



PHONES AND INTERNET

CHOOSING A PHONE/INTERNET SERVICE

You should research and compare different providers and their plans in relation to your needs and budget before committing to a contract. To assist you with this process, the State and Federal Governments have produced a number of online resources:

- www.consumersonline.gov.au/downloads/handbook/tele.pdf
- www.consumer.vic.gov.au
- www.acma.gov.au

PHONES

Mobile phones

The three types of plans offered are pre-paid, contract or capped:

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Pre-paid	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → No contract, just buy pre-paid cards as needed → Phone may be included (but it may be SIM¹ locked) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Call rates may be high → Credit may expire if not used within a stipulated time
Contract	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Cheaper call rates and specials → Phone may be included (but it may be SIM¹ locked) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Most deals are usually a 24 month contract where cancellation requires paying off the remainder of the contract → May need to spend a minimum amount on calls each month → Contracts may be difficult to obtain if you are new to Australia.
Capped	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A generous amount of calls are included per month → Phone may be included (but it may be SIM¹ locked) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Call limits may apply for long distance, etc → Call rates may be high → Contract required

Whilst each phone provider will offer different deals and levels of service (especially in relation to coverage), monthly plans usually range from \$10-100. Some factors to look out for include:

- Call charges (including local and long distance)
- SMS²/MMS³ charges (including local and long distance)
- Length of contract
- Extra charges

- www.telstra.com.au
- www.optus.com.au
- www.vodafone.com.au
- www.three.com.au
- www.virginmobile.com.au
- www.revteel.com.au

If you wish to bring your own phone, any mobile phone shop will be able to tell you if it is compatible with the Australian network. There are numerous phone shops located in the city and suburbs (particularly major shopping centres and main streets).

Landline phones

Landline (or fixed line) phones are essential for some internet services. Local phone calls are charged as a flat rate (usually 25c) and long distance per minute.

- www.telstra.com.au
- www.optus.com.au
- www.primus.com.au
- www.aapt.com.au

Phonecards

Phonecards are prepaid cards for making long-distance calls from a landline phone. Phone cards can be bought at newsagencies and convenience stores. As with phone plans, you will need to compare each card, as some companies offer better services than others.

Telephone directories

The Yellow Pages® and White Pages® directories are delivered free to all households and are good way to locate a person or business (such as a mobile phone shop!):

- www.yellowpages.com.au
- www.whitepages.com.au

Telstra directory assistance

If you do not have access to a telephone directory, Telstra Directory Assistance can locate an individual or business for you. This service is free for landline phones only. Mobile phone users are charged a fee plus call costs from their phone provider.
T: 1223

INTERNET

The two types of internet services offered are dial-up (slow speed) and broadband (high speed) internet. When choosing an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and plan, consider the following factors:

What area you live in

Where you live will determine what services are available to you. Most ISPs will be able to provide this information on their website.

Usage

If you are streaming media, web chat or sharing the connection with housemates you may need to consider a high-speed service with a generous data limit.

Excess data limits

Some ISPs charge for exceeding the monthly data limit, whilst others will “shape” the speed (slow your connection to approximately the speed of dial-up) until the month has finished.

Off-peak/on-peak

The time of day you use the internet may sometimes affect your monthly data limit. Some ISPs may divide your data limit into what time of day you can use the allotted amount of data.

Speed/data limits

Compare similarly priced plans amongst ISPs with regards to what speed and data limits are included. Some ISPs include:

www.bigpond.com
www.optus.com.au
www.tpg.com.au
www.iinet.com.au
www.netSPACE.com.au
www.alphalink.com.au
www.unwired.com.au

You can also search online to find independent websites which provide information regarding comparisons between Australian ISPs, such as *Broadband Choice* and *Broadband Guide*:

bc.whirlpool.net.au
www.broadbandguide.com.au

Other internet access options

→ Internet cafés

www.onlymelbourne.com.au
www.yellowpages.com.au

→ WiFi⁴ hotspots⁵

www.onlymelbourne.com.au
www.azure.com.au/hotspots

→ Libraries

www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries

→ The University of Melbourne IT

www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au

CONTRACTS

Many international students have been caught out with long term contracts or hidden charges, sometimes costing them several hundred dollars. Never sign a contract under duress or without being sure you wish to go ahead with that service. Insist on taking the contract home to read thoroughly and understand each clause. If you are unsure about a contract, consult the Legal Service at the Student Union before signing any agreement.

www.union.unimelb.edu.au/legal

COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint or dispute with your phone or internet provider, you must first put your complaint in writing to your provider, attaching any supporting documentation. If you cannot come to a resolution, you may lodge a complaint with the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO). The Legal Service can assist you with this process.

www.tio.com.au

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- ¹ **SIM (Subscriber Identity Module)** is a portable memory card which holds data (e.g network, address book, etc). “Locking” the SIM means you cannot use a different SIM in the phone.
- ² **SMS (Short Message Service)** is a text message sent from one mobile phone to another. Some public phones offer this service.
- ³ **MMS (Multimedia Message Service)** is similar to a SMS, only photos or video are sent (usually with text allowed).
- ⁴ **WiFi (Wireless Fidelity)** or wireless is technology which allows WiFi enabled devices (e.g laptop, mobile phone) to access the internet without cables.
- ⁵ **Hotspot** is a physical location that offers WiFi access via a transmitter.