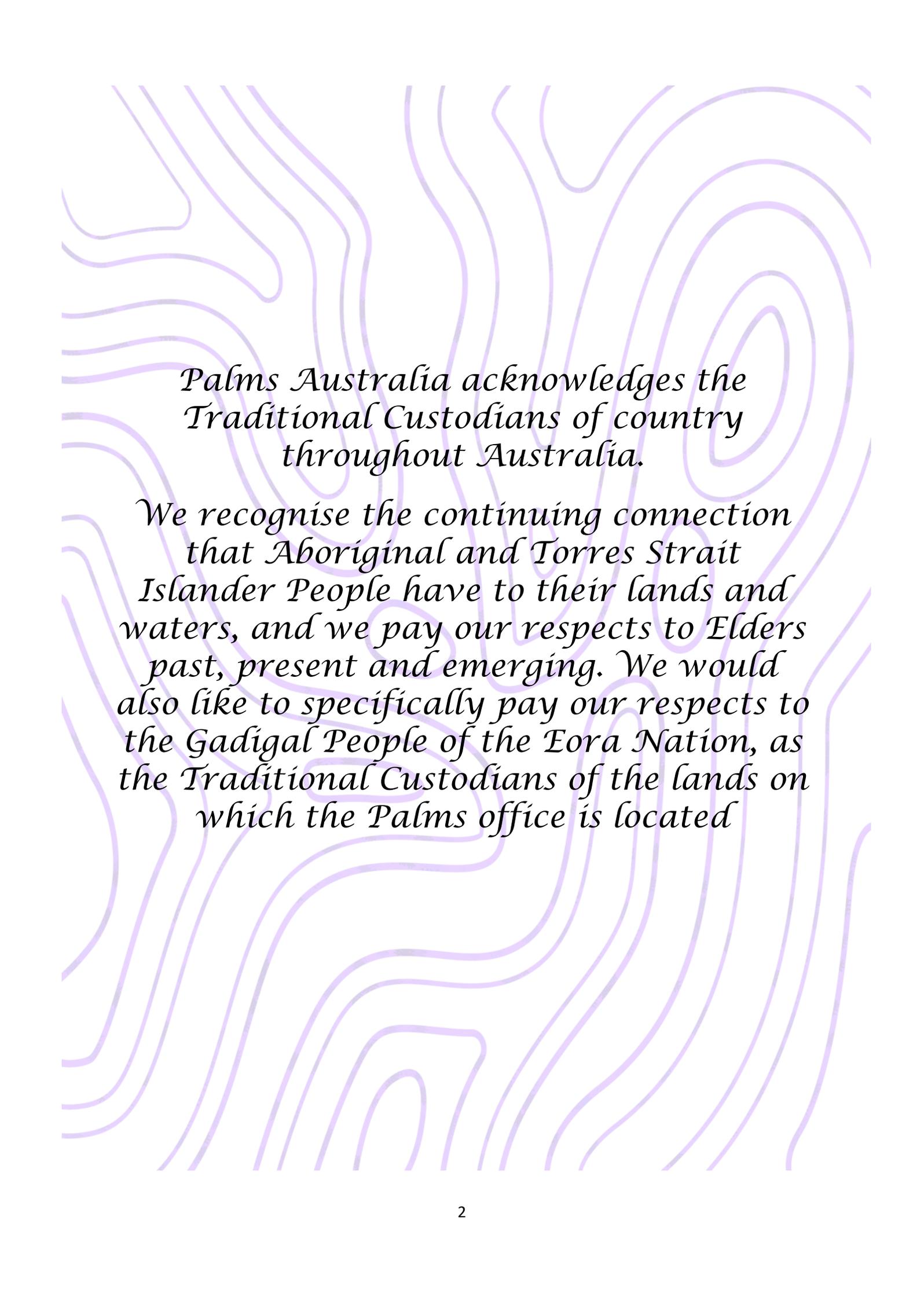




Palms Australia



PLACEMENT INFORMATION

The background of the page is a light purple color with a pattern of darker purple, wavy, concentric lines that resemble topographical contours or stylized waves. The lines are irregular and flow across the page, creating a textured, organic feel.

*Palms Australia acknowledges the
Traditional Custodians of country
throughout Australia.*

*We recognise the continuing connection
that Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander People have to their lands and
waters, and we pay our respects to Elders
past, present and emerging. We would
also like to specifically pay our respects to
the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, as
the Traditional Custodians of the lands on
which the Palms office is located*

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Introduction



Welcome!

This is the third and final part of the Information Booklets, which means that if you're reading this your placement has been confirmed and you are planning toward departure. This booklet is intended to help with some of the more practical aspects of your placement. You should not leave home without reading and acting on all the advice outlined in this booklet.

Palms Australia's Participant Code of Conduct is also outlined in this booklet. It's important that you read, understand and agree to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct and Palms Australia's Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Code of Conduct. Please read them carefully.

Again, I invite you to make notations against any sections where you have queries. Jot down any matters that you feel are specific to your personal circumstances and still haven't been covered. Contact me as soon as possible to discuss any of the contents that are really important to you before leaving home to join the Orientation Course.

I look forward to meeting with you at the Orientation Course.

Christine O'Halloran
Programs & Placement Coordinator
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COVID-19 updates

This guidebook has been updated to include additional advice about flight departures, being on assignment and returning to Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Palms Australia continues to monitor the influence of COVID-19 on program operations, and adapt accordingly. In particular, ongoing changes may relate to:

- Shifts in the global logistical environment, including routes travelling to/from assignment
- Healthcare capacity in assignment locations, including for non-COVID-related medical concerns
- Availability of resources, including medical equipment and common grocery items
- Financial stability of businesses, including our partner organisations
- Pressure on other essential services
- Additional travel requirements such as pre-trip and post-trip testing, quarantine or self-isolation
- The potential for secondary security issues, such as increases in political/social unrest, xenophobia or wider instability exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can find more information about the COVID-19 virus, including infection control and travel advice, at the <https://www.health.gov.au/>
Information about International Travel <https://www.australia.gov.au/international-travel>

Development policy and philosophy

The most important thing you can bring with you on your placement is an understanding of the philosophy surrounding global development. Palms Australia understands development to be:

“An economic, social, cultural, spiritual and ecological process which encourages the empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, communities and organisations to reduce poverty, enjoy and nurture basic human rights and independence, and work towards a future where interdependence in economic and ecological sustainability is achieved.”

You will contribute to the ongoing process of community development through skills and knowledge transfer, capacity building and working collaboratively. The role of Palms Australia in the development process is one based on partnership and interdependence rather than external control and the creation of dependence. Such partnerships foster accountability and solidarity. In this way, our participants and requesting communities contribute to a process of development that is characterised by respect, mutuality, trust and equality.

What makes a successful assignment?

A Palms Australia participant is someone who:

- Has something to share (culture, skills, knowledge) with a host organisation
- Has appropriate skills and expertise they are willing to share with others
- Is open to living and working with other cultures
- Is open to learning from others
- Is patient and flexible
- Is able to give at least 12 months of their time

A Palms Australia assignment is:

- Focused on capacity building. It either delivers on short term outputs (things that could otherwise be contracted in, but that the organisation cannot afford or access) and/or on developing specific capabilities of staff or the organisation.
- Not an existing or ongoing position within an organisation.

Successful participants demonstrate:

- Professionalism, flexibility, adaptability, open attitude, patience, resilience
- Language skills and/or willingness to learn the language
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Initiative and independence
- Integrity

Note: *Those without these attributes often leave their assignments early or are unable to transfer skills and develop relationships with their colleagues. Cross-cultural barriers were cited by almost 100% of host organisations as the single biggest obstacle to successful placements.*

Assignments have a natural cycle

The journey in host organisations includes a first phase of understanding the host organisation, settling in to country and organisational dynamics, and building relationships of trust. A second phase may include re-developing the assignment terms of reference to better reflect new and emerging circumstances. The third phase focuses on implementation.

Note: *Most host organisations report that it takes six months before participants are productive. Host organisations expect and want participants to take their time to learn about the organisation and the community before they refine their assignment.*

Palms Australia concurs with the view of host organisations. Each phase can take much longer, particularly in the regional and remote areas where our assignments are often located.

Before leaving



Visas

Most countries require at least 2 months' notice for the issuing of visas. However some (such as PNG) may take six months. Please ensure that your passport is in order before then.

In some countries, you may enter on a visitors' visa while the host organisation assists you to apply for the special stay visa/work permit while in-country (Timor-Leste, Samoa & African Countries).

Where a visa application is to be made in-country, Palms will provide information to assist with this process.

Visas applications made prior to your departure may take longer than expected to be granted. This may hold up your departure. Be prepared for this. Do not resign from your job until your visa has been granted.

Finances

We suggest that you transfer a certain amount of funds that can be used in your destination in case of emergencies (e.g. Visa/Travel Card).

It is not recommended that you depart without any financial or family backing. You may need to make arrangements to pay accounts in Australia while overseas. You should nominate someone to have Power of Attorney prior to departure.

Insurance cover

As each placement has different insurance requirements, we ask you to source your own personal/health insurance policy to cover you for the duration of your placement. Palms Australia cannot recommend a specific insurance provider, however you can check with Choice's Travel *Insurance Buying Guide* to assist. The *Insurance Council of Australia* also provides a list of general insurers who are members at www.findaninsurer.com.au. Please ensure your insurance includes medical evacuation and COVID-19 cover.

Upon receipt of your insurance policy, we will reimburse you \$700 per year for two-year placements.

Professional indemnity Insurance

Professional indemnity insurance is required for all Palms participants who are acting as a medical or legal professional whilst on assignment. If the host organisation does not provide indemnity insurance then the participant should self-fund /arrange as part of ongoing professional obligation.

Personal security plan

Security conditions can change rapidly in different regions. It is the expectation of Palms Australia that all participants register with the in-country Australian High Commission/Embassy prior to departure, which can be done so on the [Department of Foreign Affairs' \(DFAT\) website](#).

Palms Australia will communicate any relevant DFAT travel advice to participants as they are issued. Prior to placement, we will brief you on any safety issues relating to your position. A personal security plan will be developed in collaboration with the partner organisation soon after arriving and submitted to Palms Australia. A template for your Personal Security Plan can be found on your USB (which you will receive once your placement is confirmed). Although we will discuss safety and security at the Orientation Course, if you have any safety concerns related to your placement while overseas you should contact Palms Australia immediately.

Registration with DFAT

If you have an Australian passport, it is your responsibility and a Palms requirement that you register online with **DFAT Smart Traveller** before you leave. If you are unable to do so, please speak with Palms Program & Placement Coordinator as soon as you arrive in the country of your assignment. Further to registering online, it is also your responsibility to be familiar with the DFAT Smart Traveller travel advisories for the country in which you will be working, as this may impact your safety and security. This information can be found at the Australian Government Smart Traveller website: <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au>.

Code of conduct

The Palms Australia Code of Conduct accords with [Palms Australia's Vision, Mission, Approach and Values](#) and Development Philosophy, and these are consistent with the [Australian Council for International Development \(ACFID\) Code of Conduct](#) (effective 1st January, 2015). We encourage you to familiarise yourself with the code of conduct before you depart.

Palms Australia code of conduct

Under this Code, those undertaking an assignment agree to:

- Work towards the achievement of the Palms Australia Vision and Mission.
- Uphold the values articulated in the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct.
- Abide by the laws, regulations and employment rules of the country of placement and employer.
- Maintain a professional standard of behaviour, in line with the Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct (to be signed separately).
- Avoid involvement in party or sectarian politics, and public comment on political or religious matters.
- Refrain from any wrongdoing or conduct that may bring Palms Australia, its program or the Commonwealth of Australia into disrepute.

- Perform the duties set out in the Position Description in the best interests of the requesting community.
- Provide accurate and reliable reports to Palms Australia or donors when requested.
- Act in a manner which gives due respect to the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people with whom they work consistent with the principles of basic Human Rights (ACFID Code of Conduct).
- Cooperate with Palms Australia to create and develop links with Australian institutions for your own professional support in the field and the ongoing development support of the overseas partner with whom you work.
- Take adequate precautions to ensure personal security including:
 - abiding by the security advice given by Palms Australia;
 - immediately advising Palms Australia of any health, safety or security threat;
 - maintaining a sufficient balance of credit on their mobile phone.
- Avoid all comment to the media during any period of crisis, health or security threat, including during or after an evacuation.

Australian income tax

Palms Australia is unable to provide advice on taxation matters, including at tax-time.

It is your responsibility to ensure that arrangements are in place to take care of your home and financial affairs in Australia during your assignment. This includes clarifying your situation with the Australian Tax Office to ensure all tax rules are complied with.

You should also seek independent professional advice on the taxation requirements applicable to your personal circumstances and your country of assignment before departure, including advice regarding any tax implications of the allowances and other payments you receive during your assignment.

Voting while overseas

The Australian Electoral Commission advises that Australian citizens travelling internationally for periods of three (3) years or less can register as Overseas Electors and vote by post in state and federal elections. Please contact the division where you are enrolled and inform them that you are travelling internationally and for how long. You will then be registered as an Overseas Elector. Failure to do this can result in being fined, being removed from the Australian electoral roll, and having to apply for re-enrolment on return to Australia.

http://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/overseas/index.htm

Private health insurance in Australia

It is your responsibility to investigate whether a suspension of your private health cover might affect your lifetime health cover entitlements. Guidance should also be sought as to whether your private health cover has mandatory waiting periods for reactivation of cover if returning to Australia with an illness or injury. You must negotiate this with your private health fund prior to your departure.

If you have to return to Australia for medical treatment or leave, and have not maintained private health insurance, you will be treated as a public patient under the Medicare system.

Employment

Before you leave, make sure you:

- Submit resignation or Leave of Absence
- Manage superannuation
- Manage union or organisation membership

Property

Property owners need to decide whether to sell or not. Remember that housing costs may rise while you are away. Selling should be a last resort.

Other important considerations are:

- Coverage of rates, mortgage and insurance
- Notification to bank of intentions and negotiation of interest rates
- Allowance for maintenance of property
- Storage of furniture
- Real estate agent to manage rental

Medication

If you are taking any medication, please make sure you have an adequate supply, as medicines in some countries are difficult to procure. Some medication may require you to take a letter from a doctor identifying it and why you need to be carrying it when you travel.

Change or cancellation checklist

- Contact the Australian Government Department of Human Services regarding any allowances or benefits you're receiving <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/topics/change-circumstances-if-you-get-centrelink-payment/30761>
- Advise your bank regarding any credit cards, loans, etc.
- Ensure your will is up to date
- Nominate someone at home as Power of Attorney
- Complete any taxation requirements (seek your accountant's or the ATO's advice)
- Suspend or cancel health insurance
- Suspend or cancel home, contents, personal, car/s
- Update or cancel credit cards
- Update electoral details
- Update or cancel bank accounts
- Suspend or cancel magazine, periodicals, newspaper or streaming service subscriptions
- Suspend or cancel RACV, NRMA or other roadside assist services
- Pay car registration
- Cancel or allocate funds for electricity, gas and other utility rates
- Suspend, cancel or allocate funds for union or professional organisation fees
- Suspend or cancel telephone or internet service provider fees
- Redirect mail

Education for children

Those who bring their children on placement are responsible for arranging their education. The following resources provide further information on distance education.

NSW

- [Sydney Distance Education Primary School](#)
- [Distance Education - NSW Department of Education and Training](#)

VIC [Distance Education Centre](#)

QLD

- [Brisbane School of Distance Education](#)
- [Distance Education – QLD Department of Education and Training](#)

ACT [Distance Education – ACT Government](#)

NT [Distance and online learning – NT Government](#)

SA [Open Access College](#)

TAS [Tasmanian eSchool](#)

WA [School of Isolated and Distance Education](#)

National

- [The National Education Directory](#)
- [Aussie Educator – Online Education](#)
- [Modern Montessori International](#)

If you have any questions about organising your children's education while overseas, please contact the Programs & Placement Coordinator.

Clothing/footwear

The style of clothing you wear on placement (particularly for women) needs to be sensitive to local culture and customs. This generally means wearing clothing that covers knees and shoulders. There are also certain customs that vary for work, life and visiting places of worship in most countries. Most cultures require swimming costumes to be covered with either a sarong or shorts and a t-shirt. Make sure you check with the Programs & Placement Coordinator to learn more about the dress customs specific to the country you are travelling to.

In most tropical areas, only light cotton clothing is required. In coastal areas non-cotton man-made fibres can go mouldy from the humidity and may also bring on heat rashes. In some areas, clothes 'rust'. Rustiban, available from chemists, removes rust stains.

Sandals or thongs are often the most practical shoes to wear as feet tend to swell in tropical climates. However, if you are working in an environment where protective footwear is required, appropriate shoes/boots should be brought. An old pair of sandshoes can be useful for walking/swimming in beaches where coral is about.

What to pack

Clothing – Women

- Lightweight long/three quarter length pants
- Long shorts (to wear over your swimsuit with a t-shirt, for swimming)
- Lightweight below the knee skirts
- Dresses (below the knee, shoulders covered)
- Cotton/linen shirts with sleeves and collar
- T-Shirts for everyday wear, but not tight fitting or low-cut (sleeveless shirts/singlets not recommended)

- Sarong (for covering up after swimming)
- Raincoat
- Cotton underwear (take 10 pairs, they do wear out; cotton bras if possible, the underwire can irritate; cotton petticoat can be useful under thin fabrics)
- Cotton socks x 1 or 2 pairs (if you are taking sneakers or boots)
- Cardigan, jumper or jacket
- An outfit for special occasions
- Swimsuit (one piece) – You will need to wear either shorts/t-shirt/sarong over the top if you are swimming with students or in local areas. If you are in a resort, then just a swimsuit is generally OK.

Clothing – Men

- Cotton/linen long pants [suitable for a special occasion]
- Cotton/linen collared shirts
- T-Shirts
- Lightweight shorts
- Swimmers
- Raincoat
- Cotton underwear
- Cotton socks x 1 or 2 pairs (if you are taking sneakers or boots)
- Cardigan, jumper or jacket

Footwear

- Thongs
- Sandals
- Sneakers/sandshoes (though they can be hard to wear in the heat, they can be practical to have on hand)
- Boots (if appropriate for placement)

General

- Towel (optional – they are often provided but taking one is always useful)
- Wide brimmed hat (that stays on in the wind)
- Sunglasses
- Small umbrella (for rain or sun)
- Tropical strength mosquito repellent
- Sunscreen (at least 30+)
- Everyday toiletries (shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, soap – you will be able to buy these in-country but you may wish to bring enough for the first few days while you get settled)
- Hand sanitiser
- Supply of masks [during COVID]
- Baby powder (can help with chaffing)
- Small torch
- Mobile phone (if using a local sim card, make sure your mobile phone is ‘unlocked’)
- Phone charger and local adapter
- Water bottle
- Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)
- First-aid kit (discuss with your Travel Doctor what should be included)

Climate and social customs vary from country to country, so be sure to contact the Programs & Placement Coordinator if you have any questions specific to your placement.

Luggage limits

We recommend that participants bring no more than 20-23kg of luggage (be sure to check with your airline to confirm limits). If you believe you will require more than this, please contact the Programs & Placement Coordinator to discuss your options prior to us booking your flights. Not all flights will allow additional luggage at the time of booking. Palms does not cover the cost of additional luggage. Any excess baggage costs incurred are the responsibility of the participant.

Other helpful hints

- **Torches:** If your torch uses halogen lamps you will need to purchase these in Australia.
- **Photography:** You will need a supply of silica gel (available from chemists) to store with your camera equipment to keep out the moisture. You can also set up a 'hot box' using a 25 watt lamp to keep such equipment dry, or keep camera in an air-conditioned room, if available.
- **Mobile phones:** Most placement locations are within mobile phone range. Please ensure your mobile phone is 'unlocked' from your current service provider, so that a local sim card can be inserted. A dongle can often be purchased in-country that enables data/internet access. An additional power bank for your phone can be useful.
- **Power supply:** Check the electricity outlet for the country of your placement. You may need an adaptor to convert any electronics you bring with you. A power surge protector can help protect your electrical equipment.
- **Mosquito Protection:** Ensure you have discussed with your Medical Practitioner any prophylaxis that can be used to protect yourself from mosquitoes. The Conditions of Service should indicate whether or not a mosquito net is provided in your accommodation. Mosquitoes are attracted to the scent of deodorants and perfumes.

When you arrive



Upon arrival

Prior to your departure Palms will notify the host organisation of your arrival date. At the airport, you will be met by a representative from the host organisation who will take you to your accommodation. If your assignment is in a rural location and travel will be the following day, Palms will arrange your overnight accommodation and advise the host organisation.

Correspondence with Palms

You must contact Palms upon arrival at your destination (within a reasonable time). A text message or e-mail with a few words to let us know you have arrived safely and confirming contact details (address, phone number and email) is all that is required. More is welcome!

International volunteer card

Palms Australia participants will be issued with an International Volunteer Card. The card will include the contact details of your host organisation in case of an emergency. Where necessary it may also have details provided in the local language of who to contact in case of emergency. **The International Volunteer card should be carried on you at all times.** You will be issued with the card with your contract letter prior to your departure.

If your card is lost, you must contact Palms Australia to get it replaced as soon as possible.

Assignment mailing address

Your host organisation's mailing address will be automatically included as your mailing contact whilst on assignment, except where Palms Australia has a separate mailing postal box. Please ensure that the person in your host organisation responsible for collecting the mail is aware that mail may come for you.

Accommodation on assignment

Most assignments have accommodation provided by the host organisation. The accommodation is often simple, without hot water, air conditioning or WiFi. The Conditions of Service you receive prior to assignment will outline what type of accommodation you will have and what household items/bedding is provided. Palms will also complete an accommodation security checklist. There

are situations where the accommodation security may change. It is important that you notify Palms immediately if you feel that your environment or accommodation is not safe and secure.

Personal security

There are risks associated with all countries where Palms participants are working, however we ask you to read through the locality risk assessment that is on your USB to ensure that you have prior knowledge of any potential risks. You should also ensure that within the first weeks of your assignment you complete the Personal Health & Safety template which will assist to familiarise you with important local numbers that you may need in an emergency. You can complete this with your host organisation, and include your insurance details as well. The host organisation and Palms Australia should be given copies.

Language training

You will be issued with a USB that contains country-specific information including some basic language learning resources. Prior to departure you may wish to start learning language and some useful apps can be found here: <https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/five-free-apps-help-learn-foreign-language/>

Many participants can get by using English to complete their assignment role, however learning the local language can enhance integration into the local community. In some countries there are formal language learning opportunities. If you wish to take up the opportunity you should discuss this with your host organisation and Palms. Palms does not cover the cost of language learning courses.

On assignment



Your volunteer care & security person

The host organisation nominates a representative to provide volunteer care and security. It is generally the Director, Principal or local Parish Priest. Your International Volunteer Card will identify who that person is. In addition, Palms Australia Programs & Placement Coordinator is also available to provide ongoing support and contact throughout your placement.

Palms encourages our participants to maintain regular contact, to provide updates, advise of changes to your role objectives, any risk issues or concerns that you may have whilst on assignment. All participants experience various stages of adjustment whilst they are transitioning into a new culture. You will have completed preparation at the Orientation Course that provided you with knowledge and strategies to assist you in this transition. Palms will also send you reading resources in the first week of your placement as well as any current DFAT smartraveller advice.

The host organisation and you

As a Palms Australia participant you are considered to be the equivalent of an employee of your host organisation for any day to day work place activities. Any major changes to the conditions of your assignment must involve discussions between the host organisation, Palms participant and Palms Australia.

Working conditions for your assignment

Working hours for Palms participants are the same as employees in your host organisation and as detailed in your position description. You are advised to discuss the following with your host organisation within the first week of your assignment:

- Hours of work
- Leave entitlements
- Sick leave

If there are any concerns about your working conditions you should advise Palms Australia.

Leave

Annual – Palms participants are entitled to 4 weeks annual leave per year. You should discuss with the host organisation when you are likely to take annual leave. It should be taken at a time that is convenient for the host organisation. You should advise Palms of your annual leave once confirmed, and any travel dates associated with leave.

Sick - Palms participants are entitled to the same number of sick days as local employees.

Special - Special leave should be discussed with the host organisation and with Palms Australia.

Travel

Any time that you are travelling out of your placement location you should advise your host organisation and Palms Australia so that you can be located in case of an emergency.

If you are travelling out of the country of placement you should be aware of any risks that are associated with the country you are going to. Check DFAT advice, ensure that your insurance provides coverage for that country, and if not, ensure that you take up additional insurance. Palms does not take responsibility for travel outside of your country of placement or required insurance.

Sometimes positions may require domestic or international travel. If you are planning to travel outside of your placement location/country, you should follow the travel advice requirements. Palms Australia does not cover the cost of domestic or international travel.

Living allowances/stipend

Palms has different agreements with host organisations regarding your living allowance/stipend. In some countries the host organisation is able to pay a stipend, generally the equivalent to a local wage. In other countries, such as Timor Leste and Myanmar, Palms Australia raises the funds to provide your living allowance.

The living allowance is designed to enable you to live a modest local lifestyle. Based on the cost of living in a particular country, it should cover food, local transport costs and communication costs. It is not set to enable you to meet financial commitments in Australia or to make any savings.

The living allowance should be outlined on your Conditions of Service. If paid by Palms it will be paid quarterly, transferred into your Australian bank account. If the living allowance is paid by the host organisation it may be paid in cash and more frequently.

In-country legal expectations

When you enter a foreign country, you become subject to its law and are legally accountable for acts committed on its territory. At the same time, you are entitled to a certain level of protection through your own government's consular officers.

Consular protection is a privilege, which a citizen may request from the consular officers of their own country, but cannot be demanded as a right. A person detained by authorities in a foreign country is entitled to request to see a consular officer from their own country.

As a general rule, if an Australian citizen receives the benefit of the same laws, administration, protection and means of redress for injuries which a foreign state affords its own subjects, there are no grounds for complaint or representation on the citizen's behalf.

Engaging in part-time work

Engaging in any **paid** part-time work or business enterprise for personal gain while on assignment is inappropriate and breaches the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

If you are contemplating any **unpaid** part-time work in addition to your assignment, it is necessary to obtain prior approval from Palms Australia's Program & Placement Coordinator and your partner organisation. It is important to be aware that such activities may breach visa conditions and formal agreements with host country governments.

Personal study and research

We ask you not to conduct any type of research unless agreed by Palms and the partner organisation, and where it is agreed that the research is appropriate to the partner organisation and the project you're involved in.

You may undertake distance study, as long as it does not interfere with your assignment obligations.

You may not publish research, including approved research, without permission from Palms and the partner organisation.

Grants

Many participants obtain funding to support their partner organisation through fundraising and proposal writing. All participants are asked to ensure that Palms staff are notified of any donations or grants awarded to the partner organisation as a direct result of their assignment.

You may be asked to support your partner organisation with grants applications while you are on assignment. If fundraising is not included in your placement brief, then we ask that you consult with Palms to further discuss.

Fundraising in your Australian community

Your assignment can be valuable in achieving poverty reduction. At times it will be a struggle to develop effective processes and pass on skills. It may seem easier to raise funds to buy materials and equipment, but this has many negative effects including the destructive impression that Palms participants are 'cash cows' and the likelihood that you will introduce processes, that are unsustainably dependent on materials and equipment unobtainable after you depart. To maintain an effective assignment Palms needs you

- To avoid fundraising for any local projects unless this task is specifically outlined in your official position description as part of your role.
- To seek the advice of the Palms Programs & Placement Coordinator if you are wanting to, or directly asked to raise funds to support a local project;
- To assist with fundraising to cover preparation, sending, placement support and any hosting costs of your assignment;

Palms discourages any kind of direct fundraising for your host organisation within your local Australian community until all costs associated with your overseas assignment have been covered. We ask that you consult with Palms if you are asked to assist with fund raising.

Local politics

Do not become involved in local politics, attend public demonstrations, or make any public comment (written, broadcast or your own social media) on political or religious matters. Even the signing of a petition in some countries can result in action against you. Symbols of nationalism in particular should be respected.

Be mindful that any comments you make can have an effect on your host organisation, colleagues, other Australian volunteers and Palms Australia.

Your assignment role

Prior to your departure you will have received a Position Description which outlines your role objectives. Once you have arrived, it is important that you sit down with the host organisation and review the role objectives, making note of any changes. If the role objectives change significantly, you can advise the host organisation that you will need to further discuss this with Palms.

Keep in mind that the first six months of your assignment, you will be working within your role, but the focus should also be on:

- Completing the Palms Personal Health & Safety Plan
- Building relationships with your host organisation and community
- Learning language
- Identifying strengths in an asset register [personnel and local resources]
- Building a network

Your first 6 month evaluation will be evaluating against these 5 Objectives

Evaluation process

All participants are required to complete an evaluation at six months, 12 months and upon assignment completion. The Host Organisation will also be sent an evaluation at the same time. The evaluation form asks you to reflect on your assignment. The information will be used to help monitor the placement objectives and outcomes, the future direction of the placement, the emerging issues that need to be addressed by us, and a chance for you to comment on what it has been like in the position. The information may also be used to report to our various stakeholders.

During the month of June you will be asked to complete a Quantitative Report, which provides information for Palms Australia's Annual Report. The Program & Placement Coordinator will provide you with further details and template.

Assignment extensions

A request to extend an assignment should come from the host organisation and requires Palms Australia's approval. Extension requests are considered on a case by case basis.

If you leave your placement before the due date

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you are expected to complete your agreed period of service. Failure to do so will mean that costs to the receiving community and Palms Australia will need to be recovered.

In the case of early withdrawal or termination of a placement, you will be liable to pay your return airfare and to refund your placement costs (including forwarding airfare, Orientation Course and insurance subsidy). Palms Australia will consider each situation individually.

When there is an issue with your placement

Although Palms Australia will provide support when needed, it is important to remember that your primary relationship while in placement is with the receiving community. If you encounter an issue, you should initially attempt to meet with the appropriate people in your organisation/community and work through any issues that are causing conflict.

Palms Australia should only be asked to intervene if your relationship with the receiving community breaks down. However, you must contact us before any drastic action is taken (e.g. changes to your working arrangements). **DO NOT RESIGN FROM YOUR PLACEMENT WITHOUT ADVISING PALMS AND THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES IN COUNTRY.**

If you decide to withdraw from your placement, you must consult the Program & Placement Coordinator. We will discuss the appropriate course of action from there. The receiving community also has the right to terminate your placement. If this is the case, they will consult with Palms Australia before doing so.

Host Organisation termination

Partner organisations have the right to terminate assignments where necessary. This may include issues such as work performance, personal behaviours, breach of the Volunteer Code of Conduct, failure to follow directives issued by program and/or host organisation staff, deterioration in security, or social and workplace adjustment. Although the primary relationship in your assignment is between you and the host organisation, Palms Australia must be made aware of, and be included in, any discussion concerning any changes to your position.

Past experience has shown that the earlier any problems are discussed with the host organisation and with Palms Australia, the more likely an amicable and agreed upon resolution is reached.

Health and medical

Maintaining good health is primarily your responsibility. Palms Australia is committed to supporting your efforts to maintain good health, and encourages you to make careful decisions and take actions appropriate to your circumstances.

During your orientation course, you will have participated in a Health Workshop, which provided you with the information that alerted you to the health risks and issues. You will also have been cleared by your medical practitioner to undertake work in a developing country. Ensuring that you have the appropriate medications with you and that all medical advice is adhered to throughout your placement is essential.

If you become ill, you should advise the host organisation and Palms Australia. You should share with the host organisation your insurance details, so that in the case of a medical emergency the insurance company/medical customer care can be contacted. Ensure that you carry your International Volunteer card with you at all times as it includes the emergency contact number.

If you are sick or injured and cannot be adequately treated in your country of assignment, it may be decided that you need to travel for medical treatment. The decision to conduct a medical evacuation will generally be made by your insurance provider and the local hospital. The host organisation and Palms Australia should be advised.

Safety and security

Palms Australia conducts a locality risk assessment for each assignment location. You should have a copy of this on your USB. Reading this prior to your arrival is important!

Your safety is primarily your responsibility. It is expected that you always exercise caution in regard to all aspects of your personal safety and security. This includes road safety, such as being a licensed driver, having the appropriate insurance to drive a vehicle or motorbike, wearing an approved helmet, and using a seat belt. This also includes taking care of your possessions while on assignment as a Palms Australia participant.

Palms Australia will pass on any new DFAT advice that comes through regarding your country of assignment. Any advice that is provided by Palms Australia regarding action that you need to take to ensure your safety and security should be adhered to.

Incident Reporting

All incidents related to safety or security, even if the incident seems minor or is only a threat, must be reported to Palms Australia as soon as possible, or within 24 hours at the latest. Such incidents may have implications of which you might not be aware, and which may become apparent at a later date. Non-reporting of such incidents may have negative implications for you, other Palms participants and any related insurance claims.

Palms Australia has an Incident Report template which will be sent to you to complete.

Accommodation Security Form

Prior to your placement Palms will have completed an accommodation security form. If there are any changes to the security of your accommodation you should advise Palms Australia.

Use of a Car or Motorbike

If purchasing a motor vehicle/bike, it is your responsibility to assess its roadworthiness or safety. The onus is on the participant to do all the necessary checks and obtain insurance to drive the vehicle if not already covered under your existing insurance policy.

Water Safety Travel

Boat accidents are not uncommon. If your assignment requires you to travel by boat, please ensure that you have an inflatable life-jacket with you. Some boats do provide life-jackets, but not all. Ensuring that you have taken steps to ensure your safety will make the trip more enjoyable! If weather conditions are not favourable for water travel please postpone your trip.

Media and public diplomacy

Sharing your experiences, the work of your host organisation and the contribution volunteering makes to sustainable development is an important part of your assignment. It helps increase awareness of issues impacting the country in which you are working. Please refer to the Palms Participant Media Policy [here](#) for further information about media activity, social media and approvals.

Coming home



Prior to coming home

Three to six months prior to your return to Australia, Palms Australia will send you some returning home resources, to start your preparation for returning to your culture. The prospect of returning home can be a time of mixed emotions. The resources are sent to provide an opportunity for reflection and preparation for your journey home.

How we leave a culture is as important as how we enter! Being mindful of saying goodbye to those with whom you have shared the last two years, within your workplace and within the community is very important.

Return ticket/s

Palms has differing arrangements for return travel with each of our host organisations. Some host organisations cover the cost of the return airfare for a two-year assignment. Where the host organisation doesn't cover the cost of a return airfare for a two-year assignment, Palms Australia will. Discuss with the Programs & Placement Coordinator as to the arrangement for your position.

Palms will generally consult with you, as to when you would like your return ticket booked. If after the ticket is booked/confirmed, and you wish to change it, any costs associated with the change will be your responsibility.

Remaining in-country

Palms Australia advises the DFAT Post when participants have finished their assignments. Should you decide to remain in-country and seek work after the conclusion of your assignment, it is your responsibility to organise the necessary visa and work permits. You should be mindful that remaining in your country of assignment in paid employment could be perceived as taking jobs from local people. If you want to stay in-country after the completion of your assignment, you should arrange/extend your own travel insurance beyond this time.

Arriving home

Palms will send you further resources/readings to assist in your re-entry to your home country. You will also be provided with a Returnee Evaluation to complete and send back to Palms.

Palms will contact you within the first week of returning to arrange a time for a returning home debrief.

It is important for you to share your experiences and understanding of development with other Australians at home. Even after returning home, you can play an integral part in helping us continue to assist our partner communities. Palms Australia is always looking for returnees to get involved by sharing their experiences at information sessions, focus workshops, Orientation Courses and community gatherings.

Re-entry workshop

Palms Australia conducts an annual Re-Entry Workshop. The Re-Entry Workshop provides Palms participants with the opportunity to share their experience with other returned Palms people in a confidential environment. The group is generally no more than 6 participants, and Palms provides an independent facilitator. The Re-Entry process explores *where you have been, where you are now, and where you would like to be*. All Palms participants who have participated in this workshop have found the process to be extremely helpful in their re-entry .

Gratuity fund

Australian Catholic Bishops support those who undertake an assignment by providing \$2500 per year per adult for each year of service. The contribution of children is also recognised with a provision of \$250 per year for each year of service. This can be sent to you in the field or held in Australia to be collected when you return. There is:

- Interest accumulated on untaken balances;
- Pro-rata payments after one year of service. In the event of returning early due to illness, gratuity is available with a letter from the appropriate person in the receiving community authorising payment or at the Executive Director's discretion.

Please contact the Programs & Placement Coordinator if you have any questions regarding the Australian Lay Missionary Gratuity Fund.

Thank you!