

Information about life at Swinburne for prospective and incoming postdocs, faculty and students

This page is intended to give basic information for prospective or incoming Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing (CAS) staff and students regarding quality of life, family and personal related matters. CAS is committed to supporting an inclusive environment promoting diversity and equity in gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, gender identity and gender expression. The Swinburne University website for Equity and Diversity can be found at <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/equity/index.htm>

The University has recently adopted a Gender Equality Strategic Action Plan. For six consecutive years, Swinburne has been recognized as an Employer of Choice for Women by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. The Plan identifies initiatives that will encourage, recognize and promote achievement of gender equality across Swinburne. Read more about the University policies toward gender equality at this link (http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/equity/workplace_gender_equality.htm)

If anyone has concerns about any of the issues below - childcare, faith, LGBT+, gender balance, or general atmosphere at CAS – please feel free to contact us at diversity@astro.swin.edu.au, and we will put you in contact with a local CAS member who can share their experiences.

Melbourne is a large metropolitan city with a number of attractions in arts, entertainment and sports. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melbourne>). Getting around in Melbourne is relatively easy on the public transit system. Melbourne is often ranked as one of the most livable cities on the planet (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World%27s_most_livable_cities).

General Visa information:

We cannot make any official statements about immigration law, as we are not experts. We recommend reading up on the latest in Skilled Worker VISAs at <http://www.immi.gov.au/>. You can also read the Wikipedia entry (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/457_visa), though understand it may be less reliable. The details may vary for individuals, however among Swinburne staff there is typically no problem in obtaining VISAs for CAS employees and their spouses/life partners. Indeed the partners of current Swinburne staff that are on Skilled Worker VISAs are typically allowed to seek employment in Australia with very few restrictions.

Family Related Information:

CAS understands the realities of a healthy work-life balance, especially for those with young families. CAS aims to be sympathetic to those with significant carer responsibilities. There is currently a mechanism through which Swinburne employees may request to design a flexible work arrangement (such as work from home or non-traditional hours). Of course the details of any such arrangement would need to be worked out with your manager.

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/swin/benefits/flexible-work.htm>

Maternity Leave: Swinburne offers maternity leave, which is outlined on the website above. For Academic and General staff this amounts to 14 weeks full paid leave, 38 weeks 0.6 paid leave, and an additional year of unpaid leave.

Childcare: Swinburne does offer childcare services for their staff. In practice there is a significant waiting list for university childcare services for very young students (under 3 years). The website for Swinburne childcare is given below.

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/childcare/>

If you have more questions about childcare or family related issues we are happy to put you in contact with a local staff member with experience.

Information for LGBT+ identifying people:

CAS is dedicated to having an open and inclusive department, respecting the diversity of individual's sexual preferences, gender identity and gender expression. The department has a committee dedicated to promoting diversity and equity within the department.

Immigrating Concerns: Currently Australia does not allow same-sex marriages. However, in terms of immigration same-sex partners are currently (2014) recognized as *de facto* partners and are eligible to be included in a VISA 457. We strongly recommend that you double check this when considering a move, as immigration law could change (<http://www.immi.gov.au/>). Healthcare for immigrating individuals is arranged directly between the individual and the insurance company, therefore same-sex partnerships are not likely to run into coverage issues.

Melbourne LGBT Community: Melbourne is very LGBT friendly city. There are numerous queer-friendly organizations. There is no specific "gay neighborhood" in Melbourne, however a recent survey places the highest concentration of same-sex couples living in Collingwood, and Fitzroy with increasing gay populations in Northcote and Brunswick.

For LGBT students: Swinburne has a Queer Student Organisation (which is very near the astronomy department on campus) <http://www.ssu.org.au/our-groups/welfare-collectives/queer-collective/>

For Faith Related issues:

Swinburne's Multi Faith Facility at Hawthorn is an acknowledgement of Swinburne's commitment to religious tolerance. It is a place for people to tolerantly engage in communal reflection and individual meditation.

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/multifaith/>