should also be wary of staying in basic pub accommodation unless it looks safe and well managed. Stereotypically, the further you get from 'civilisation' (the bigger cities), the less enlightened your average Aussie male is probably going to be about women's issues. Having said that, many women travellers say that they have met the friendliest, most down-to-earth blokes in small-town pubs.

Lone female hitchhikers are tempting fate – hitching with a male companion is safer (and increasingly travellers are not hitching at all).

WORK

Casual work can usually be found in the high season (summer) at the major tourist centres and most jobs are in tourism, hospitality, labouring, gardening or farming. Seasonal fruit-picking is another prime possibility, though be warned that it's a tough way to earn a few dollars and pay is proportional to the quan-

tity and quality of fruits picked (read: hard work!). In Tasmania the main harvest times are December to April, and the main areas are the Huon and Tamar Valleys. Grape-picking jobs are sometimes available in late autumn and early winter, as a number of wineries still hand-pick their crops. The best source for information on local work is on the website of **Australian Job Search** (www.jobsearch.gov.au). See also the information about the WHM visa, above.

Volunteer Work

Volunteering is an excellent way to meet people and visit some interesting areas of the country, with a number of worthy projects in Tasmania. The not-for-profit **Conservation Volunteers Australia** (☎ 1800 032 501, 03-5330 2600; www.conservationvolunteers.com.au) has offices in Hobart and Launceston and runs a variety of practical conservation projects (and information sessions) throughout the year. It organises volunteers (including overseas visitors) to get into the bush and get their hands

dirty: tree planting, walking-track construction and flora and fauna surveys are just a few examples. Most projects are either for a weekend or a week and all food, transport and accommodation is supplied in return for a small contribution to help cover the costs (about \$30 per day).

Greening Australia (www.greeningaustralia.org.au) actively encourages volunteers to get involved with environmental projects. It has offices in Hobart and Burnie.

Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF; ☎ 03-5155 0218; www.wwoof.com.au) is a well-established program, with a number of host farms and businesses in Tasmania. The idea is that WWOOFers do a few hours' work each day on a farm or cottage business in return for bed and board, often in a family home. Some places have a minimum stay of a couple of days but many will take you for just a night. See the website: Tassie jobs at the time of writing included gardening, landscaping and blueberry-picking.

Transport

CONTENTS

Getting There & Away	332
Entering the Country	332
International Air Travel	332
Domestic Air Travel	335
Sea	336
Getting Around	337
Air	337
Bicycle	337
Boat	338
Bus	338
Car & Motorcycle	339
Hitching	342
Local Transport	343
Train	343

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Tasmania is the land beneath 'the land down under'. It's a long way from just about everywhere except Antarctica, and getting here usually means a long-haul flight.

There are only a few direct international flights available to or from Hobart and Launceston, and these are from within the Australasian region (Asian capitals and New Zealand). Overseas visitors to the island state will usually need to fly to one of Australia's mainland cities and connect to a Tassie-bound domestic flight. Melbourne and Sydney airports have the most frequent direct air links to Hobart and Launceston.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at lonelyplanet.com/travelservices.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Disembarking from your plane in Australia is generally easy enough, with only the usual customs declarations and the fight to be first to the luggage carousel to endure. Your flight number will be displayed on the screen above the carousel.

With increased security in mainland Australian airports, both in domestic and international terminals, Tasmania's customs procedures are generally less time-consuming. See p321 for more information on customs and quarantine.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Passport

There are no restrictions when it comes to citizens of foreign countries entering Australia. If you have a visa (see p330), you should be fine.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

There are many competing airlines and a wide variety of airfares if you're flying in from Asia, Europe or North America, but unless you book early, you'll still probably pay a lot for a flight. If you plan to fly during a particularly popular period (around Christmas is a notoriously difficult time to get into Sydney or Melbourne) or on a particularly popular route (such as Hong Kong, Bangkok or Singapore to Sydney or Melbourne), ensure that you make your arrangements well in advance.

Airlines

The east coast of Australia is the most common gateway for international travellers. Airlines that visit Australia follow (note that all phone numbers mentioned here are for dialling from within Australia):

- Air Canada** (airline code AC; ☎ 1300 655 757; www.aircanada.ca) Flies to most Australian capitals, including Hobart.
- Air New Zealand** (airline code NZ; ☎ 13 24 76; www.airnz.com.au) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Cairns, Canberra, the Gold Coast, Adelaide, Darwin, Hobart and Launceston.
- British Airways** (airline code BA; ☎ 1300 767 177; www.britishairways.com.au) Flies to Sydney.
- Cathay Pacific** (airline code CX; ☎ 13 17 47; www.cathaypacific.com) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Cairns, Canberra, the Gold Coast, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Darwin, Hobart and Launceston.

- Emirates** (airline code EK; ☎ 1300 303 777; www.emirates.com) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.
- Garuda Indonesia** (airline code GA; ☎ 08 041 807 807; www.garuda-indonesia.com) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin and Perth.
- Japan Airlines** (airline code JL; ☎ 1300 525 287; www.jal.com) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns.
- KLM** (airline code KL; ☎ 02-9223 9835; www.klm.com) Flies to Melbourne and Sydney.
- Malaysia Airlines** (airline code MH; ☎ 603 7843 3000; www.malaysiaairlines.com.au) Flies to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.
- Royal Brunei Airlines** (airline code BI; ☎ 1300 721 271; www.bruneiair.com) Flies to Brisbane, Sydney, Perth and Darwin.
- Singapore Airlines** (airline code SQ; ☎ 13 10 11; www.singaporeair.com.au) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.
- Thai Airways International** (airline code TG; ☎ 1300 651 960; www.thaiairways.com.au) Flies to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.
- United Airlines** (airline code UA; ☎ 13 17 77; www.unitedairlines.com.au) Flies to Melbourne and Sydney.

Tickets

Be sure you research the options carefully to make sure you get the best deal, online or otherwise. Round-the-world tickets can be a good option for getting to Australia.

Automated online ticket sales work well if you're doing a simple one-way or return trip on specified dates, but they're no substitute for a travel agent with the low-down on special deals, strategies for avoiding stopovers and other useful advice.

Paying by credit card offers some protection if you unwittingly end up dealing with a rogue fly-by-night agency in your search for the cheapest fare, as most card issuers provide refunds if you can prove you didn't get what you paid for. Alternatively, buy a ticket from a bonded agent, such as one covered by the **Air Travel Organiser's Licence** (ATOL; www.atol.org.uk) scheme in the UK. If you have doubts about the service provider, at the very least call the airline and confirm that your booking has been made. Most airlines will have an office in the country you're calling from; check their websites (usually to be found under 'Contact Us' or 'Customer Support').

For online bookings, start with the following websites:

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.com) Very informative site with specials, airline information and flight searches from the USA and other regions.

Cheapest Flights (www.cheapestflights.co.uk) Cheap worldwide flights from the UK; get in early for the bargains.

Expedia (www.expedia.msn.com) Microsoft's travel site; mainly US-related.

Flight Centre International (www.flightcentre.com) Respected operator handling direct flights, with sites for Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the USA and Canada.

Roundtheworldflights.com (www.roundtheworldflights.com) This excellent site allows you to build your own trips from the UK with up to six stops (it's a Global Village site).

STA (www.statravel.com) Prominent in international student travel but you don't have to be a student; site linked to worldwide STA sites.

Tiss.com (www.tiss.com) Truly international site for flight-only tickets; cheap fares and an easy-to-search database.

Travel Online (www.travelonline.co.nz) Good place to check worldwide flights from New Zealand.

Travel.com.au (www.travel.com.au) Good Australian site; look up fares and flights out of the country.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) US site that allows you to search fares (in US\$) to/from practically anywhere.

Asia

Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong are usually the best places to shop around for discount tickets, however, flights between Hong Kong and Australia are notoriously heavily booked. Flights to/from Bangkok and Singapore are often part of the longer Europe-to-Australia route so they are also sometimes full. Plan your preferred itinerary well in advance.

Typical one-way fares to Sydney are A\$500 leaving from Singapore, A\$400 from Penang or Kuala Lumpur, and about A\$650 from Bangkok. From Tokyo, fares start at A\$650.

There are several good local agents in Asia:

STA Travel Japan (☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp)

STA Travel Singapore (☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg)

STA Travel Thailand (☎ 662-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th)

Canada

The air routes from Canada are similar to those from mainland USA, with most Toronto and Vancouver flights stopping in one US city, such as Los Angeles or Honolulu, before heading on to Australia. Air Canada flies from Vancouver to Sydney and from Toronto to Melbourne (both via Honolulu).

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow jetsetters to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: lonelyplanet.com.

Canadian discount air ticket sellers' (consolidators') airfares tend to be about 10% higher than those sold in the USA. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 1 866 246 9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency and has offices in all major cities.

Fares out of Vancouver to Sydney or Melbourne cost from C\$1300/1900 in the low/high season via the US west coast. From Toronto, fares go from around C\$1500/2300.

Continental Europe

From the major destinations in Europe, most flights travel via one of the major Asian cities such as Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong or Kuala Lumpur. Some flights are also routed through London before arriving in Australia. **eDreams** (www.edreams.com) is a fine website on which to compare multiple airfares from European capitals to Australia. In Germany, good travel agencies include the Berlin branch of **STA Travel** (☎ 069-743 032 92; www.statravel.de). Fares start at around €900/1000 in the low/high season. Other agencies:

Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 08 25 00 07 47; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr) Fares from Paris in the low/high season cost from €550/800. Also has branches outside of Paris.

Holland International (www.hollandinternational.nl) Links to multiple travel sites. From Amsterdam, return fares start at around €650.

New Zealand

Air New Zealand and Qantas operate a network of flights linking Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch with most major Australian gateway cities, from where you can fly to Tasmania. Fares from New Zealand to Sydney/Melbourne cost around NZ\$180/750 one-way/return, although prices can greatly vary depending on the time of year.

Trans-Tasman booking agents include:

Flight Centre (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) Has a large central office in Auckland and branches throughout the country.

STA Travel (☎ 0800 474 400; www.statravel.co.nz) Has offices in various cities.

UK & Ireland

There are two routes from the UK: the western route via the USA and Pacific, and the usually cheaper and more frequent eastern route via the Middle East and Asia. Some of the best deals around are with Emirates, Gulf Air, Malaysia Airlines and Thai Airways International. British Airways, Singapore Airlines and Qantas generally have higher fares but may offer a more direct route.

A popular agent in the UK is the ubiquitous **STA Travel** (☎ 0871 2300 040; www.statravel.co.uk).

Typical direct fares from London to Sydney are UK£650/900 one-way/return during the

low season (March to June). In September and mid-December fares go up by as much as 30%, while the rest of the year they're somewhere in-between.

From Australia you can expect to pay around A\$900/1800 one-way/return in the low season to London and other European capitals (with stops in Asia on the way) and A\$1100/2050 in the high season.

USA

Airlines directly connecting Australia across the Pacific with Los Angeles or San Francisco include Qantas, Air New Zealand and United Airlines. There are also numerous airlines offering flights via Asia, with stopover possibilities including Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Singapore, and via the Pacific, with stopover possibilities such as Nadi (Fiji), Rarotonga (Cook Islands), Tahiti (French Polynesia) and Auckland (NZ). In most cases, you'll need to purchase an additional fare to Hobart.

As in Canada, discount travel agents in the USA are known as consolidators. San Francisco is the ticket consolidator capital of America, although some good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities.

STA Travel (☎ 800 781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices around the country, and can assist with tickets.

Student Universe (www.studentuniverse.com) specialises in cheap tickets for college students and faculty.

Typically you can purchase a return ticket to Melbourne or Sydney from the west coast for US\$700/1700 in the low/high season, or from the east coast for US\$950/1900. Note that taxes and fees will be extra (up to US\$400).

Return low-/high-season fares from Australia to the US west coast cost around A\$1640/1850, and to New York A\$1500/1950.

DOMESTIC AIR TRAVEL

There are major airports located at Hobart and Launceston, as well as smaller operations at Burnie/Wynyard and Devonport. (Burnie/Wynyard airport is officially known as Burnie airport but is actually located 20km west of Burnie near the town of Wynyard. Due to the fact that some Tasmanians call the airport 'Burnie' and others call it 'Wynyard', we refer to it as 'Burnie/Wynyard' throughout this book).

Flights are getting ever cheaper and it's straightforward to find a one-way flight for under A\$100 from most Australian gateway cities. Airlines with services between Tasmania and the Australian mainland:

Jetstar (☎ 13 15 38; www.jetstar.com.au) Qantas' low-cost airline. Direct flights from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide to Hobart; also from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane to Launceston.

Qantas (☎ 13 13 13; www.qantas.com.au) Direct flights from Sydney and Melbourne to Hobart, and from Melbourne to Launceston. QantasLink (the regional subsidiary) offers flights from Melbourne to Burnie and Devonport.

Regional Express (REX; ☎ 13 17 13; www.regional-express.com.au) Flies from Melbourne to Burnie/Wynyard and King Island.

Tiger Airways (☎ 03-9335 3033; www.tigerairways.com.au) Flies from Melbourne to Hobart and Launceston.

Virgin Blue (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au) Direct flights from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide to Hobart, and from Melbourne and Sydney to Launceston.

Qantas and Virgin Blue have connecting flights from most other mainland capitals.

PACKAGE DEALS

These include transport to Tasmania (either by air or sea), car rental and accommodation – and can often work out considerably cheaper than purchasing each component separately. As you would expect, the biggest discounts apply in the quieter periods of autumn, winter and spring, whereas in summer the deals rise in price. Most package deals have conditions attached to them, of which the most common is twin share (two people), and sometimes an itinerary is fixed at booking.

Contact **Tourism Tasmania** (p328), **Qantas Holidays** (☎ 13 14 15; www.qantas.com.au) or **TasVacations** (☎ 1800 030 160; www.tasvacations.com) for ideas.

Package deals are a particularly good idea if you're visiting King or Flinders Islands. See p309 and p314 for details.

DEPARTURE TAX

There is a \$38 departure tax when leaving Australia. This is included in the price of airline tickets.

See p309 and p314 for information on airlines servicing King and Flinders Islands respectively.

Fares

Air fares to Tasmania are constantly changing and you can get some good deals, especially if you book well in advance or if you're planning a wintertime trip. Few people pay full fare on domestic travel, as the airlines offer a wide range of discounts that come and go. There are also regular special fares, so keep your eyes open and check the airlines' websites. Regular one-way and return domestic fares are similar on Qantas and Virgin Blue, while Tiger Airways and Jetstar offer some very good bargains, usually (but not always) cheaper than the two major airlines. Lowest one-way prices (at the time of writing) from Melbourne to Tasmania are in the \$40 to \$150 range; Sydney to Tassie costs \$90 to \$160, from Brisbane costs from \$150 to \$200, and from Adelaide costs from \$130 to \$155, although it is likely you'll pay towards the middle of these ranges.

Advance-purchase deals provide the cheapest airfares. Some advance-purchase fares offer up to 33% discount off one-way fares and up to 50% off return fares. You have to book one to four weeks ahead, and you often have to stay for at least one Saturday night. There are restrictions on changing flights and you can lose up to 100% of the ticket price if you cancel, although you can buy health-related cancellation insurance.

There are also special deals available only to foreign visitors (in possession of an outbound ticket). If booked in Australia these fares offer a 40% discount off a full-fare economy ticket. They can also be booked from overseas (which usually works out a bit cheaper).

SEA**Cruise Ship**

Just about the only way to see the spectacular diversity of wildlife on remote, sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island, proclaimed Tasmania's second World Heritage area in 1997, up close is to take one of the sub-Antarctic islands cruises

scheduled by New Zealand-based **Heritage Expeditions** (☎ 0800 262 8873; www.heritage-expeditions.com). At the time of writing the company offered a couple of wonderful options in the austral summer, such as the Footsteps of Mawson tour, a 26-day trip to Antarctica taking in various sub-Antarctic islands and incorporating two days on Macquarie Island (1500km from Tasmania). Prices per person for the this cruise range from around US\$10,882 for triple share (shared facilities) to US\$15,345 for a suite, plus US\$400 for landing fees. Check the comprehensive website for more information (download brochures on all expeditions).

Ferry

There are two high-speed *Spirit of Tasmania* ferries operated by **TT-Line** (☎ 1800 634 906; www.spiritoftasmania.com.au) that ply Bass Strait nightly in each direction between Melbourne and Devonport on northern Tasmania's coast. The crossing takes between nine and 11 hours (departs at 9pm, both arriving at their destinations at approximately 7am the next morning). The Devonport terminal is on The Esplanade in East Devonport; the Melbourne terminal is at Station Pier in Port Melbourne. Each ferry can accommodate 1400 passengers and around 650 vehicles and has restaurants, bars and games facilities. The public areas of the ships have been designed to cater for wheelchair access, as have a handful of cabins.

Fares depend on whether you're travelling in the peak season (mid-December to late January), shoulder season (late January to early May, and September to mid-December) or off-peak season (May to the end of August), and there's a range of seating and cabin options. 'Ocean view recliner' seats are the cheapest and resemble airline seats. Cabins are available in twin or four-berth configurations, with or without porthole windows, or you can opt for a 'deluxe' cabin (with a queen-size bed and complimentary bottle of sparkling wine). All cabins have a private bathroom. Child,

QUARANTINE

There are stringent rules in place to protect the disease-free status of the agriculture of this Tassie, and plants, fruit and vegetables cannot be brought in. Tourists must discard all items prior to their arrival (even if they're only travelling from mainland Australia).

WARNING TO WEAK STOMACHS!

Bass Strait is known as one of the roughest shipping channels in the world, so landlubbers prone to seasickness should prepare themselves (just in case).

student, pensioner and senior discounts apply to all accommodation except for deluxe cabins. Prices do not include meals, which can be purchased on board from an à la carte restaurant or cafeteria.

One-way prices (per adult) are as follows. Booking online saves a further A\$5 each way. Fares listed here (except for deluxe cabins) are the less flexible, nonrefundable 'ship saver' fares (conditions are similar to discount airlines):

Fare	Peak	Shoulder	Off-peak
Ocean-view recliner seat	\$145	\$123	\$117
Inside 4-berth cabin	\$185	\$170	\$134
Inside twin cabin	\$221	\$189	\$148
Deluxe cabin	\$418	\$354	\$326
Daytime sailings (seats only)	\$168	\$120	\$114
Standard vehicles	\$61	\$61	\$61
Campervans up to 5m length	\$103	\$103	\$103
Motorcycles	\$50	\$50	\$50
Bicycles	\$8	\$8	\$8

GETTING AROUND

Driving around Tasmania is the easiest, most flexible way to see the state. If you do drive, don't make the mistake of drawing up exhaustive itineraries with carefully calculated driving times between each destination. Though this is sometimes necessary to catch a particular tour on a particular day or to check in at a prebooked B&B, it runs contrary to the real idea behind driving around Tasmania: that you can stop for a spontaneous photo or a leisurely browse, or divert down a side-road to explore the unfamiliar whenever you feel like it. Too many people make the mistake of thinking they can see all of Tasmania's top attractions in one week, madly dashing from the west coast to the east (via Cradle Mountain, Hobart and Port Arthur) – they usually end up going home in desperate need of a holiday.

While public transport is adequate between larger towns and popular tourist destinations,

visiting remote sights might prove frustrating due to irregular or, in some cases, nonexistent services. There are, however, plenty of car-rental companies offering decent rates for early-model vehicles, an option you should seriously consider when planning your itinerary, particularly if your time is limited and the places you want to visit are far-flung.

AIR

As distances within Tasmania are far from huge, air travel within the state is not very common. Of more use to travellers are the air services for bushwalkers in the southwest, and links between major towns and King and Flinders Islands.

There are a few small regional airlines within the state:

Airlines of Tasmania (☎ 1800 144 460, 6248 5490; www.airtasmania.com.au) Flies daily between Launceston and Flinders Island (adult one-way/return \$145/340). Also flies to Cape Barren Island from Launceston (\$240 return).

Par Avion (☎ 6248 5390; www.paravion.com.au) Flies from Hobart to Malaleuca in the southwest wilderness (adult one-way \$160). Good for scenic flights and bushwalker pick-ups/drop-offs; also offers a southwest off-season special (\$180, May to October).

Tasair (☎ 1800 062 900, 6248 5088; www.tasair.com.au) Flies daily to King Island from Devonport and Burnie/Wynyard (adult one-way \$198, student discounts apply). Flies weekdays between Burnie/Wynyard and Hobart (one-way \$198). Also offers charters and scenic flights, plus a bushwalkers' service to Cox Bight and Malaleuca (one-way \$176).

BICYCLE

Cycling Tasmania is one of the best ways to get close to nature (and, it has to be said, to log trucks, rain and roadkill). If you're prepared for steep climbs and strong headwinds in certain sections, you should enjoy the experience immensely.

It's worth bringing your own bike, especially if you're coming via ferry as transport on one of the *Spirit of Tasmania* ferries costs \$8 each way any time of year. If you wish to fly in, check with the airline for costs and the degree of dismantling and packing required. Also consider buying a bike in Hobart or Launceston and reselling it at the end.

Bike rental is available in the larger towns, and there are also a number of operators offering multiday cycling tours or experiences such

as mountain-biking down Mt Wellington in Hobart. See p59 for more information.

While the same road rules that apply to cars also apply to bicycles, riders should also follow another rule – if in doubt, give way or get out of the way. When cycling on the state's many narrow, winding roads, always keep your eyes and ears open for traffic. Also watch out for wooden bridges with gaps between the slats that can trap bicycle wheels, and try not to cycle at night. Note that bicycle helmets are compulsory in Tasmania (and all other states and territories of Australia), as are white front lights and red rear lights if you are riding in the dark.

Full notes and lots of practical advice for cycling around the state can be found at www.biketast.org.au/giro.php.

BOAT

A car ferry runs at least eight times a day from Kettering to Bruny Island in Tasmania's southeast (\$30 one way). To effectively explore this rather long (and beautiful) island, you'll need your own car or bicycle. See p141 for details.

At the time of writing there was a twice-daily service from Triabunna on the east coast to Maria Island, which is a national park, carrying only passengers and bicycles as vehicles aren't allowed on the island. The services may be limited during winter. See p171 for details.

There is also a small weekly passenger and car ferry from Bridport in Tasmania's north-east to Flinders Island (the ferry continues on to Port Welshpool in Victoria on demand). See p314 for more information.

BUS

Tasmania has a reasonable bus network connecting major towns and centres, but weekend services are infrequent, which can be inconvenient for travellers with limited time. There are more buses in summer than in winter, but smaller towns are still not serviced terribly frequently.

The main regional bus lines are **Redline Coaches** (☎ 1300 360 000, 6336 1446; www.redlinecoaches.com.au) and **Tassielink** (☎ 1300 300 520, 6230 8900; www.tassielink.com.au). They cover most of the state between them.

Buses run along most major highways year-round. Redline services the Midland Hwy between Hobart and Launceston,

the north coast between Launceston and Smithton, north from Launceston to George Town, and to the east coast. Tassielink runs from both Hobart and Launceston to the state's west (Cradle Mountain, Strahan, Queenstown, Lake St Clair) and to the east coast (St Helens, Bicheno, Swansea), from Hobart to Port Arthur, and south from Hobart down the Huon Valley. It also runs the 'Main Road Express', an express services connecting Bass Strait ferry arrivals/departures in Devonport to Launceston, Hobart and Burnie.

Over summer, Tassielink buses also run to popular bushwalking destinations. Special fares that enable you to be dropped off at the start of a walk and picked up at the end are offered. Buses take the link road from Devonport past Cradle Mountain to the Lyell Hwy, and services also run from Hobart past Mt Field and Maydena to Scotts Peak, and from Hobart past Dover to Cockle Creek in the south. See the website (click on 'Walking Track Links') or these destinations in the relevant chapters for more information.

Additionally, **Hobart Coaches** (☎ 13 22 01; www.hobartcoaches.com.au) runs regular services south from the capital as far as Woodbridge and Cygnet, and north to Richmond and New Norfolk. See the relevant chapters for details of these and other regional services.

There are smaller transport operators offering useful bus services on important tourist routes (eg between Bicheno and Coles Bay, or within the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair region); details of these are given in the relevant sections of this book.

Note that all bus fares and conditions quoted throughout this book are subject to change and should be used as a guide only.

Bus Passes

TASSIELINK

Tassielink offers an Explorer Pass valid on all scheduled services for unlimited kilometres. The pass can be bought from mainland Tasmanian travel centres, YHA and STA Travel offices, most other travel agents or directly from Tassielink. If you intend to buy an Explorer Pass, ask for Tassielink's timetables in advance or check the company's website and plan your itinerary carefully before making your purchase – this is the best way to ensure you'll be able to get where you want to go within the life of the pass.

Explorer Pass	Valid for	Cost
7-day pass	travel in 10 days	\$189
10-day pass	travel in 15 days	\$225
14-day pass	travel in 20 days	\$260
21-day pass	travel in 30 days	\$299

REDLINE COACHES

Redline offers its own form of bus pass, the Tassie Pass, with unlimited travel on its services. As the Redline bus network is not nearly as comprehensive as that of Tassielink, it's especially worth checking Redline's website and timetables to ascertain its worth to you before you purchase.

Tassie Pass	Cost
7-day pass	\$135
10-day pass	\$160
14-day pass	\$185
21-day pass	\$219

Costs

Fares are quite reasonable for bus travel within Tasmania. To give some idea of the fares and travel times, a one-way trip between Devonport and Launceston is around \$20 and takes 1½ hours, Hobart to Launceston is \$31 (2½ hours) and Hobart to Devonport is \$52 (four hours).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travelling by car is the best option in Tasmania, as it gives you the freedom to explore according to your own timetable. You can bring cars from the mainland to Tasmania on the ferry (p336), so renting may only be cheaper for shorter trips. Tasmania has many international, national and local car-rental agencies. There are also bus passes that allow you to travel for unlimited kilometres within a certain period (see opposite).

Motorcycles are another popular way of getting around, and the climate is OK for bikes for a large part of the year. You can bring your own motorbike across on the ferry from the mainland for a small fee, or hire one once you get here.

Automobile Associations

The **Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania** (RACT; ☎ 13 27 22; www.ract.com.au) provides an emergency breakdown service to members and has reciprocal arrangements with services in other Australian states and some from overseas. It also provides tourist literature, excellent maps and detailed guides to accommoda-

tion and camping grounds. The roadside assistance number is ☎ 13 11 11. There are branches in Hobart (corner of Patrick and Murray Sts) and Launceston (corner of York and George Sts).

Bring Your Own Vehicle

If you're departing mainland Australia from Melbourne, it's easy to bring your own vehicle across on the ferry. Before you book a ferry ticket, however, it's worth doing some calculations to determine whether it's the most economical option for your intended trip.

Driving Licence

You can generally use your own home-country's driving licence in Australia, as long as it's in English (if it's not, a certified translation must be carried) and has an identifying photograph. Alternatively, it's a simple matter to arrange an International Driving Permit (IDP), which should be supported by your home licence. Just go to your home country's automobile association and it can issue one on the spot. The permits are valid for 12 months. For more, see the website of the **Australian Automobile Association** (www.aaa.asn.au/touring/idp.html).

Fuel

Fuel (super, diesel and unleaded) is available from service stations sporting the well-known international brand names. In small towns there's often just a pump outside the general store, while the larger towns and cities have conventional service stations and garages. Most are open from 8am to 6pm weekdays, but fewer are open on weekends, and fewer still are open late at night or 24 hours, something to keep in mind if you intend travelling long distances at night.

Fuel prices vary from place to place and from price war to price war, but basically fuel is heavily taxed and continues to hike up, much to the shock of Australian motorists. With petrol prices erratic but rising at the time of writing, the only reasonably steadfast fact is that once you get out into the small rural towns, unleaded petrol prices can rise about 10c a litre compared to larger cities and towns.

Insurance

In Australia, third-party personal injury insurance is always included in the vehicle registration cost. This ensures that every

registered vehicle carries at least minimum insurance. It's wise to extend that minimum to at least third-party property insurance as well – minor collisions with other vehicles can be amazingly expensive.

When it comes to hiring cars from a hire company, know exactly what your liability is in the event of an accident. Rather than risk paying out thousands of dollars if you do have an accident, you can take out your own comprehensive insurance on the car, or (the usual option) pay an additional daily amount to the rental company for an 'insurance excess reduction' policy. This brings the amount of excess you must pay in the event of an accident down from between \$2000 and \$5000 to a few hundred dollars.

Be aware that if you're travelling on dirt roads you will not be covered by insurance unless you have a 4WD – in other words, if you have an accident you'll be liable for all the costs involved. Also, most companies' insurance won't cover the cost of damage to glass (including the windscreen) or tyres. Always read the fine print.

Purchase

If you're planning a stay of several months that involves lots of driving, buying a secondhand car will be much cheaper than renting. But remember that reliability is all-important.

You'll probably get any car cheaper by buying privately through a local newspaper rather than through a car dealer. Buying through a dealer does have the advantage of some sort of guarantee, but this is not much use if you're buying a car in Sydney for a trip to Tasmania.

When you come to buy or sell a car, there are usually some local regulations to be complied with. You can get advice on how to make buying a car simpler and safer from www.justice.tas.gov.au/fair_trading/motor_vehicles. To avoid buying a lemon, you might consider forking out some extra money for a vehicle appraisal before purchase – the RACT offers this kind of inspection for a fee.

Rental

Tasmania has many international, national and local car-rental agencies; www.travelways.com.au lists many of the rental options.

Before you decide on a company, ask about any kilometre limitations and find out what the insurance covers. Ensure there are no hid-

den seasonal adjustments. However, it is quite normal for smaller rental companies to ask for a bond of \$300 or more. Also remember that most companies do not cover accidents that occur on unsealed roads, and hike up the excess in the case of damage or an accident on such a road – which is a considerable disadvantage in a state where so many of the best destinations can only be reached via unsealed roads and where roadkill is so common.

Larger international firms have booking desks at airports and offices in major towns. They have standard rates from about \$40 to \$60 for high-season, multiday hire of a small car. By booking in advance and choosing smaller cars, rates can be lower still. Big-name companies include the following:

AutoRent-Hertz (☎ 1800 030 222, 6237 1111; www.autorent.com.au)

Avis (☎ 13 63 33, 6234 4222; www.avis.com.au)

Budget (☎ 13 27 27; www.budget.com.au)

Europcar (☎ 1800 030 118; www.europcar.com.au)

Thrifty (☎ 1800 030 730; www.tasvacations.com.au)

You can sometimes save money by choosing the smaller operators, but this must be weighed against the rental conditions and general condition of the vehicle – make sure you're familiar and confident with both before you sign. Small local firms rent older cars for as little as \$35 a day, depending on the season and how long you hire the vehicle for. Prices then increase according to the model and age of the cars. The smaller companies don't normally have desks at arrival points but can usually arrange for your car to be picked up at airports and the ferry terminal in Devonport. Operators include the following:

Lo-Cost Auto Rent (www.locostautorent.com); Hobart (☎ 6231 0550); Launceston (☎ 6334 6202); Devonport (☎ 6427 0796)

Rent-a-Bug (☎ 6231 0300; www.rentabug.com.au) Office in Hobart, offering cheap Volkswagen Beetles, plus older-model vehicles and campervans.

Selective Car Rentals (☎ 6234 3311; www.selectivecarrentals.com.au) Office in Hobart.

CAMPERVANS

Tasmanian Travelways has a listing of campervan rental companies. Hiring three-berth campervans costs around \$700 per week from May to mid-September, rising in stages to a hefty \$1540 in the peak period from Christmas to mid-January. Other companies offer campervan rental:

CAMPERVANNING IN TASMANIA

Check your rear-view mirror on any far-flung Tasmanian road and you'll likely see a shiny white campervan packed with liberated travellers, surfboards and portable BBQs cruising along behind you. Campervanning around Tassie has really taken off – it's flexible and affordable, and you can leave the trampled tourist trails behind and crank up the AC/DC. Most towns have a campground or caravan park where you can park for around \$20 a night, or seek out a remote beach/mountain/valley and dream in isolation. One warning: some rental companies aren't thrilled about their vehicles traversing unsealed roads (Bruny Island, Friendly Beaches, Mt William National Park etc). To avoid any acrimony, read the fine print and discuss your itinerary with them first.

Autorent-Hertz (☎ 1800 030 500; www.autorent.com.au)

Britz (☎ 1800 331 454; www.britz.com)

Cruisin' Tasmania (☎ 1300 664 485, 6248 4035; www.cruisin-tasmania.com.au).

Maui (☎ 1300 363 800; www.maui-rentals.com)

Tasmanian Campervan Hire (☎ 1800 807 119; www.tascamper.com) Specialises in two-berth vans.

MOTORCYCLES

Tasmanian Motorcycle Hire (☎ 6391 9139; www.tasmotorcyclehire.com.au; 17 Coachmans Rd, Evandale) has a range of touring motorbikes for rent from \$110 per day (cheaper rates for longer rentals and half-day rentals also available); full pricing details are listed on the website. Evandale is south of Launceston, not far from the airport.

YHA CAR & HOSTEL PACKAGES

Available from the office of the **Tasmanian YHA office** (Map p82; ☎ 6234 9617; www.yha.com.au; 9 Argyle St, Hobart; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) is the car rental and accommodation deal, whereby you purchase a Tasmania Adventure Freedom Pass and YHA hostel accommodation package for either seven, 10, 14 or 21 days. Twenty-one nights' dorm-style accommodation and car-hire pass costs \$1042 (based on two persons). While these packages might appear to offer reasonable value, it's important to remember that YHA hostels are not widespread in Tasmania – there are no YHA hos-

tels on the west coast, for example, or south of Hobart, or along the Midland Hwy, or in the popular east-coast towns of Swansea or Bicheno. Our advice is to pay your accommodation as you go and not commit yourself to any one form of accommodation. There may not be a YHA hostel at your destination of choice, but there may well be an independent hostel, cheap pub room or budget cabin you can stay in.

Road Conditions & Hazards

Watch out for wildlife while you're driving around the island – the huge number of carcasses lining main roads is sad testimony to the fact that many drivers don't use enough caution. Many local animals are nocturnal and often cross roads around dusk, so try to avoid driving in rural areas when darkness falls and if it's unavoidable, remember to slow down. And be warned that hitting a wombat not only kills the unfortunate animal, but can also make a mess of your car.

Distances may appear short when looking at a map of Tasmania (especially in relation to distances on the mainland), but roads are often narrow and winding, with many sharp bends and, occasionally, one-lane bridges that aren't clearly signposted. This can make trip durations considerably longer than anticipated. There are also many unsealed roads leading to sites of interest throughout the state – bear this in mind when renting a car, as many insurance policies won't cover you for damage or accidents incurred while driving on such roads.

Cycling is popular on some roads (particularly on the east coast) and when encountering bicycles you should wait until you can pass safely. Log-trucks piled high and coming around sharp corners also demand caution. Finally, in cold weather be wary of 'black ice', an invisible layer of ice over the bitumen, especially on the shaded side of mountain passes. It's wise to drive a little more slowly and allow more time to react to these hazards.

Anyone considering travelling on 4WD tracks should read the free publication *Cruisin' Without Bruisin'*, available at and visitors centres around the state or online from the website of the **Parks & Wildlife Service** (www.parks.tas.gov.au). It details over 20 tracks (graded easy to hard) and explains how to

Health

Dr David Millar

CONTENTS

Before You Go	344
Internet Resources	344
Further Reading	344
In Transit	345
Deep Vein Thrombosis	345
Jet Lag & Motion Sickness	345
In Tasmania	345
Availability & Cost of Health Care	345
Infectious Diseases	346
Travellers' Diarrhoea	346
Environmental Hazards	346

Australia and Tasmania are healthy places in which to travel. Diseases of insanitation such as cholera and typhoid are unheard of. Thanks to isolation and quarantine standards, even some animal diseases such as rabies and foot-and-mouth disease have yet to be recorded.

Few travellers to Australia will experience anything worse than an upset stomach or a bad hangover, and the standard of hospitals and health care is high if you do fall ill.

BEFORE YOU GO

Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the 'Yellow Booklet'), which will list all the vaccinations you've received. This is mandatory for countries that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry (sometimes required in Australia, see right), but it's a good idea to carry a record of all your vaccinations wherever you travel.

Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

Health insurance is essential for all travellers. While health care in Australia is of a high

standard and is not overly expensive by international comparisons, costs can build up and repatriation is extremely expensive.

If your health insurance doesn't cover you for trips abroad, consider getting extra insurance; check lonelyplanet.com for details. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. In Australia, as in many countries, doctors expect payment at the time of consultation. Make sure you get an itemised receipt detailing the service and keep contact details for the health provider. See opposite for details of health care in Australia.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

If you're really worried about health when travelling, there are a few vaccinations you could consider for Australia. The World Health Organization recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox and polio, as well as hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. The travel-planning period is a great time to ensure that all routine vaccination cover is complete. The consequences of these diseases can be severe, and while Australia has high levels of childhood vaccination coverage, outbreaks of these diseases do occur.

REQUIRED VACCINATIONS

Proof of yellow fever vaccination is required only from travellers entering Australia within six days of having stayed overnight or longer in a yellow fever-infected country. For a full list of these countries visit the websites of the **World Health Organization** (www.who.int) or the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (wwwn.cdc.gov).

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice online. The **World Health Organization** (www.who.int) publishes *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually and is available online at no cost. Another website of general interest is **MD Travel Health** (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides travel health recommendations and is updated daily.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

- acetaminophen/paracetamol or aspirin
- adhesive or paper tape
- antibacterial ointment (for cuts and abrasions)
- antibiotics
- anti-diarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- DEET-containing insect repellent for the skin
- iodine tablets or water filter (for water purification)
- oral rehydration salts
- pocket knife
- permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- scissors
- safety pins
- steroid cream or cortisone (for poison ivy and other allergic rashes)
- sun block
- thermometer
- tweezers

FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* contains advice on travel health for younger children. Also try reading *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood (Oxford University Press) and *International Travel Health Guide* by Stuart R Rose, MD (Travel Medicine Inc).

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. Though most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some may break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they could cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of deep vein thrombosis is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually – but not always – on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of deep vein thrombosis on long flights, you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie flex the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones, resulting in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag try drinking plenty of (nonalcoholic) fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, expose yourself to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate and meclizine are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. Their main side effect is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger, which works like a charm for some people.

IN TASMANIA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Australia, including Tasmania, has an excellent health-care system. It's a mixture of privately run medical clinics and hospitals alongside a government-funded system of public hospitals. The Medicare system covers Australian residents for some health-care costs. Visitors from countries with which Australia has a reciprocal health-care agreement are eligible for benefits specified under the Medicare program. Agreements are currently in place with New Zealand, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Malta and Ireland – check the details before departing these countries. In general the agreements provide for any episode of ill-health that requires prompt medical attention. For more, see www.health.gov.au. However, you should carry insurance (see opposite).

There are excellent, specialised, public health facilities for women and children in Australia's major centres.

Pharmaceutical Supplies

Over-the-counter medications are widely available from privately owned chemists throughout Australia. These include painkillers, antihistamines for allergies and skin-care products.

You may find that medications readily available over the counter in some countries are only available in Australia by prescription. These include the oral contraceptive pill, most medications for asthma and all antibiotics. If you take medication on a regular basis, bring an adequate supply and ensure you have details of the generic name as brand names can differ between countries.

Self-Care

In Australia's remote locations, including those in Tasmania, it is possible there'll be a significant delay in emergency services reaching you in the event of serious accident or illness. An increased level of self-reliance and preparation is essential.

Consider taking a wilderness first-aid course, such as those offered at the **Wilderness Medicine Institute** (www.wmi.net.au); take a comprehensive first-aid kit that is appropriate for the activities planned; and ensure that you have adequate means of communication. Tasmania's often-limited mobile phone coverage can mean that additional radio communication is important for remote areas.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Giardiasis This is widespread in waterways. Drinking untreated water from streams and lakes is not recommended. Water filters and boiling or treating water with iodine are effective preventatives. Symptoms consist of intermittent bad smelling diarrhoea, abdominal bloating and wind. Effective treatment is available (tinidazole or metronidazole).

Hepatitis C This is still a growing problem among intravenous drug users. Blood transfusion services fully screen all blood before it is used.

HIV Rates of this disease have stabilised in Australia and levels are similar to other Western countries. Clean needles and syringes are widely available through all chemists.

Meningococcal disease Occurs worldwide and is a risk with prolonged, dormitory-style accommodation. A vaccine exists for meningococcal A, C, Y and W. No vaccine is presently available for the viral type of meningitis.

Ross River fever This virus is widespread in Australia, spread by mosquitoes living in marshy areas. In addition to fever it causes headache, joint and muscular pains and a rash, and resolves after five to seven days.

Sexually transmitted diseases These occur at rates similar to those in most other Western countries. The most common symptoms are pain while passing urine and a discharge. Infection can be present without symptoms so seek medical screening after any unprotected sex with a new partner. You'll find sexual health clinics in all of the major hospitals. Always use a condom with a new sexual partner. Condoms are readily available in chemists and through vending machines in many public places including toilets.

Tick typhus Cases of this illness have been reported throughout Australia, but are predominantly found in Queensland and New South Wales; however Flinders Island spotted fever occurs in Tasmania and Flinders Island in Bass Strait. A week or so after being bitten, a dark area forms around the bite, followed by a rash and possible fever, headache and inflamed lymph nodes. The disease is treatable with antibiotics (doxycycline) so see a doctor if you suspect you have been bitten.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids – preferably an oral rehydration solution containing lots of salt and sugar. A few loose stools don't require treatment but if you start having more than four or five stools a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug) and an anti-diarrhoeal agent (such as loperamide). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention. Also see Water (p348) for more information.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Animal Bites

INSECTS

Various insects can be a source of irritation and, in Australia, may be the source of specific diseases (eg dengue fever, Ross River fever). Protection from mosquitoes, sandflies, ticks and leeches can be achieved by a combination of the following strategies:

- wearing loose-fitting and long-sleeved clothing
- applying a 30%-DEET insect repellent to all exposed skin and repeating every three to four hours
- impregnating clothing with permethrin (an insecticide that kills insects but is safe for humans).

SHARKS

Despite extensive media coverage, the risk of shark attack in Australian waters is no greater

than in other countries with a lot of coastline. Great white sharks are now few in number in the temperate southern waters. Check with surf lifesaving groups about local risks.

SNAKES

Australian snakes have a fearful reputation that is justified in terms of the potency of their venom, but unjustified in terms of the actual risk to travellers and locals. Snakes are usually quite timid in nature and in most instances will move away if disturbed. They only have small fangs, making it easy to prevent bites to the lower limbs (where 80% of bites occur) by wearing protective clothing (such as gaiters) around the ankles when bushwalking. The bite marks are very small and may even go unnoticed.

In all confirmed or suspected bites, preventing the spread of toxic venom can be achieved by applying pressure to the wound and immobilising the area with a splint or sling before seeking medical attention. Firmly wrap an elastic bandage (you can improvise with a T-shirt) around the entire limb, but not so tight as to cut off the circulation. Along with immobilisation, this is a life-saving first-aid measure.

For more on Tasmanian species see p51.

SPIDERS & ANTS

Australia has a number of poisonous spiders. Redback spiders, although rare in Tasmania and rarer still in winter months, are found throughout the country. Bites cause increasing pain at the site followed by profuse sweating and generalised symptoms (muscular weakness, sweating at the site of the bite, nausea). First aid includes application of ice or cold packs to the bite, then transfer to hospital. White-tailed spiders can also give a nasty bite. Clean the wound thoroughly and seek medical assistance.

Jack jumper (or bull) ants are more common in Tasmania than the other Australian states, and their painful sting can cause an allergic reaction, the most severe of which is anaphylaxis, including swelling and difficulty breathing. Travellers who know they are allergic should carry an EpiPen and seek urgent medical attention.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a significant risk, especially during the winter months in southern parts of

Australia – and especially in Tasmania. Strong winds produce a high chill factor that can result in hypothermia even in moderately cool temperatures. Early signs include the inability to perform fine movements (such as doing up buttons), shivering and a bad case of the 'umbles' (fumbles, mumbles, grumbles and stumbles). The key elements of treatment include moving out of the cold, changing out of any wet clothing into dry clothes with wind- and water-proof layers, adding insulation and providing fuel (water and carbohydrate) to allow shivering, which builds the internal temperature. In severe hypothermia, shivering actually stops: this is a medical emergency requiring rapid evacuation in addition to the above measures.

Surf Beaches & Drowning

Australia has exceptional surf. Beaches vary enormously in their underwater conditions: the slope offshore can result in changeable and often powerful surf, rips and undertows. Check with local surf lifesaving organisations and be aware of your own expertise and limitations before entering the water. If a beach is patrolled by surf lifesavers, always swim between the red-and-yellow flags. If you are caught in a rip, don't try to swim against it. Instead, swim laterally along the beach to exit the rip, then head for shore.

Sunburn

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Tasmania's latitude makes it a risky destination, especially if you're spending lots of time outdoors. Monitor your exposure to direct sunlight closely, especially if you are fair or have moles and freckles. UV exposure is greatest between 10am and 4pm so avoid skin exposure during these times. Always use sun protection factor 30+ sunscreen; apply 30 minutes before going into the sun and reapply regularly to minimise damage.

TRAVEL HEALTH WEBSITES

It's usually a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available.

Australia (www.smartraveller.gov.au)

Canada (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

UK (www.fco.gov.uk)

USA (wwwn.cdc.gov/travel)

Water

Tap water in Tasmania is usually safe but there are some small towns (Swansea on the east coast, for example) where it is recommended that you boil tap water before drinking. It's worth asking for advice if you're unsure about the safety of tap water in the areas you're visiting.

Increasing numbers of waterways are being contaminated by bugs that cause diarrhoea, making water purification essential. The simplest way of purifying water is to boil it thoroughly.

Consider purchasing a water filter. It's very important when buying a filter to read the specifications, so that you know exactly what it removes from the water and what it doesn't. Simple filtering will not remove all dangerous organisms, so if you can't boil water it should be treated chemically. Chlorine tablets will kill many pathogens, but not some parasites such as giardia and amoebic cysts. Iodine is more effective in purifying water and is available in tablet form. Follow the directions carefully and remember that too much iodine can be harmful.

Glossary

arvo – afternoon
Aussie Rules – Australian Rules football, a game (vaguely) resembling rugby played by teams of 18

barbie – barbecue
barrack – cheer on team at sporting event, support ('Who do you barrack for?')
battler – struggler, someone who tries hard
beanie – woolly hat
beaut, beauty – great, fantastic
bloke – man
bludger – lazy person
body board – half-sized surfboard
bogan – loutish ruffian; term of social derision
boogie board – see *body board*
booze bus – police van used for random breath testing of drivers for alcohol
bottle shop – liquor shop, off-licence
brekky – breakfast
bush tucker – native foods
bush, the – country, anywhere away from the city
bushwalking – hiking
BYO – bring your own; a type of restaurant licence that allows customers to quaff bottles of wine (and sometimes beer) purchased elsewhere; a 'corkage' charge (say, around \$5 per bottle) is added to the bill for this privilege

cask wine – wine packaged in a plastic bladder surrounded by a cardboard box (a great Australian invention)
catch ya later – goodbye, see you later
chook – chicken
cooee – to be 'within cooee' is to be within close range. A 'cooee' is a call from one person to another.
counter meal – pub meal
crack the shits – to express utmost irritation
crook – ill or substandard
cut lunch – sandwiches (to cut someone's lunch is to steal their girlfriend/boyfriend)

dag – dirty lump of wool at back end of a sheep; also an affectionate or mildly abusive term for a socially inept person
dinky-di – the real deal
dob in – to inform on someone
Dreaming – complex concept that forms the basis of Aboriginal spirituality, incorporating the creation of the world and the spiritual energies operating around us; 'Dreaming' is often the preferred term as it avoids the association with time
dunny – outdoor lavatory

earbash – to talk non-stop
Esky – large insulated box to keep your beer and sausages cold

fair dinkum – honest, genuine
fair go! – give us a break!
flake – shark meat, often the fish in fish and chips
flannie – flannelette shirt; often worn by *bogans*
flat out – very busy or fast
footy – football (in Tasmania, Aussie Rules is the code of choice)

galah – noisy parrot, thus noisy idiot
g'day – good day, traditional Australian greeting
good on ya! – well done!
grog – alcohol

hard yakka – hard work
having a lend – humorous deception
homestead – residence of a *station* owner or manager
hoon – idiot, hooligan

icy pole – frozen lollipop, ice lolly
iffy – dodgy, questionable

kick the bucket – to die
Kiwi – New Zealander
knackered – broken, tired
knock – to criticise, deride

larrikin – hooligan, mischievous youth
little ripper – extremely good thing; see also *ripper*
lollies – sweets, candy
loo – toilet

mainlander – someone from mainland Australia
mainland refugee – a *mainlander* who has relocated to Tasmania
map of Tassie – aside from its literal meaning, this is also a crude term for a woman's pubic hair (think about it – especially the island's shape...)
mate – general term of familiarity, whether you know the person or not
milk bar – small shop selling milk and other basic provisions
mobile phone – cell phone
Mod Oz – modern Australian cuisine influenced by a wide range of foreign cuisines, but with a definite local flavour
moszies – mosquitoes

no-hoper – hopeless case
no worries! – no problems! That's OK!

ocker – uncultivated or boorish Australian
off-sider – assistant, partner, right-hand man
outback – remote part of the *bush*

paddock – fenced area of land, often full of sheep
perv – to gaze with lust
piss – beer
piss up – boozy party
piss weak – no good, gutless
pissed – drunk
pissed off – annoyed
plonk – cheap wine
pokies – poker machines
pom – English person

rapt – delighted, enraptured
ratbag – friendly term of abuse
ratshit – lousy
rip – strong ocean current or undertow
ripper – good; see also *little ripper*
root – to have sexual intercourse
rooted – tired, broken

sanger – sandwich
scrub – *bush*
sealed road – bitumen road
shark biscuit – inexperienced surfer
sheila – woman
she'll be right – no problems, no worries
shonky – unreliable

shoot through – to leave
shout – to buy a round of drinks ('Your shout!')
sickie – day off work ill (or malingering)
smoko – tea break
snag – sausage
sparrow's fart – dawn
squatter – pioneer farmer who occupied land as a tenant of the government
station – large farm
stolen generations – Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families during the government's policy of assimilation
stroppy – bad-tempered
stubby – 375ml bottle of beer
sunbake – sunbathe (well, the sun's hot in Australia!)

taking the piss – see *having a lend*
thongs – flip-flops (definitely *not* a g-string!)
tinnie – aluminium boat or beer can
trucky – truck driver
tucker – food
two-pot screamer – person unable to hold their drink

unsealed road – dirt road
ute – utility; a pick-up truck

wag – to skip school or work
weatherboard – timber cladding on a house
whinge – to complain, moan

yobbo – uncouth, aggressive person
yonks – a long time

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above – 'Do the right thing with our content.'