

# A new way to stay.

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Xchange your time.  
Reduce your cost of living.



*Reduce your cost of living  
and save around \$18,000  
a year in living expenses.*

# Our Story

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Here's the story of how The Room Xchange was born.



*Ludwina Dautovic - Founder & CEO*

**We've created this e-book to answer your questions and provide you with more information about how an Xchange works.**

## **What is Xchanging?**

Xchanging is trading something you have (spare bedroom) for something you need or want (help).

It's a model that is based on access rather than ownership. It's utilising resources that already exist - time and spare bedrooms.

## **How it all began**

Our founder, Ludwina Dautovic, had a life changing experience a few years ago when her eldest son left home. She felt what many parents at this stage of life feel - the emptying of her nest.

As some time went by Ludwina started to see the room as a cost centre. It was only used a couple of times a year when family came to stay and she wanted to better utilise the space.

She then listed the room on Airbnb for a year and loved the variety of guests who stayed with her. However, what she didn't like was the four hours it took to get the entire house 'hotel ready' for a \$50 a night guest!

Ludwina cancelled her account and wondered how she could bring the same joy into her home but reduce her workload instead of adding to it.

During this time some friends of her adult kids needed a place to stay while on their travels so she opened her home to them. So they could

feel more at home, she suggested they help out for a couple of hours a day in Xchange for food and accommodation. The idea was well received and became a significant part of her lifestyle for the following few years.

Her guests loved the arrangement so much they would end up staying longer than originally planned and became part of their home and family.

The help Ludwina and her husband received gave them more time on their evenings and weekends. Her guests had the opportunity to live in a nice home where they felt safe, cared for and were able to massively reduce their living expenses. It was a great win-win.

After hearing from many of her friends that it was a great idea and how could they find someone to Xchange with, her entrepreneurial radar kicked in and The Room Xchange was born.

**Xchanging for one year can save you around \$18,000. That could go towards a deposit on a house, an overseas holiday or pay your university fees.**

# Who can be a guest?

Guests provide our hosts with an agreed amount of help around the house each day in Xchange for food and accommodation.

## UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

University Students who need accommodation closer to where they are studying but can't afford high rents and living expenses.



## INDEPENDENT YOUTH

Independent youth who want to leave home but can't afford to commit to a lease or rent, causing them to remain dependent on their parents.



## TRAVELLERS - SHORT & LONG TERM

Short-term travelers who might like to stay for a week or two in a region. They can offer their specific skill set on a short-term basis.

Mid to long-term travellers on a working holiday visa and looking to stay in one place for at least one month at a time. They're looking for a more local experience and to really delve into the region they're staying in.



## IN BETWEENERS

In-betweeners who are either beginning a new chapter in their life or who find themselves in-between stages of life and need something stable until they get back on their feet.



Depending on how many hours you can help out a household each week will depend on what you will receive. We recommend 2 hours a day or 14 hours a week in Xchange for food and accommodation. However, if you have a specialised skill, you can negotiate less time as the value of that skill could be higher than domestic help. If you want to do less and contribute to food costs, you can negotiate say 10 hours a week. It's up to you and the host to work it out.

# Who can be a host?

**Hosts are households who receive an agreed amount of help around the house each day in Xchange for food and accommodation.**

## PROFESSIONALS & ENTREPRENEURS

Professionals and entrepreneurs who are working long hours. They're likely to have a closer relationship with Uber Eats than they have with their own fridge! Your guest can help with food preparation, walk your dog, pick up the dry cleaning or even do your Christmas shopping. Think of it like having a personal assistant. They could even help out with non professional tasks in your business.



## BUSY FAMILIES

Parents who are juggling paid work, housework, school, sporting activities, cooking, cleaning and the list goes on and on. Your guest could help with the weekly grocery shopping, make the kid's lunches, drop them off at school, babysitting or help out with their homework.



## EMPTY NESTERS

Empty nesters who are feeling a little lonely now that the kids have flown the coop. You might not like the idea of downsizing but are struggling to manage the large, family home. Your memories are deeply rooted in the home and your friends live locally. Having a guest to help out with basic household upkeep plus inject some youthful energy back in the home would be warmly welcomed.



## ABLE ELDERLY COUPLES OR SINGLES

Able elderly who are lonely and need a hand with some of the heavy lifting around the house. Their adult children might be sandwiched in between caring for their own children and their elderly parents. Knowing that someone is in the home to keep them company and offer some household support is comforting for all.



**“The Room Xchange is a great option for accommodation in the holiday season.”**

*Chris Zeiher, Lonely Planet*

# Getting started

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Now, let's get you started!

## Step 1



CREATE YOUR FREE  
ACCOUNT

## Step 2



BUILD YOUR  
PROFILE

## Step 3



SEARCH FOR  
GUESTS

## Step 4



START  
XCHANGING

# Things you can help a household with

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From short-term Xchange to long-term.

### Short-term

- Sorting out spaces around the home such as: garage, cupboards, wardrobes, kitchen pantry and cupboards.
- Listing your items for sale on e-Bay.
- Wardrobe styling, do your Christmas shopping, get your 'to-do' list done, spring cleaning or start a vegetable garden.
- Business services such as: content writing, social media marketing plan and admin.

### Long-term

- Day to day cleaning, childcare, drop offs and pick ups, elderly care, cooking meals, grocery shopping etc.

# We know what's important to you

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## Safety and security

All our users are vetted and verified via Digital iD by Australia Post.



## Insurance

All our users are covered under our \$5,000,000 public liability insurance policy when the Xchange is booked via our platform.



## Fair use of service

The hours will depend on the skill being offered. eg domestic help will be a different value to graphic design help. Talk with your host to negotiate a fair Xchange based on what is being offered.



## Customer care & support

You can book a call anytime with our customer care team.

For additional information, read the [FAQ's](#) at the end of the e-book.

# Create a great profile

Creating a compelling profile will help you attract your ideal guest.



To create your listing, simply complete all sections in your profile. Most of the questions are multiple choice so it's nice and easy.

They are:

- Basic details
- Preferences
- Priorities in an Xchange
- Skills & talents
- Photos

To connect with guests on our platform, your profile and verification needs to be completed. It ensures all our users are safe and vetted. A good profile will include photos, general information about you, what your needs are, the kind of household you want to stay with and what you can offer a host. It will only take you about ten minutes to complete.

## Put your best foot forward!

Being creative and interesting will give you the best opportunity of finding a host who is perfect for you!

## Be honest

Be clear about the type of household you're looking for. Be as open and honest as you can be in terms of who you are and any quirks you might have. Think of it in the same way you would when making a decision about a share house.

## Check your grammar

Please be precise with your spelling and written language. Many people are turned off by poor grammar and text speak and will move past your profile.

## Update regularly

Keep your profile up to date. Make the effort to refresh your profile on a regular basis. Circumstances may change in your life, e.g. your dates may need to be updated if your availability has changed. The more information you can provide that is current, the better your chances of finding the right Xchange.

## Have fun

Most hosts prefer guests who are lighthearted and don't take things too seriously. Show that you have a sense of humour. If you can make someone laugh, it's a great ice-breaker!

## Happy Xchanging!

### PHOTO TIP

If you can show yourself in action, do it. A good photo can go a long way to convey the skills you have and what you can contribute, e.g. If you're a good cook, show some images of meals you can prepare.

# Vetting & verification

When building our marketplace, creating trust in our community is important.



We want you to feel confident that the person you're Xchanging with is who they say they are. So we have a two step verification process. The first step is a SMS verification. The second step is your Digital iD by Australia Post.

**We partnered with Australia Post's Digital iD which enables all users to be verified using a form of government photo iD such as a drivers licence or passport.**

Before you can connect with other users on the platform you need to be verified by Digital iD. Once you're verified, your Digital iD badge will appear on your profile.

## What is Digital iD™?

Digital iD™ is a game-changing new technology that puts you in control of your identity. It allows you to verify your information digitally – then use your smartphone to prove your identity.

It's safer than traditional forms of ID too, since you're the only one who can access and share your information.

The good news is, The Room Xchange does not store your information; it's done completely within Digital iD™. Once you've verified your details, a Digital iD™ verification badge will show up on your profile.

## You're in good hands with Digital iD™

Australia Post verifies over 6 million identities each year within their postal network, making them a trusted choice for identity verification.

## Police Checks

For some hosts it's important that their guest have a valid police check, particularly if they have children. You can apply for a police check directly via our platform. If you have an existing, valid Police Check that is less than one year old, you can upload it into your profile and once sighted by our team your profile will show a Police Check badge.



To find out more about Digital iD™ by Australia Post click [here](#).

# Finding the right host

You're signed up, verified and profile is complete.  
It's time to find a host!



Finding an ideal host is no different to finding an ideal housemate. Having similar interests, tastes in food, personalities and values is a good start.

You can learn about the host and the household on their profile. If you like what you read, you can reach out to them privately via our in-built messaging system.

## Once you've found a host you like, it's time to connect!

Simply request to connect with them via our private, in-built messaging system to start the conversation.

If you're happy with how that's going, you can swap phone numbers and have a real conversation.

## Here are some suggestions to help you start the conversation:

- What do you like to do on the weekends?
- Are the people in your household early risers or do they stay up late?
- What interests do you have?
- What activities do you like to do in your spare time?
- Are there any quirky things about your household that I might find interesting?

You're on a reconnaissance mission to determine if you're compatible. Keep it light-hearted and fun, but ask the same type of questions you would ask if you were interviewing for a sharehome.

## Meeting face-to-face is the next best step.

Meeting up for a coffee is a great idea. If the host is comfortable, they might even invite you for dinner so you can also meet the other people in the household.

Either way, you want to make sure that you do see the house and meet the people in it before you make your final decision.

If you're not in the same location, arrange a video call using Facebook messenger or Skype for example.

**"The Room Xchange is a much better alternative to Airbnb for travellers."** – Chris Zeiher, Director – Lonely Planet



# Customer Care Support

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We're here to help.



## Q & A's

Questions you can ask potential hosts.



## INSURANCE

\$5m insurance coverage for all users when you book the Xchange via our platform.



## VERIFICATION

Assurance that all our users are vetted and verified.



## BLOG

Articles on Xchanging, tips and stories from hosts and guests.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Promotion of your profile to our community and social media channels.



## COMMUNICATION

In-built tools to make connecting and Xchanging easy.

If you have any questions, you can book a call with our friendly Customer Care Team whenever you need.

Simply click [here](#) to book a call via our [online calendar](#).

Or you can email us at: [support@theroomxchange.com](mailto:support@theroomxchange.com)

# Host Xchange stories

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Every Xchange has a story.

Here are stories from some of our hosts.



## Tiffany Cherry, 46

Busy Professional Single Mother

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Tiffany is a professional female sports broadcaster and is an executive at the Richmond Football Club. She welcomed Li as a guest to help with her young daughter. A busy, professional mother she finds it hard to juggle career and raising a daughter on her own. Li has not only made things easier for Tiffany, she's become part of the family, changing the way Tiffany lives.

[Watch Tiffany's testimonial.](#)



## David & Catherine, 20's

Busy Professionals/entrepreneurs

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David and Catherine are a professional couple who both run their own businesses. They recently bought their first home and wanted some help preparing vegan meals so they could concentrate on growing their businesses. They welcomed Sally into their home and were delighted with her delicious cooking and her ability to whip their new home into shape.

[Watch their testimonials.](#)



## Maggie Shaw, 91

Able Elderly

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Maggie lives in Brisbane whilst her daughter, Wendy lives in Melbourne. Wendy was looking for someone to help her ageing mother. Maggie's guest prepares several meals each week, helps out with the laundry, drives Maggie to her appointments and assists with grocery shopping. Best of all, Wendy has peace of mind and it's reduced her need to travel to Brisbane as often.

[Watch Maggie's testimonial.](#)

# Guest Xchange Stories

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Every Xchange has a story.

Here are stories from some of our guests.



## Mengxi Li, 32

International Student

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Li is an international student from China living in Melbourne. With no family there she felt lonely. After finding The Room Xchange, Li's quality of life dramatically improved. Her host considers Li part of the family and Li's health and fitness has also improved. So much in fact, that her host Tiffany, who works for the Richmond Football Club, produced a feature story on Li as part of the #ThisGirlCanVic campaign.

[Watch Li's testimonial.](#)



## Guillaume Dubois, 26

International Traveller

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Guillaume was on a two-year working holiday in Australia and found an Xchange with a professional couple and their adult daughter. He lived with the family for 1.5 years and during that time was amazed at how much the family came to mean to him. So much so he called his host, 'Ma' and was referred to as one of the family. Now back in Canada, he is still in touch with the host family and considers it a life changing experience.

[Watch Guillaume's testimonial.](#)



## Sally Batt, 54

In-betweenener

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After 26 years of marriage, Sally and her husband divorced and also lost their family business. She found herself couch-surfing while trying to build a wedding photography business. She started Xchanging and after only four months, her business had grown so much she was able to leave and rent her own apartment. Sally attributes her success to having had the opportunity to live expense free for a while.

[Watch Sally's testimonial.](#)

# FAQ's

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**Here are our most commonly asked FAQ's.  
You can read the full list on our website.**

## **How much does it cost?**

We have worked hard at finding an affordable solution for our users. Our pricing model is fair for you and for us. It covers our costs, keeps our lights on, provides insurance for all our users and customer care support.

## **Short-term Xchanges. Casual rate at \$25 a week - no joining fee.**

Short-term Xchanges gives you the opportunity to have a guest stay with you for a week or two to see if you're compatible. If it works well, you can then commit on a month by month basis or long-term; whatever you and the guest are comfortable with.

Or you might be a guest who only wants to Xchange for a week at a time as you could be travelling from one place to the next or on a business trip. We have payment options for each.

## **Long-term Xchanges. Monthly rate of \$60 a month, plus a once off joining fee of \$99.**

If you Xchange for a minimum of a month or longer, you can get access to our long-term plan. It's a once off \$99 joining fee when you create your first Xchange and then only \$60 a month for the duration of your Xchange. You will never pay the \$99 again. To give you an idea, if you Xchanged for one year, it will only cost you \$819 a year which will save you over \$18,000 in living expenses. We think it's a pretty fair deal.

## **Insurance**

The Room Xchanges' Broadform Liability policy is designed to provide both hosts and guests with peace of mind that they are covered for third party bodily injury and property damage for the duration of any Xchange. When you book your Xchange via our platform, you can be confident that if an incident happens we've got you covered. If you'd like details of our coverage, you can find it on our website.

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**There are over 7 million unused spare bedrooms in Australia which equates to \$1.4 billion in wasted space.**

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# FAQ's

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## Where will my hosts come from?

Our hosts come from various locations around Australia and they join our platform for a variety of reasons. They might be busy professionals or entrepreneurs who are working their way up the corporate ladder and are too busy to attend to things around the home. They could be busy families who are juggling paid work, housework, school, sporting activities, cooking, cleaning and an endless 'to-do' list. Or they could be able elderly who are lonely and need a hand with some of the heavy lifting around the house.



## How do I know if they're a good match?

The hosts profile will give you a good indication of compatibility on a practical level. Once you start a conversation and/or meet, you can ask about other things that are important to you. At this stage it's more about your gut feeling, whether you like the host and can imagine sharing their home.

Or, you can Xchange for a week and if it works out well, you can go on our monthly plan from there.



## What if I don't get along with my host?

Communication is the magic key to any successful Xchange. If you follow the information and steps in this e-book, you'll find that your Xchange will be a good fit and will run smoothly. If you're not communicating, that's when issues can arise.

If you do have any challenges, you can book a call with our [Customer Care Team](#) any day and we'll help you work through it. If the Xchange needs to come to an end, we'll help you exit your Xchange as smoothly as possible.



**“Changing the way we live by creating micro-communities in the most intimate place of all - home.”**

# Tips

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## How to create a successful Xchange.



Have a regular catch up, over a meal, so you can chat about how things are going.



Create an Xchange diary so you can note when you're home, if something has come up or when your host needs something specific.



Spend some time together outside of the house and be a tourist in your own city!



When you begin your Xchange, we'll send your host a guest book template so they can fill it in with any relevant information that will be helpful for you to know. Such as emergency numbers, rubbish days, local medical clinic etc.



Give your host and the household some time to adjust to your company. Check in with them from time to time to see how they're feeling and if they're happy with the help you're Xchanging. Taking initiative will go down well.



THE ROOM **XCHANGE**