

Voluntary Return

What is voluntary return assistance?

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) can assist eligible migrants to make an informed and voluntary decision to return to their home country or to a country where they have the legal right to enter and reside.

Voluntary Return Assistance may be appropriate if you are in Australia and;

- You wish to return to your home country or to a country where you have the legal right to enter and reside;
- You have applied for a protection (refugee) visa; and
- You have been unsuccessful in your application or do not wish to wait for the outcome.

Assistance is available through the following programs:

- Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Program – for Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMAs – i.e., for people who arrived by boat)
- Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Program – for people who arrived by plane

The support you receive will depend on your individual circumstances.

More information on this can be found on the IOM [website](#). As requesting voluntary return may impact your ability to obtain an Australian visa, you should seek legal advice before making your decision.

At what stage of the application process can I apply for voluntary return?

You can apply for voluntary return if you have applied for a Permanent Protection Visa, Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) and are at one of the following stages:

- You are still waiting on a decision on your visa application; or
- You are undergoing merits review (e.g. at the IAA or AAT); or
- You are undergoing judicial review (e.g. at the Federal Court or High Court); or
- You have applied for Ministerial Intervention; or
- You have been through all of the above.

You can also apply for voluntary return if you have been found not to be a refugee on Nauru.

What kind of assistance is available?

If you decide to voluntarily return, you may be eligible for the following kinds of assistance:

- Information and counselling regarding voluntary return
- Assistance applying for passports or travel documents (e.g., liaising with foreign offices, providing administration support, application fees)
- Travel assistance such as transport arrangements and booking flights (e.g., air tickets, transit assistance, transport to/from airport, reception assistance, medical escort)
- Pre-departure, en-route and in-country support upon return (e.g., accommodation, daily subsistence, post-return allowance, material aid, medical assistance)

- Reintegration assistance (for IMAs only) (e.g., reception assistance in home country; reintegration planning that may include providing a small cash or “in-kind” grant for you to pursue small business income generation, vocational training, schooling or other such support to facilitate integration in home country; follow-up monitoring and support)

What is the process if I am considering voluntary return ?

You can make a confidential appointment with IOM for information and counselling about voluntary return via the following methods:

- Phone: Call (02) 9248 2160 or 1300 116 986
- Email: AVRSydney@iom.int or AVRaustralia@iom.int

Website: <https://australia.iom.int/contact-us> (online referral form)

Will IOM share my information with the Department of Home Affairs?

IOM services are confidential and IOM will not share your details with the Department of Home Affairs or other parties unless you give consent after deciding to voluntarily return.

Getting help from RACS

RACS is entirely independent of the Department of Home Affairs. All assistance is free.

If you would like advice or assistance, RACS offers the following service options:

Service	Day	Time	Address/Number
Client Line	Monday to Friday	11AM to 1PM and 2PM to 4PM	(02) 8355 7227 or admin@racs.org.au
Auburn Drop-in	Wednesday	Register in person from 10 AM to 12 PM	Visit 44A Macquarie Road, Auburn

Please note: This fact sheet contains general information only. It does not constitute legal or migration advice. RACS is independent of the Department of Home Affairs. All assistance is free. This factsheet was updated in October 2023.