

Building connections makes all the difference

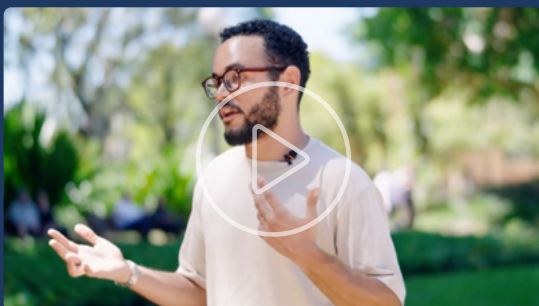
What Marcos wishes he knew before moving to study in Australia



When Marcos left Brazil to study in Australia, he felt prepared. He was confident that the move would offer him broader education opportunities, the chance to improve his English and an exciting international experience.

While he certainly wasn't wrong, Marcos says that his feeling of 'preparedness' quickly disappeared upon arrival.

"I remember the excitement of being in a new country mixed with feeling completely out of my comfort zone."



Watch 2025 SOSH In Their Words: Marcos



YouTube: Allianz Partners Australia

Everything, from navigating university life to simple daily tasks like public transport and grocery shopping, felt strange and unfamiliar.

"I was surprised by how independent I had to become so quickly."

"I underestimated how much time and energy it takes to balance study, work, finances, and personal life all at once."



BUILDING NEW CONNECTIONS

We so often speak about the excitement that comes with moving overseas and seeking new opportunities, but it's something that can also take a huge emotional toll on you. Working out how to do things in an entirely different culture, without the support network you've likely been growing your whole life, is not a small undertaking. But, it's also not something you have to manage completely on your own.

Even without your regular support network directly by your side, there are ways you can ease the transition period.

"Staying connected with family, getting involved in university activities, exercising and building friendships," helped him to manage during those early days. "I was also very lucky when I first moved to Australia to have really kind and friendly flatmates, which made my first days here amazing."

Getting involved in his local church was also an important source of support for Marcos, and he found the people he met there were very welcoming and open to sharing their lives with him.

"I've found a lot of joy in attending church and meeting new friends through that community," he says.

ONE THING NO ONE EXPLAINED ABOUT HEALTHCARE

Even Australia's healthcare system, which Marcos says seemed *"professional and well organised"* was a challenge to figure out. Australia's system is quite different compared with Brazil's, and trying to navigate it, especially amidst culture-shock and studying challenges, can cause real anxiety in those new to Australia.

For Marcos, it wasn't always clear what his student health insurance covered and what services he was actually eligible for.

UNDERSTANDING FINANCES IN A NEW COUNTRY

Aside from struggling to find his sense of self in a new country, Marcos says that the thing he struggled with the most was working out how to best utilise his student budget.

Financial stress is a very real source of overwhelm for the majority of students. It's something that can impact the ability to study, socialise, and build connections, because of how much pressure they can be under to even just make ends meet.

"I knew Australia was expensive, but I didn't fully understand how quickly costs like rent, groceries, transportation, and utilities add up."

"Also, unexpected expenses such as textbooks, medical appointments, visa-related costs, and setting up a new home were more significant than I expected."

"Understanding Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), finding the right healthcare provider, and knowing when to visit a GP versus other services was initially confusing."



BEING PREPARED IS THE FOUNDATION OF BUILDING YOUR NEW LIFE

If he could do it all over again, Marcos says that he would remind himself of how normal it is to feel completely overwhelmed at times.

“Most international students go through similar challenges, even if it doesn’t look like it from the outside.”

His advice to anyone considering coming to Australia is to make sure you’re as prepared as possible for all aspects of the move: from being aware of the financial

situation in your new home, to how you’re going to not only maintain your existing connections but also build new ones.

For Marcos, settling into Australia wasn’t about having everything figured out, it was about being willing to ask questions, show up and keep trying.

“Don’t wait for people to come to you. Join clubs, attend events, volunteer, and say yes to opportunities. Building connections takes time, but consistency matters.”

DISCOVER MORE STUDENT STORIES

This article is part of the Allianz Partners In Their Words series, where five international students share their experiences of living and studying in Australia.

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