

Reciprocal Student Exchange Program between Victoria and Bavaria and Tasmania and Bavaria Updated Information for the 2021-2022 Exchange – Prices and information subject to change

This exchange program offers Victorian and Tasmanian students of German the opportunity to experience life with a family in Germany for a period of approximately **ten weeks**, with an option of nominating to extend it to twelve weeks if desired. **The exchange is conducted on a reciprocal basis**, so costs are relatively low. The AGTV and BJR are both not-for-profit organisations. The AGTV and the BJR are committed to child safety and have a zero tolerance of child abuse. We want students who participate in our program to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our students, young people, staff, families and volunteers.

Who are the organisers?

The Association of German Teachers of Victoria Inc. (AGTV) is a registered Student Exchange Organisation (SEO) with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and has co-ordinated the BJR exchange in Victoria since 1988 in co-operation with Victorian teachers and schools. In 2015, the AGTV was also registered as a Student Exchange Organisation (SEO) with the Office of Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification (TASC). The *Bayerischer Jugendring* (Bavarian Youth Council – BJR) is a public body commissioned by the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and the Arts with responsibility for international student exchanges for Bavaria, Germany.

Who can go?

Victorian and Tasmanian students of German in Year 9 & 10 in AGTV member schools may apply to be matched through the AGTV BJR Exchange to travel when they are in Year 10 or Year 11 the following year. The German students arrive in February of the year after the application and matching, the Australian students return in November.

Successful students need to be excellent ambassadors for Australia, their school and their family. Host families need to be friendly, tolerant of cultural differences and flexible. The application process requires all persons 18 and over in the household/s in which the exchange student resides to undertake a Working with Children Check. **Students, families and schools must agree to abide by the AGTV Student Exchange Guidelines.**

What role does the school have?

The school must be a current member of the AGTV and agree to be part of the AGTV BJR Student Exchange Program. Schools provide a confidential recommendation about the Victorian/Tasmanian student/s applying. The school's role involves sharing responsibility for overseeing the German student/s at the school, including appointing a contact teacher as the Student Exchange Local Coordinator at the school. This teacher is the first point of contact for the German student and host families throughout the exchange in Victoria and Tasmania. As the AGTV BJR Exchange students travel on a student visa (subclass 500) issued via an AASES form, German students must be formally enrolled at the school upon arrival in February. This means the students are eligible to be counted in the February student census data reported for student funding.

How does it work?

This is a direct exchange involving students, families and schools. Applicants are approved initially in Victoria and matched in Germany according to interests, personality, gender, family etc. It is very important that students provide accurate information about themselves, their family and their day to day lifestyle.

The German exchange partner stays with the Victorian or Tasmanian host family for ten weeks from mid February to late April 2021. For the German students staying in Victoria, an optional week-long study tour is organised in February or March, and a social event is organised for participating families during the exchange.

In late November 2021, the Victorian and Tasmanian students return the visit, staying with their German host family in Bavaria, experiencing Christmas and New Year German-style and participating in an optional group study tour to Berlin in January. The study tour is led by the Australian Group Leaders in cooperation with personnel appointed by the BJR. The students also meet with Group Leaders and BJR personnel in München in early December to discuss their experiences.

Please note that the AGTV and BJR reserve the right to send students home to the host family from a study tour, and in certain circumstances, a student may be (and has been) sent home to the family in Australia or Germany, when there is a breach of the rules of the exchange or other circumstances requiring the return of the student/s to Australia.

How much does it cost?

Costs include:

- The airfare, which varies from year to year. In 2019, the approximate cost of the airfare, including travel insurance, airport taxes and GST, was in the vicinity of \$2,700.00 per student.
- Administration fee detailed below
- Passport
- In kind hosting costs while the German student lives with the family (food, travel to and from school, family activities etc.)
- Spending money while in Germany
- Participation in optional Study Tour to Berlin costing approximately 600 Euros (which at Feb 2020 exchange rate was around \$995 AUD).

Administration Fee 2020

Students forward \$760.00 administration fee with the application, and if not successfully matched, \$700.00 is refunded. Please note, if students withdraw after the matching process is completed they do not receive a refund.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE EACH YEAR

Matching process

Students are requested to submit an *Expression of Interest* form by email before the end of April 2020.

The AGTV BJR Co-ordinator of the Student Exchange then emails an Application Form to the Student and their family to complete. When this is completed it is checked by the school, scanned and emailed to the AGTV BJR Co-ordinator of the BJR Student Exchange Programme (deadline Monday June 8, 2020) and an Electronic Funds Transfer of the Administration Fee is processed and confirmed. The original application form is mailed to the AGTV BJR Coordinator.

At the same time, forms are emailed to the Applicant's school. These include a Confidential Student Recommendation and a School Agreement to support and participate in the AGTV BJR Student Exchange Program.

Matchings are finalised by the BJR team in Germany based on the information they receive. The BJR cannot guarantee the students will be compatible. Students and schools are notified of the outcome by email, usually by late September. A pre-departure and pre-hosting meeting are held in Melbourne and Tasmania to assist families preparing for the exchange. **NB:** Please notify the AGTV if circumstances change from those described on the application form.

Travel Arrangements

Under the terms of the AGTV's registration as a Student Exchange Organisation (SEO), **Australian students** on the AGTV BJR Exchange **are required to fly as a group** with Group Leaders to Munich, Germany in late November 2021 and will return as a group in late January or the start of February 2022. All group travel arrangements to and from Germany for the Australian students are the responsibility of the AGTV and are negotiated with the travel agent selected by the AGTV. The travel agent liaises with families under the direction of the AGTV. All parents in the group share the travel costs and insurance of two or three group leaders. The families also pay for their child's passport, travel & health insurance, and airport taxes and any additional fees imposed by the airline.

What is expected of the Victorian Host Family?

The host family is expected to attend pre-arrival and pre-departure meetings and to provide for their German guest as they would for their own child. It is recommended that a separate room be provided for the guest to give them some personal space, but this is not essential. Host families need to be open to understanding cultural differences during both stages of the exchange and work through any concerns that may arise in consultation with the school's contact teacher, the AGTV Coordinator and BJR team. The team from BJR in Munich oversee any concerns whilst the students are in Germany in consultation with the AGTV Coordinator and Australian Group Leaders.

Applications

Students wishing to apply for exchange should discuss this with their German teacher at school to gain the school's support and then complete the initial **AGTV BJR Expression of Interest** form in German available on the AGTV website. This completed form should be emailed to the AGTV BJR Coordinator. It is **due by April 30 2020**.

Exchange application forms are then emailed to all students who have submitted an Expression of Interest, to be completed electronically. Forms are also emailed to applicants' schools for completion. This occurs in May.

Expressions of Interest and Applications received after the closing date may not be accepted. Please note that students are not selected on the basis of their German writing skills. Matchings are made on the basis of the detailed information provided on the Application Form.

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2020 AGTV BJR Student Exchange Program