

Current options for those trying to leave Gaza / the Occupied Palestinian Territories / Israel

This factsheet provides RACS' understanding of responses to some Frequently Asked Questions we are currently receiving from people in Australia wishing to assist relatives and friends in Gaza, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel wanting help leaving to come to Australia. Please note that all the information in this factsheet we believe to be correct as at 14 December 2023, but the situation is changing rapidly.

- I have friends or relatives in danger and I want to help them to come to Australia see page 1
- If they get a visa, how do they leave?
 - Travel from Gaza see page 1
 - Travel from the West Bank see page 2
 - Travel to/from Israel see page 2
- Once someone arrives with a visitor visa to Australia, how long can they stay? Are there more permanent options to stay? see page 3
- I want to check on my family what can I do? see page 3
- I am an Australian Citizen or Visa holder in Gaza / the Occupied Palestinian Territories / Israel, how can I get help? see page 3

I have friends or relatives in danger and I want to help them to come to Australia

Currently the quickest way to leave and to come to Australia is to apply for a 600 visitor visa in the tourist stream. To do this, you will generally need a passport.

Palestinian nationals who wish to make a visa application to travel to Australia must hold a valid travel document. For those who have difficulty obtaining a travel document, you can contact the <u>Palestinian Embassy</u> where you are located which may be able to assist.

The process to apply for a visitor visa is to create an ImmiAccount, and lodge the application through there. A step by step guide to this process is at the end of this factsheet.

It's been reported that between 7 October and 20 November, 1,793 visas were granted to Israeli citizens and 860 to Palestinians.

For further information, and to ensure that you have the most up to date information, we suggest that you check the Department of Home Affairs website: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/hamas-israel-conflict

If they get a visa, how do they leave?



Travel from Gaza

Gaza is surrounded by blockades imposed by Israel and Egypt, which restrict movement. Israel prevents access to and from Gaza by sea and air. Land movement is restricted to three crossings: the Egypt-controlled Rafah crossing and Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings, which Israel controls.

As at 14 December 2023 crossing Rafah to Egypt seems to be the only way to leave Gaza. The Guardian notes that:

It is also important to note that being granted a visa does not mean someone can automatically leave Gaza. Citizens still have to be able to cross from Gaza into Egypt and this has proven very difficult in many cases. So far, only 127 Australian citizens, permanent residents and family members have been able to cross the border. Another 69 Australians have sought to leave, but have so far been unable to.

The Rafah border into Egypt has opened in a limited capacity. Any right of stay in Egypt currently appears to be very limited, with individuals required to show a visa or ticket to an onward destination. The situation is volatile and is subject to change.

Travel from the West Bank

In general, Palestinian Authority passport holders seeking to exit the West Bank must cross through one of the land borders with Israel and Jordan (and depending on which area in the West Bank, may need authorization to travel either from the Palestinian Authority or the Israel Coordinator of Government Affairs).

Palestinian Authority passport holders who are U.S. citizens are able to exit the West Bank via Israel (including flying out from Ben Gurion airport).

Leaving the West Bank is only possible via either Israel or Jordan. The most common routes are the Qalandia checkpoint – between Jerusalem and Ramallah – or the Allenby Bridge checkpoint in the Jordan Valley. In exceptional cases, a permit to travel through Ben-Gurion Airport might be obtained

Travel to/from Israel

Travel to Israel is severely disrupted due to conflict. Many flights to and from Israel have been cancelled, though some flights do continue to operate. Individuals wishing to travel to or from Israel should expect severe delays and cancellations.

For Israeli nationals wishing to depart Israel whose passports have expired, the Ministry of Interior desk on the 2^{nd} floor of Ben Gurion Airport Terminal 3 may be able to issue an emergency passport if the individual is booked on a flight within 48 hours.

East Jerusalem Palestinians who are residents of Israel (even if they do not have Israeli citizenship) can travel freely within Israel but would need an exit permit for international travel through Ben Gurion Airport.



The U.S. Embassy in Israel has <u>published</u> that U.S. citizens with Palestinian passports/identification cards cannot at this time request to enter Israel visa-free for visits up to 90 days for business, tourism or transit. The Embassy further noted that any unexpired B-2 permits issued prior to October 7, 2023 are no longer valid for such U.S. citizens.

To leave Israel, DFAT's Smart Traveller reports that:

Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport remains open and commercial flights are available. Airports may pause operations due to heightened security concerns. This may cause flight delays or cancellations.

Land border crossings to Jordan are open but may close at short notice.

Once someone arrives with a visitor visa to Australia, how long can they stay? Are there more permanent options to stay?

A 600 visitor visa in the tourist stream can be granted for different periods, with different "stay" periods of 3, 6 or 12 months. Once onshore, a person should then get advice from RACS about the prospects of success of a protection visa, taking into account their individual circumstances.

Once here in Australia, a person may also be eligible to apply for other kinds of visas in Australia such as a further visitor visa, a student visa, a temporary skills shortage visa, or a partner if they have an Australian partner. RACS can provide a list of commercial lawyers who can provide advice on all the kinds of visas a person may be eligible for, not just a protection visa.

I want to check on my family - what can I do?

For family members who have lost contact with relatives due to the current situation, the Restoring Family Links team at Australian Red Cross can assess your case and work through their Family Links Network:

The RFL Hotline is available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (AEST) on 1800 875 199 or via tracing@redcross.org.au

Refugees United is a non-profit helping refugee families that have lost contact with each other connect. They can be reached through their web portal at:

https://refunite.org/

I am an Australian Citizen or Visa holder in Gaza / the Occupied Palestinian Territories / Israel, how can I get help?

As at 14 December 2023, DFAT says:

The Australian Government is providing consular assistance to Australians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and supporting registered Australians.

Australian government officials from DFAT and other agencies have been deployed to the region to support assisted departures.



More than 1500 Australians have left Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (assisted and independently).

Australia is monitoring developments closely as the humanitarian situation in Gaza deteriorates. This information will be updated as required in line with the situation.

Australians in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories are encouraged to register with the <u>DFAT crisis</u> registration portal.

Australians in need of emergency consular assistance or that require assistance with departure should contact the Australian Government's 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre on +61 2 6261 3305 (from overseas) or 1300 555 135 (from within Australia).

For further information, and to ensure that you have the most up to date information, we suggest that you check the DFAT website: https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations/middle-east/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories

Smart Traveller currently advises:

- The situation is highly challenging and rapidly changing. Australians who want to leave are strongly encouraged to take the first available option.
- Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport remains open and commercial flights are available. Airports may pause operations due to heightened security concerns. This may cause flight delays or cancellations.
- Land border crossings to Jordan are open but may close at short notice.
- Monitor local media and public safety information updates through the <u>National Emergency</u> <u>Portal</u> (accessible in Israel only).
- If you're an Australian citizen or permanent resident in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories you can register on DFAT's <u>registration portal</u>. Keep your registration details up to date so we can contact you with important updates.
- Due to the security environment, the Government has offered voluntary departures to Australia of dependents of Australian officials posted in Tel Aviv and Ramallah.
- If you're planning to stay in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories, follow alerts to seek shelter.
- Since 27 October, Israeli Defence Forces have significantly expanded operations, including in Gaza and areas near the border with Gaza.
- The Israeli military announced on 13 October that the entire population of Gaza north of Wadi Gaza should relocate to Southern Gaza within 24 hours. We recommend following this advice.
- There have been large political demonstrations across Israel, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Protests can escalate and become violent. Be alert, avoid any large gatherings or demonstrations, and avoid areas which have been the site of recent violence.
- Israel is a target for terrorism, rocket fire and military confrontation. Terrorist attacks could happen at any time or anywhere. Always be alert. Have an exit plan. Tension and security risks exist close to Israel's borders with Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. There are ongoing threats of rocket attacks and military activity. Authorities are monitoring security on Israel's northern border.
- Security in the West Bank is unpredictable. This includes Nablus, Jenin, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho and Ramallah. Tensions are high. Violence occurs. Take care around West Bank checkpoints. If you're in the West Bank during military action or civil unrest, stay in a safe place indoors and away from windows. Take



- care when visiting the Old City in Jerusalem. Transportation and other services could be affected. Be alert to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Monitor media for the latest updates.
- If you're in Gaza, be aware of your surroundings and review your personal security plans. Monitor local media (including social media), UN alerts, and your own organisation's security contacts for information about changing security contacts and alerts to seek shelter. If it's possible to leave, carefully consider the safest means. We may not be able to provide consular help in Gaza.

Further contact information on how to contact DFAT can be found at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/contact-us

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 | 11AM to 1PM and 2PM to 4PM | (02) 8355 7227 or admin@racs.org.au |

Please note: This factsheet 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 prepared on 14 December 2023.

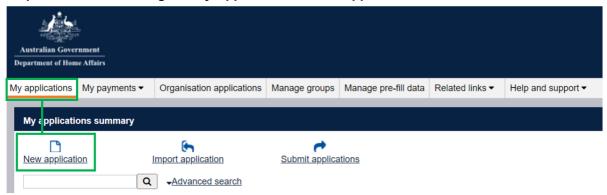


STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO A VISITOR VISA APPLICATION

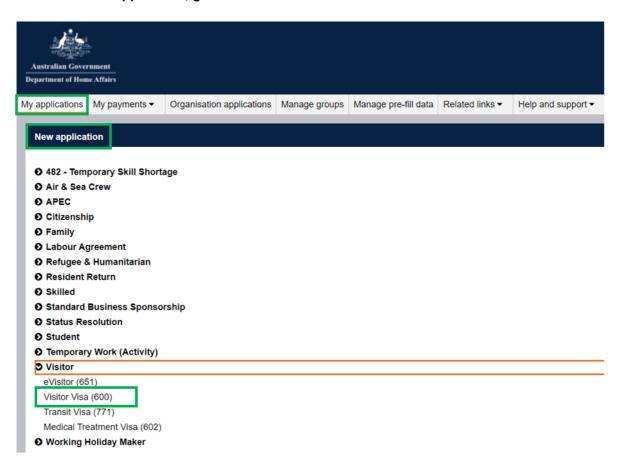
Step 1: Create an ImmiAccount

See separate information sheet about how to create an ImmiAccount. It can be in your name rather than your relative who intends to visit

Step 2: In ImmiAccount go to My Applications - New Application



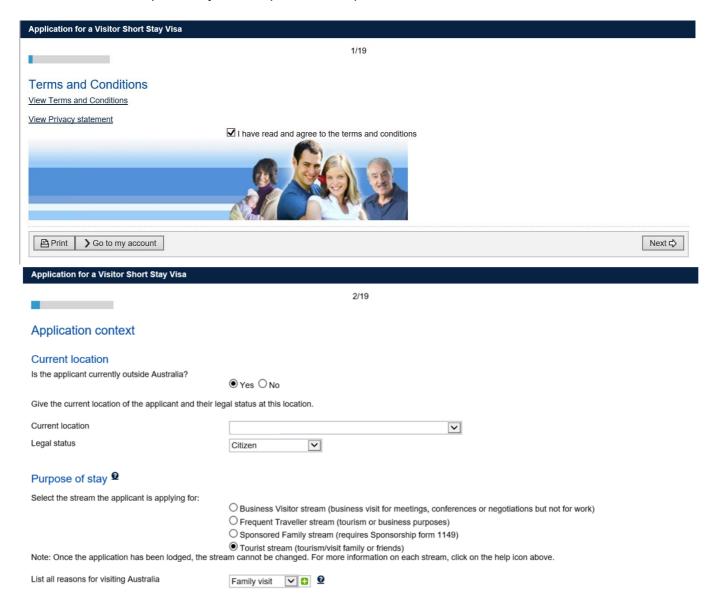
Then from New Application, go to Visitor Visa - 600



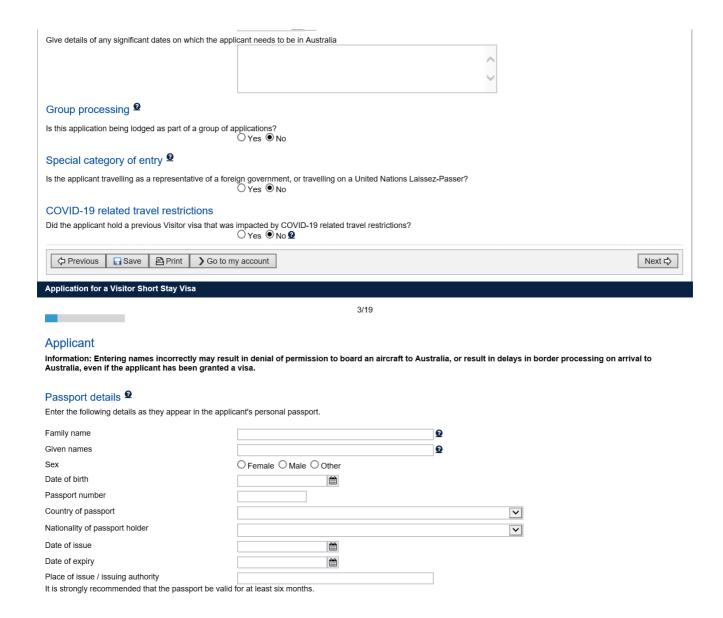
Step 3: Answer the questions on the Application.



Each screen with the questions you are expected to complete is set out below:



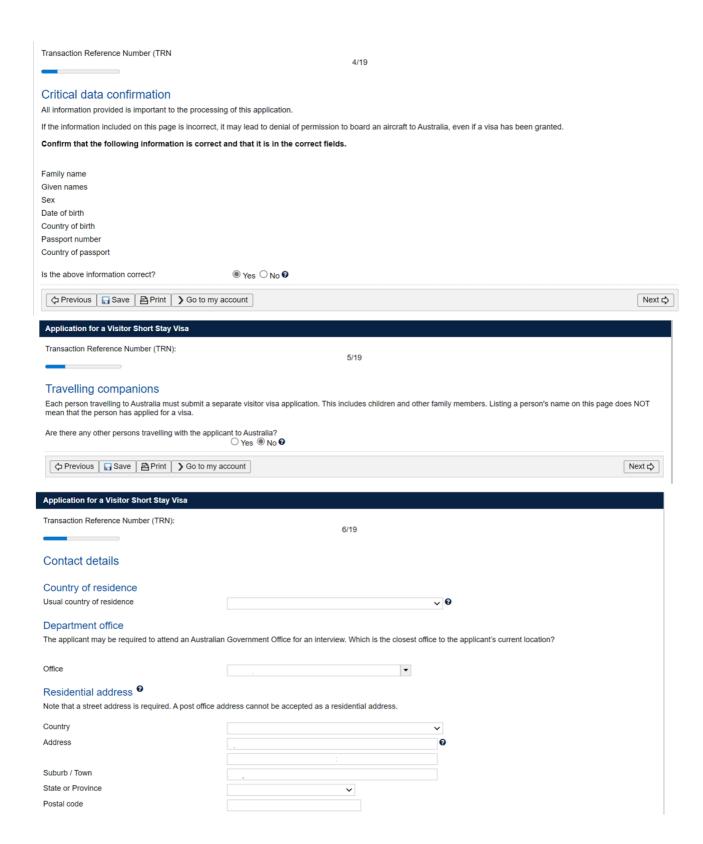






| National identity card | | | |
|--|---|---|---------|
| Does this applicant have a national identity card? | ○ Yes ○ No ② | | |
| Design Assetution Cond | 3.65 3.62 | | |
| Pacific-Australia Card is issued through an invite | ation process to Pacific leaders. If the applicant does not h | old a Pacific Australia Card, please select 'No' for this que | etion |
| | anon process to r aonio leaders. Il the applicant does not il | ord a r acino-Australia Gard, picase select 140 for this que | 230011. |
| Is the applicant a Pacific-Australia Card holder? | ○ Yes ○ No | | |
| Place of birth ♀ | | | |
| Town / City | | | |
| State / Province | | | |
| Country of birth | | ▽ 0 | |
| Deletienskie otetus | | | |
| Relationship status Relationship status | | | |
| relationship status | ▽ <u>•</u> | | |
| Other names / spellings | | | |
| Is this applicant currently, or have they ever been kn | own by any other names? ○ Yes ○ No 望 | | |
| | 0 103 0 NO <u>0</u> | | |
| Citizenship | | | |
| Is this applicant a citizen of the selected country of p | O Yes O No 2 | | |
| Is this applicant a citizen of any other country? | ○ Yes ○ No ② | | |
| | O Yes O No ♥ | | |
| Previous travel to Australia | | | |
| Has this applicant previously travelled to Australia? | ○ Yes ○ No | | |
| | | | |
| Previous travel to Australia | | | |
| Has this applicant previously travelled to Australia? | ○ Yes ○ No | | |
| Has this applicant previously applied for a visa to Au | | | |
| | ○ Yes ○ No | | |
| Grant number | | | |
| Does this applicant have an Australian visa grant nu | mber? ○ Yes ○ No 望 | | |
| | 0 103 0 NO <u>0</u> | | |
| Other passports or documents for trave | I | | |
| Does this applicant have any other passports or doc | uments for travel? | | |
| | ○ Yes ○ No Q | | |
| Other identity documents | | | |
| Does this applicant have other identity documents? | | | |
| , | ○ Yes ○ No ② | | |
| Health examination | | | |
| Has this applicant undertaken a health examination to | | | |
| | ○ Yes ○ No ② | | |
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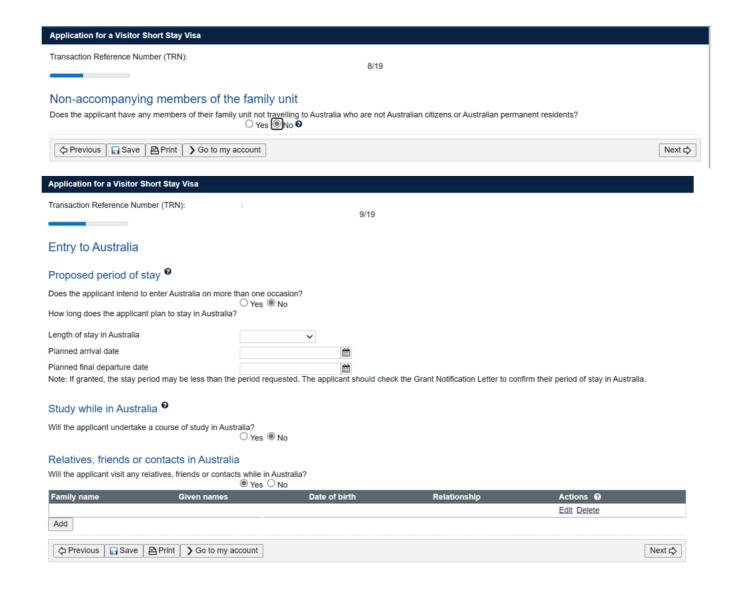




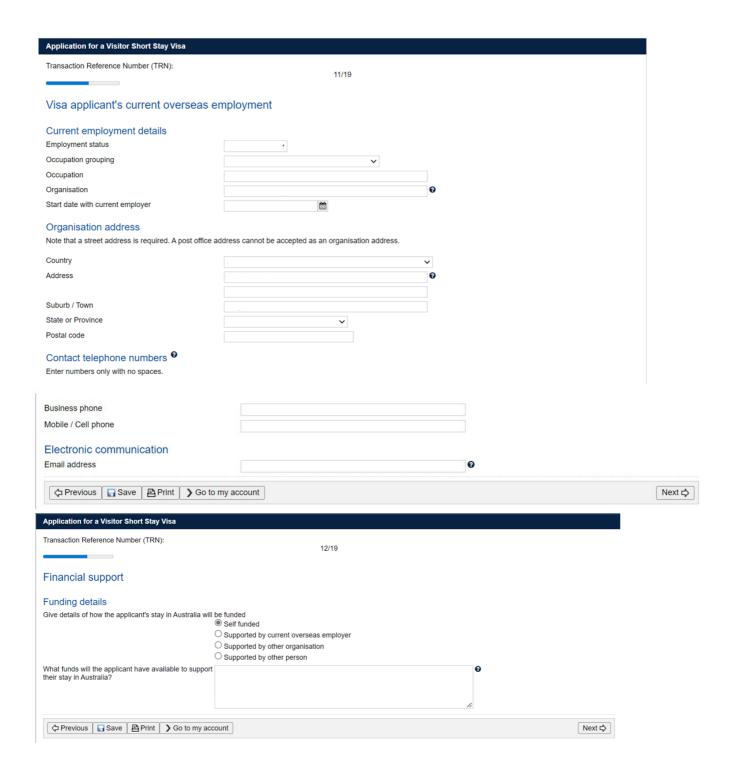


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|--|---|---|
| SOURCE CONTRACTOR | | |
| Business phone | | |
| Mobile / Cell phone | | |
| Postal address | | |
| s the postal address the same as t | he residential address? | |
| Email address | | |
| mail address | 0 | |
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| | | |
| Application for a Visitor Short Stay Vi | sa | |
| Transaction Reference Number (TRN | 7/19 | |
| | | |
| Authorised recipient | rson to receive written correspondence on their behalf? | |
| | the authorised person all written correspondence that would otherwise be sent directly to the applicant. | |
| This authorises the department to send | No | |
| | Yes, a registered migration agent | |
| | ○ Yes, a legal practitioner | |
| This person is referred to as the 'authori | (a) Yes, another person sed recipient. | |
| Authorised recipient contact de | etails | |
| Family name | • | |
| Given names | 0 | |
| Postal address | | |
| Country | AUSTRALIA | |
| Address | • | |
| 1001000 | | |
| | | |
| Suburb / Town | | |
| Suburb / Town State / Territory | New South Wales ✓ | |
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| Suburb / Town State / Territory Postcode Contact telephone numbers inter numbers only with no spaces. Susiness phone State / Territory Contact telephone numbers Suburbar Suburbar | eate electronically as this provides a faster method of communication. | |
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| Application for a Visitor Short Stay Visa |
|--|
| Transaction Reference Number (TRN): |
| 15/19 |
| Health declarations |
| In the last five years, has any applicant visited, or lived, outside their country of passport, for more than 3 consecutive months? Do not include time spent in Australia. |
| ○ Yes ◎ No |
| Does any applicant intend to enter a hospital or a health care facility (including nursing homes) while in Australia? ○ Yes No |
| Does any applicant intend to work as, or study to be a doctor, dentist, nurse or paramedic during their stay in Australia? O Yes No |
| Has any applicant: |
| ever had, or currently have, tuberculosis? been in close contact with a family member that has active tuberculosis? ever had a chest x-ray which showed an abnormality? Yes ® No |
| During their proposed visit to Australia, does any applicant expect to incur medical costs, or require treatment or medical follow up for: |
| blood disorder cancer heart disease hepatitis B or C and/or liver disease HIV infection, including AIDS kidney disease, including dialysis mental illness pregnancy respiratory disease that has required hospital admission or oxygen therapy other? |
| ○ Yes ® No |
| Does any applicant require assistance with mobility or care due to a medical condition? O Yes No |
| ♣ Previous ♣ Print ★ Go to my account Next ♣ Application for a Visitor Short Stay Visa |
| Transaction Reference Number (TRN): 16/19 |
| |
| Character declarations |
| If the applicant answers 'Yes' to any of the character declarations they must give all relevant details. For combined applications, state which applicant the declaration applies to. |
| If the matter relates to a criminal conviction, provide: |
| the date and nature of the offence full details of the sentence dates of any period of imprisonment or other detention |
| Has any applicant ever been charged with any offence that is currently awaiting legal action? ○ Yes No |
| Has any applicant ever been convicted of an offence in any country (including any conviction which is now removed from official records)? ○ Yes ○ No |
| Has any applicant ever been the subject of a domestic violence or family violence order, or any other order, of a tribunal or court or other similar authority, for the personal protection of another person? |
| |
| rias any applicant ever been the subject of an arrest warrant of filter por notice? ○ Yes ○ No |
| Has any applicant ever been found guilty of a sexually based offence involving a child (including where no conviction was recorded)? Or Yes No |
| Has any applicant ever been named on a sex offender register? |
| Has any applicant ever been acquitted of any offence on the grounds of unsoundness of mind or insanity? |
| Has any applicant ever been found by a court not fit to plead? ○ Yes ○ No |
| Has any applicant ever been directly or indirectly involved in, or associated with, activities which would represent a risk to national security in Australia or any other country? Ores No |



| Has any applicant ever been charged with, or indicted for: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture, slavery, or any other crime that is otherwise of a serious nternational concern? |
|---|
| ○ Yes ® No |
| Has any applicant ever been associated with a person, group or organisation that has been or is involved in criminal conduct? ○ Yes ○ No |
| Has any applicant ever been associated with an organisation engaged in violence or engaged in acts of violence (including war, insurgency, freedom fighting, terrorism, protest) either overseas or in Australia? |
| ○ Yes No |
| Has any applicant ever served in a military force, police force, state sponsored / private militia or intelligence agency (including secret police)? ○ Yes ○ No |
| Has any applicant ever undergone any military/paramilitary training, been trained in weapons/explosives or in the manufacture of chemical/biological products? Yes No |
| Has any applicant ever been involved in people smuggling or people trafficking offences? |
| Has any applicant ever been removed, deported or excluded from any country (including Australia)? ○ Yes ○ No |
| Has any applicant ever overstayed a visa in any country (including Australia)? |
| Has any applicant ever had any outstanding debts to the Australian Government or any public authority in Australia? ○ Yes ○ No |
| ♦ Previous Save Print Go to my account Next |
| |
| Application for a Visitor Short Stay Visa |
| Transaction Reference Number (TRN): |
| 17/19 |
| Visa history |
| Has the applicant held or does the applicant currently hold a visa to Australia or any other country? ○ Yes I No |
| Has the applicant ever been in Australia or any other country and not complied with visa conditions or departed outside their authorised period of stay? ○ Yes ⑤ No |
| Has the applicant ever had a visa for Australia or any other country refused or cancelled? ○ Yes ○ No |
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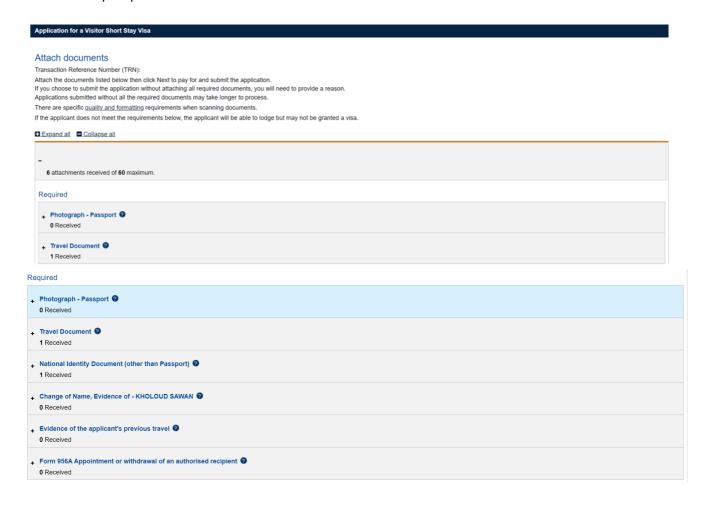
Agree to leave Australia on or before the expiry of the period of stay of the visa. Yes ○ No Give consent to the collection of their fingerprints and facial image if required. Yes ○ No Understand that, if required to provide their fingerprints and facial image, the applicant's fingerprints and facial image and biographical information held by the Department may be Give consent to Australian law enforcement agencies disclosing the applicant's biometric, biographical and criminal record information to the Department to help identify the applicant, to determine eligibility for grant of a visa and for law enforcement purposes. Yes ○ No Understand that the Visitor visa does not permit them to work in Australia. Yes ○ No Give consent to the Department using the applicant's biometric, biographical and criminal record information obtained for the purposes of the Migration Act 1958 or the Citizenship Act 2007. Yes ○ No As an applicant: I understand that if my visa ceases to be in effect and I do not hold another visa to remain in Australia at that time, I will be an unlawful non-citizen under the Migration Act 1958. As such, I will be expected to depart from Australia, and be subject to removal under the Migration Act 1958. Yes ○ No Next 戊



Step 4: Attach supporting documents.

We recommend attaching:

- the person's passport and any identity cards,
- current bank statement showing they have enough money to support their travel
- a statement from you explaining that you will support them, they can stay with you.
- If they have travelled outside their home country previously and returned, you should attach pages from their passport which demonstrate this.

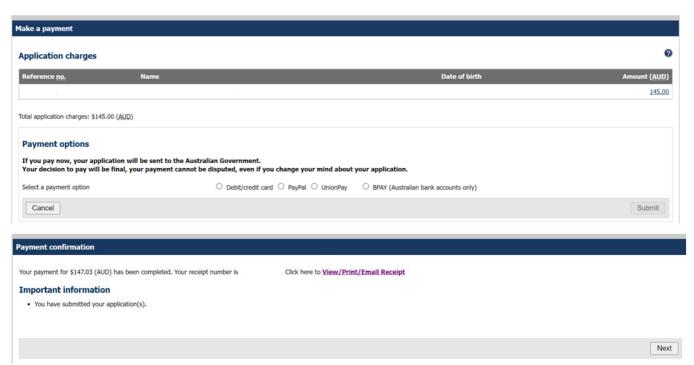






Step 5: Pay for the visa application charge.

You will need a visa or mastercard and the cost is \$190 per person plus credit card charges.



Step 6: The application should show as submitted.





Step 7: Biometrics and medicals

After lodging the application you may receive a request for a photograph or medicals. If you don't understand the request, please contact RACS for help.

You should only organise an appointment for an immigration medical assessment if you are requested to do so by a Departmental Officer. Visa applicants outside the Occupied Palestinian Territories can make an appointment for an immigration medical assessment with a registered panel doctor – details are as below:

Gaza Diagnostic Centre - NOTE this Clinic temporarily closed (as at 11 December 2023)

Street address:

Wehda Street, Rimal (opposite Al-Shifa Hospital)

Phone:

- +972 8 284 0266
- +972 599 485 577

Email:

samy.alagha@hotmail.com mohalagha1987@hotmail.com

OR

Arab Care Hospital

Street address: Alnahda Street 24 Ramallah

Phone:

- +972 2 298 6420
- +972 2 298 6424
- +972 599 301 358

Email:

mdaibes@hotmail.com