

Becoming an Australian Citizen

There are different ways in which you can become an Australian citizen. This information sheet is for **Permanent Residents who entered Australia on a Refugee and Humanitarian visa or a Family Stream visa.**

You should be aware that the Department of Immigration and Border Protection may review any previous visa applications you have made and any information or documents they hold in relation to you at the time that you apply for citizenship.

Applying for Citizenship as a Permanent Resident

If you hold a permanent residency visa in Australia, you may be eligible to apply for Australian citizenship. This is called citizenship by conferral.

To be eligible to apply for citizenship you **must**:

- satisfy the residence requirements;
- be over 18 years old;
- be of good character;
- successfully complete the citizenship test to satisfy that you:
 - understand the nature of the application;
 - have a basic knowledge of English; and
 - have an adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship;

AND

- if granted citizenship, intend to live in Australia or maintain a close and continuing association with Australia

Unless you are stateless, you will not be granted citizenship if:

- you are outside Australia at the time of the decision; **OR**
- you cannot provide the required Identity documents; **OR**
- criminal proceedings against you for an offence against Australian Law are pending; **OR**
- it is less than 2 years since you were released from prison after serving a prison sentence of 12 months or more, or 10 years if you are a repeat offender; **OR**
- you are subject to certain conditions set by an Australian court (such as being released on parole, good behavior or bail) where action may be taken against you for breach of those conditions; **OR**
- you are in jail or a psychiatric institution by order of the court at the time of decision.

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

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Residence Requirements

The general residence requirements are set out below.

You must be present in Australia for 4 years immediately before the date of your citizenship application and as a permanent resident for at least 12 months immediately before the date of your citizenship application.

You must not be outside Australia for more than 90 days in the 12 months before applying for citizenship.

Good Character

You must be of good character to obtain Australian citizenship. As citizenship gives you special responsibilities and privileges, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (**Department**) will consider any criminal convictions you have.

If you have any criminal convictions in Australia or overseas, you must disclose them on your application form. You can call the Citizenship Information Line for advice on **131 880**. You may wish to obtain legal advice before applying for citizenship if you have criminal convictions.

Citizenship Test

You must successfully complete the citizenship test before citizenship can be granted. There is no fee for sitting the test and centres are held at Department offices in the capital cities of all states and at some regional centres. The locations can be found at:

<http://www.border.gov.au/Citizenship/Pages/locator/Citizenship-Test-Locator.aspx>

The test is made up of 20 multiple-choice questions which are in English. You need to get at least 15 questions correct to pass the test. The questions cover subjects such as Australia's values, history, culture, geography, government, national symbols and emblems and the responsibilities and privileges of being an Australian citizen.

You can take the test as many times as you like. Failing the test does not affect your permanent residence visa or your ability to continue living in Australia.

The questions from the test are based on the test resource ***Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond***. There is also a DVD and practice questions available. All these resources can be found at:

<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi/Lear/Citizenship-test/Australian-citizenship-test-resource>

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How to Apply

The current application fee to apply for citizenship is **\$285**. Concessions may be available in some circumstances.

Applications can be made online or by paper. Generally applications will be made using **Form 1300t Application for Australian Citizenship - General Eligibility** but your individual circumstances will determine which form to use.

You can use the Department's Citizenship Wizard to give you information about what to do and how to apply for Australian citizenship. The wizard is available at:

<https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi/Appl/Citizenship-wizardassist>.

Documents Required

A document checklist can be found at <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi/Appl/What-documents-do-you-need> which provides detailed information on the types of documents required.

You will need to provide 3 categories of documents:

- proof of identity documents;
- good character documents; and
- other supporting documents.

Identity Documents

You must provide:

- 3 documents that together show your:
 - photograph;
 - signature;
 - current residential address; and
 - birth name, date of birth and gender,

AND

- proof of change of name, if applicable; **AND**
- identity declaration completed by a person with the appropriate authority; **AND**
- evidence of your arrival in Australia.

You may be required to provide a current and previous passport or a travel document with a visa (e.g. Document for Travel to Australia, PLO56 (M56) or Titre de Voyage).

Examples of documents you may use are your:

passport
birth certificate
national ID card

Australian drivers licence
utility bill
rental agreement

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Good Character Documents

You will need to provide original penal clearance certificates from overseas countries if:

- since the grant of your permanent Australian visa:
 - you lived or travelled overseas since the age of 18 years or over; **AND**
 - the total time spent overseas added up to 12 months or more; **AND**
 - the time spent in any one country was more than 90 days,

OR

- the Department asks you to do so.

Other Supporting Documents

You may be required to provide other supporting documents.

Originals or Certified Copies?

You should not provide original documents unless they are requested. Instead you should provide certified copies of your documents. There is a designated list of occupations of people who can certify documents. If any of your documents are not in English, you will need to provide an official translation.

After Lodging Your Application

After you have lodged your citizenship application you will receive a receipt. Make sure that you keep this receipt safe as it is proof that you lodged your citizenship application.

You will be required to attend an appointment where your documents and identity will be checked.

It is important that you keep your address updated with the Department. If you are successful you will receive a letter inviting you to a citizenship ceremony. You must attend a ceremony within 12 months of the notification of your citizenship. At this ceremony, you will pledge your commitment as an Australian citizen.

Where Can I Get Assistance?

The Humanitarian Group will provide advice on eligibility for Australian citizenship in some circumstances, but does not generally assist in completing citizenship applications. You may contact the following organisations for assistance:

- **MercyCare**
4 Brewer Place, Mirrabooka
(08) 9344 2468
- **Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre**
1/14 Chesterfield Road, Mirrabooka
(08) 9345 5755

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