

How to Apply for Australian Citizenship

This fact sheet is for refugees and their family members who are Australian permanent residents and their children born in Australia. It explains the most common ways you can become an Australian citizen and the steps to take to apply for citizenship or evidence of citizenship.

Australian citizens have the right to travel on an Australian passport, work in certain Australian Government jobs, and the right and the responsibility to vote in elections and serve on juries.

Some countries do not allow dual citizenship. If you are a citizen of another country, you should check if becoming an Australian citizen will affect your citizenship of that country. RACS cannot provide advice about the citizenship laws of other countries.

It is very important that the information you provide in a citizenship application is correct and the documents are genuine. If the documents you provide in a citizenship application have information that is different to information otherwise provided to the Department of Home Affairs (the Department), you should seek legal advice. Inconsistent information may lead to visa refusal or cancellation. You can request a copy of your previous immigration records under Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation. If you need help doing this, contact RACS.

Pathways to become an Australian Citizen

Most refugees become Australian citizens by meeting the general eligibility requirements for citizenship. These include being in Australia with a valid visa continuously (not unlawful) for 4 years and being a permanent resident for at least one year before applying to become an Australian citizen. See **Pathway 1: General Eligibility** below.

Some children born in Australia can apply for citizenship if both their parents were stateless (did not have citizenship of any country) at the time of their birth. **If this applies to you, please refer to the RACS Fact Sheet – “Citizenship application process for Stateless Children”, available [here](#).**

Some children born in Australia become Australian citizens without having to apply. They just need to apply for evidence that they are Australian citizens. Children born in Australia who do not need to apply for Australian citizenship are children who either have:

- One parent who is an Australian citizen or permanent resident at the time of the child’s birth; or
- Been ordinarily resident in Australia for 10 years since birth.

See **Pathway 2: Children Born in Australia – One Parent is an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident or Child is Ordinarily Resident in Australia for 10 Years** below.

More information on the above pathways, as well as what to expect after you apply, is set out below.

Pathway 1: General Eligibility

Step One: Check your eligibility

When you apply for citizenship, you must meet the following requirements:

1. Age

You must generally be aged 16 or over, or a child aged 15 or under included in a parent or guardian's application. Children aged 16 or 17 must apply on their own and cannot be included in a parent or guardian's application. If you are a child aged 15 or under applying on your own, you should seek legal advice.

2. Permanent residence

You and any other person included in the application must be an Australian permanent resident. If you are a New Zealand citizen, you should seek legal advice.

3. General residence requirement

If you are aged 16 or over, you must generally have been:

- Living in Australia on a valid visa for the past 4 years, including as an Australian permanent resident for the past 12 months (see [residence calculator](#)); and
- Not outside of Australia for more than 12 months in the past 4 years, including more than 90 days in the past 12 months.

Children aged 15 or under included in a parent or guardian's application do not need to meet the general residence requirement.

4. Character requirement

If you are aged 18 or over, the Department must be satisfied that you are of good character. The Department may consider any recorded criminal convictions; court obligations; association with people of concern; incidents of reported domestic violence; and your honesty, including whether you have provided false or misleading information in relation to a visa or citizenship application. If you have a criminal record (including driving/traffic offences) or other character concerns, you should seek legal advice.

5. Knowledge of Australia and English

If you are **aged 18 to 59**, you must generally demonstrate your understanding of Australia, Australian citizenship and basic English by attending a citizenship interview and passing a citizenship test (see **Step Four: Attend your citizenship interview and/or test** below).

If you are **aged 16, 17 or 60 or over**, you may need to attend a citizenship interview, but you will not need to pass a citizenship test.

If you have a **physical or mental incapacity or impairment** that may prevent you from passing the citizenship test, you should seek legal advice.

6. Close and continuing link to Australia

You must intend to live in Australia or maintain a close and continuing association with Australia while overseas. If you intend to live or travel for a long time overseas, you should seek legal advice.

Step Two: Gather your documents

You and any other person included in the application will need the following documents:

- **Identity documents** – The Department must be satisfied of your identity from birth. If you do not have identity documents from your home country, or if you have had different names, dates of birth, citizenships or other issues that may raise identity concerns, you should seek legal advice.
 - If you are **aged 16 or over**, you will need:
 - 3 documents that show your:
 - birth name, date of birth, gender, photograph, and signature (for example: full birth certificate showing parents' names, family or household registration document, Australian driver's license, passport, national identity card, UNHCR document, student card); and
 - current residential address (for example: utility bill, bank statement)
 - Evidence of arrival in Australia (for example: stamped passport, Document for Travel to Australia, PLO56)
 - If you have changed your name since birth, you will also need evidence of any change of name (for example: marriage certificate, divorce certificate, change of name document)
 - If you are **aged 15 or under**:
 - Full birth certificate showing your parent's details
 - Your passport or travel document
 - If you have changed your name since birth, you will also need evidence of any change of name
 - Adoption documents or parenting orders (if applicable)
 - Identity declaration – This is a document generally signed by an Australian citizen who has known you for over one year and is qualified to sign the declaration. The application forms have information about who is qualified to sign the identity declaration.
 - If you apply using the paper application form, the identity declaration is at Question 36 on [Form 1300t](#), and Question 35 on [Form 1290](#)
 - If you apply online, you will need to complete [Form 1195](#)
 - Passport-sized photograph signed by the same person who signs your identity declaration (see the identity declaration for photograph requirements)
- **Character documents** – **Original** [overseas penal clearance certificate](#) from any country where you have spent 90 days or more, if you have spent 12 months or more outside Australia as an Australian permanent resident aged 18 or over.
- Evidence of eligibility for a [fee concession or exemption](#) (for example: Pensioner Concession Card) (if applicable)

All documents you provide must:

- Be clear, colour scans (online application) or certified copies (paper application);
- If not in English, translated by someone accredited by the [National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters \(NAATI\)](#). Provide both the original document and the translation; and
- Have a maximum file size of 500KB for identity documents and 5MB for other documents.

Step Three: Apply for citizenship and pay the applicable fee

The cost of the application is:

- **Adult** – \$540 (unless eligible for a [fee concession or exemption](#))
- **Child aged 16 or 17** – \$330
- **Child aged 15 or under included in a parent or guardian’s application** – \$0
- **[Fee concession](#)** (holder of a Pensioner Concession Card) – \$75

You can generally apply using the paper application form or online.

Paper application

You **must** submit a paper application if you:

- Do not have a travel document (for example: current or expired passport, Document for Travel to Australia, ImmiCard, PLO56, Titre de Voyage);
- Are eligible for a [fee concession or exemption](#); or
- Have not travelled in or out of Australia since July 1990.

If you are **aged 18 to 59**, complete [Form 1300t](#).

If you are **aged 16, 17 or 60 or over**, complete [Form 1290](#).

You can pay the application fee in ImmiAccount:

- Go to ImmiAccount at <https://online.immi.gov.au/lusc/login> and login to your account, or create a new account if you do not have one
- From the ‘My payments’ menu, select ‘Manage payments’
- Select ‘Pre-pay Citizenship Paper Application’
- For ‘Nearest Office’ – if you are in NSW, select ‘Parramatta Office’

If you are in NSW, send your completed form, supporting documents and payment receipt to:

Department of Home Affairs
GPO Box 9984
Sydney NSW 2001

We recommend that you send your application by Registered Post or Express Post so that you can confirm that it has been delivered and keep a copy of your application for your records.

Online application

Complete your application online in ImmiAccount at: <https://online.immi.gov.au/lusc/login>.

You can pay the application fee and attach your supporting documents at the end of the online application in ImmiAccount.

Step Four: Attend your citizenship interview and/or test

If you are **aged 18 to 59**, you must generally attend a citizenship interview and pass a citizenship test.

If you are **aged 16, 17 or 60 or over**, you may need to attend a citizenship interview, but you will not need to pass a citizenship test.

After you submit your citizenship application, the Department will schedule an appointment for your citizenship interview and/or test and send you a letter with the details. You must bring the original identity documents that you provided with your application, as well as any other documents requested by the Department.

Citizenship interview

At the interview, the Department will confirm your identity and understanding of Australian citizenship and basic English. Children included in your application do not need to attend the interview.

Citizenship test

The test is in English and consists of 20 multiple choice questions about Australia. To pass the test, you need to correctly answer 75% of the questions, including all 5 Australian values questions.

To prepare for the test, you can:

- Read the [Our Common Bond booklet](#) in English or 40 other languages
- Listen to the [Our Common Bond podcast](#) (in English only)
- Do the [practice test](#)
- Watch the [SBS Learn English Australian Citizenship](#) videos
- Take a [free class](#) in English for Citizenship and/or Preparation for the Citizenship Test

If you pass the test, the Department will continue processing your application.

If you fail the test, the Department will generally schedule two more appointments for you before refusing your application.

Step Five: Attend your citizenship ceremony

If you are aged 16 or over, you must generally attend a citizenship ceremony.

After the Department approves your citizenship application, the Department or your local council will schedule your citizenship ceremony and send you a letter with the details about 4 weeks before. You must bring your invitation and photo identification or 3 documents that show your name, address and signature.

At the ceremony, you must make the [Australian citizenship pledge](#). You will then be an Australian citizen.

At or after the ceremony, you will receive your citizenship certificate.

If you do not attend a ceremony within 12 months of your approval, the Department may cancel your approval unless you provide an acceptable reason.

Pathway 2: Children Born in Australia – One Parent is an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident or Child is Ordinarily Resident in Australia for 10 Years

Step One: Check your child's eligibility

Your child must meet the following requirements:

- Be born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986; and either:
 - At least one parent was an Australian citizen or permanent resident when your child was born; or
 - Your child has been ordinarily resident in Australia for 10 years since birth. Your child is ordinarily resident in Australia if their permanent home is Australia, even if they have been temporarily absent from Australia.

If your child is a New Zealand citizen, you should seek legal advice.

Step Two: Gather your documents

You will need the following documents:

- Identity documents:
 - For your child **aged 16 or over**:
 - 3 documents that show their:
 - birth name, date of birth, gender, photograph, and signature (for example: full birth certificate showing parents' names, family or household registration document, Australian driver's licence, passport, national identity card, student card); and
 - current residential address (for example: utility bill, bank statement)
 - If your child has changed their name since birth, you will also need evidence of any change of name
 - For your child **aged 15 or under**:
 - Full birth certificate showing parent's details
 - Passport or travel document
 - If your child has changed their name since birth, you will also need evidence of any change of name
 - Identity declaration – This is a document generally signed by an Australian citizen who has known your child for over one year (unless your child is 6 or younger) and is qualified to sign the declaration. The application forms have information about who is qualified to sign the identity declaration. The identity declaration is on [Form 1195](#).
 - Passport-sized photograph signed by the same person who signs your identity declaration (see the identity declaration for photograph requirements)
- If at least **one parent was an Australian citizen or permanent resident** when your child was born:

- Evidence of that parent's Australian citizenship or permanent residence (for example: Australian passport, citizenship certificate or birth certificate; Australian permanent residence visa)
- If your child has been **ordinarily resident in Australia for 10 years** since birth:
 - Evidence of both parents' status in Australia at time of your child's birth (if available)
 - Your child's residence in Australia for 10 years since birth (for example: immunisation certificates, passport, school reports)

All documents you provide must:

- Be clear, colour scans;
- If not in English, translated by someone accredited by the [National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters \(NAATI\)](#). Provide both the original document and the translation; and
- Have a maximum file size of 500KB for identity documents and 5MB for other documents.

Step Three: Apply for evidence of your child's citizenship and pay the applicable fee

The cost of the application is \$265.

You must submit an online application.

Complete your application online in ImmiAccount at: <https://online.immi.gov.au/lusc/login>.

You can pay the application fee and attach your supporting documents at the end of the online application in ImmiAccount.

After you apply

Processing times

The processing time for **applications under Pathway 1** is approximately 5-20 months. If there are identity, character or other concerns, your application may take much longer. If there are such concerns and the Department is considering refusing your application, the Department will generally notify you by letter about its concerns, and give you an opportunity to address them, before refusing your application. If you receive such a letter, you should seek legal advice.

The processing time for **applications under Pathway 2** is approximately up to 22 days (+10 days for printing and posting the citizenship certificate).

More information about processing times is available [here](#).

Delays

If your application is outside standard processing times, you can:

- Request a copy of your application under FOI legislation to try to determine the reason for the delay
- Make a [complaint to the Department](#)
- If the Department does not respond, or you are not satisfied with the Department's response, make a [complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)
- Contact your [local Member of Parliament](#)

- Contact a private lawyer for advice about the prospects of applying for judicial review to expedite your application

Updating the Department

After you submit your application, update the Department if:

- There is any change to any of your details
- You plan to travel outside Australia

You can update the Department in ImmiAccount, by calling them at **131 880** or by emailing them as directed in any letter from them.

Approval and refusal

If your application is **approved**, the Department will notify you by letter with next steps and/or your citizenship certificate.

After your application is approved and you receive your citizenship certificate:

- You can apply for an Australian passport
- If you are aged 18 or over, you must enrol to vote

If your application is **refused**, the Department will notify you by letter with reasons for refusal. If you submitted an **application under Pathway 1**, you can apply for review of the refusal decision to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

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
Telephone Advice	Monday to Friday	11 AM to 1 PM and 2 PM to 4 PM	(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.