

# Delays in Citizenship Applications for Permanent Refugee Visa Holders

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Since September 2013 people on permanent visas have been experiencing significant delays from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (**Department**) in the process of applying for Australian citizenship.

The Department claims to process 80% of citizenship applications in 80 days. In practice, it is taking far longer, particularly for those who arrived in Australia by boat.

## What can you do?

### 1. Write a letter to the Perth Visa and Citizenship Office

You can use the template letters at the end of this fact sheet appropriate for your situation:

#### You:

- have lodged an application for citizenship; **AND**
- have paid the fee; **BUT**
- have not had any communication or acknowledgement of your application; **AND / OR**
- You have not been invited to take the citizenship test.

➔ [Template 1](#)

#### You:

- have lodged an application; **AND**
- have passed the citizenship test; **BUT**
- are waiting for approval of your Australian citizenship.

➔ [Template 2](#)

#### You:

- have passed the citizenship test; **AND**
- have received approval of your Australian citizenship; **BUT**
- have not been invited to attend a ceremony to take the oath.

➔ [Template 3](#)

[Community focused legal services for people new to Australia](#)

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## 2. Make a complaint

### (a) Make a complaint to the Department

You may wish to make a complaint to the Department online at:

<https://www.border.gov.au/about/contact/provide-feedback/compliments-complaints-suggestions>

This will raise awareness about the issue and they may give you further information about your application. Take note of your complaint reference number.

### (b) Make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman

To make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman, you must first have made a complaint to the Department. If you have not had a response from the Department within 2 weeks or you have been waiting for a long time and your application has not been processed, then you can make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman at:

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/pages/making-a-complaint/>

## 3. Talk to your local Member of Parliament

You can also contact your local Member of Parliament and ask to meet with them to discuss the problem. This will help raise awareness of the issue. You can find the details of your local MP at:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Guidelines\\_for\\_Contacting\\_Senators\\_and\\_Members](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members)

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**TEMPLATE LETTER 1**

Address:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Perth Visa and Citizenship Office  
Locked Bag 7  
NORTHBRIDGE WA 6865

**Re: Acknowledgment of Citizenship Application**

To whom it may concern,

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
delivered an Application for Citizenship (**Application**) to the \_\_\_\_\_ office on  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I have not received an acknowledgment of the Application nor had the Application returned as invalid.

I kindly request an acknowledgment of receipt for this Application, including an update on the progress of the application or further documents/information for processing.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

**TEMPLATE LETTER 2**

Address:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Perth Visa and Citizenship Office  
Locked Bag 7  
NORTHBRIDGE WA 6865

**Re: Citizenship Approval**

To whom it may concern,

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
delivered an Application for Citizenship (**Application**) to the \_\_\_\_\_ office on  
\_\_\_\_\_. I passed the citizenship test on \_\_\_\_\_, my reference  
number is \_\_\_\_\_.

I have not received approval or refusal of my Application.

I kindly request an update on the progress of my Application.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

**TEMPLATE LETTER 3**

Address:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Perth Visa and Citizenship Office  
Locked Bag 7  
NORTHBRIDGE WA 6865

**Re: Citizenship Ceremony**

To whom it may concern,

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
passed the citizenship test on \_\_\_\_\_, my reference number is  
\_\_\_\_\_. My Application for Citizenship was approved on  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I have not received an invitation to attend a citizenship ceremony.

I kindly request an update on the progress of this invitation.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)