

# A Holistic approach to Homestay: Enhancing Global Relationships.

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This paper will outline procedures the University of Newcastle undertook in the development of the Homestay program and the challenges and achievements, which unfolded along the way. The philosophy of the Homestay Program believes that 'each person can make a positive difference in the life of another'. Our program is an example of this belief as it brings together people from all walks of life and various cultures.

The Homestay program began in the year 2000 with a small number of families accommodating mainly study groups. As the number of International students requesting Homestay increased, the need for affordable 'home style accommodation' was recognised, also enabling community members to become affiliated with the University and creating further networks.

The rest of the paper will outline the processes that were implemented to ensure both the mutual enjoyment of the host families and students with consideration of the long term safety of International students. There will also be a description of how the program promotes community engagement by ensuring the Homestay families are regarded as valued partners in the program. It will outline the challenges faced and the strategies employed to address these challenges. The relationship that has evolved between families, students and the University is unique to our program as together we foster an environment that provides an arena for the cross-cultural adjustments necessary for students' academic and personal achievement as global citizens. Our program nurtures relationships with both the students and the host families, providing a holistic approach to enhance cross-cultural awareness, where cultural similarities are recognised and diversity celebrated.

Key words: enhancing interaction, cross-cultural adjustments, global citizens