



Making and processing visa applications

You must have a visa to travel to and stay in Australia

This information form explains how to make visa applications and how they are processed.

It is important that you read this information

It is important that you read this information – it may affect whether you are granted a visa or have your visa cancelled.

You should read all information and instructions about the class of visa you want. If you do not think you qualify for a visa, you may wish to reconsider whether to apply because any visa charge paid will not be refunded if you are unsuccessful.

Where to get information

You can obtain information about visas, charges and forms at offices of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (the department) (see page 3), from the department's website **www.immi.gov.au**, by calling 131 881 (for the cost of a local call) or by contacting the nearest Australian mission overseas.

How to apply for a visa

To make a valid application you must:

- indicate the class of visa that you want;
- use the correct form; or
- lodge an application via the internet (where applicable);
- provide your residential address;
- pay the required charge (where applicable);
- satisfy any other requirements (for example, you may have to be outside Australia to apply for the visa); and
- send or deliver your application as instructed by the specific visa application form, or contact the general enquiries line for assistance.

You must also:

- complete the application in English;
- answer all questions truthfully – if you provide incorrect information or documents, your visa may not be granted; and
- provide originals or certified copies of any required documents unless the department advises otherwise.

Method of payment

Payment must accompany your application and is generally not refunded if the application is unsuccessful.

In Australia

To make a payment, please pay by credit card, debit card, bank cheque or money order made payable to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Debit card and credit card are the preferred methods of payment.

Outside Australia

Before making a payment outside Australia, please check with the Australian Government office where you intend to lodge your application as to what methods of payment and currencies they can accept and to whom the payment should be made payable.

Internet applications

Certain visas can be applied for via the internet. Further information can be found at **www.immi.gov.au**

Family members

For most visas, family members (spouses, de facto partners, dependent children or dependent relatives) who apply at the same time can apply on the same form and pay one charge. A child who is born after an application is made (but before it is decided) will be automatically included in the parent's application, once the department is notified of the details of the newborn child. In some circumstances, a spouse, de facto partner or dependent child can be added to an application.

Medicare

The Australian Government provides help with medical expenses and hospital care through a scheme called Medicare. The government also subsidises the cost of most medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Medicare and the PBS are administered by Medicare Australia.

To find out if you are eligible and to enrol in Medicare, visit your local Medicare office with your passport, travel documents and permanent visa. If you are not already the holder of a permanent visa, you will also need to provide details of any permanent visa/migration applications you have lodged.

Most temporary visa holders are not eligible to enrol in Medicare, but there are some exceptions, for example people who have applied for a permanent visa and meet the necessary criteria. You should visit your local Medicare office to see if you are eligible. If all eligibility requirements are met, you may be given your Medicare card number and your card will be posted in approximately 3 weeks. In most cases, you will pay for medical care then receive a refund for some of the payment.

Further information can be obtained from:

Website: www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

E-mail: medicare@medicareaustralia.gov.au

Mail: Medicare Australia
GPO Box 9822
In your capital city

Limitations on applications

If you are in Australia, you may be prevented from making further applications if, for example:

- you do not hold a substantive visa (which is any visa other than a bridging visa, a criminal justice visa or an enforcement visa) and have had a visa cancelled or refused since you last arrived in Australia;
- your last visa was granted on the condition that you would not be granted a substantive visa while you remain in Australia;
- you hold a sponsored visitor visa;
- you are in immigration detention; or
- you have previously applied for a protection visa.

In these cases the department can provide you with information about which visas, if any, you can apply for.

More than one application

If you apply for more than one visa, the visa granted last will generally be the visa you have (and the visa granted first will no longer be valid). You can get advice about your situation from any office of the department.

Communicating with the department

Communication with the department about your application should generally be in writing. You should send the communication to the office where you applied unless the department notifies you of another address.

Withdrawal of applications

You can withdraw your application by advising the department (in writing) at any time before a decision is made. Any charges that you paid at time of application are usually not refunded.

You must identify yourself correctly

If you communicate with the department about your application, you must:

- include your name (as in your application);
- include your date of birth;
- include the departmental client number if it has been given to you or, if you do not have a client number, the departmental file number, or the application receipt number; and
- if your application is made outside Australia, include the name of the office where you applied.

Let the department know if you change your residential address

If you intend to change your residential address for more than 14 days while your application is being processed, you must tell the department your new address prior to moving and how long you will be there.

Extra information about your application

Additional information can be provided (in writing) at any time, until a decision is made on your application. All relevant information is taken into account.

If you are invited to give additional information or comment on information, you will be given a date by which to do so. After that date the department can continue processing your application. You cannot delay a decision by saying that you may or will give more information later.

Interviews

If you are invited to attend an interview, you must attend on the date and time agreed with the department. If you do not, the department can process your application and make a decision on the basis of the information it already has. If you are unable to attend your interview please contact the department prior to the time of your appointment.

Invitation to comment

If another person gives the department information that could result in you being refused a visa, the department will give you an opportunity to comment on the information. You will need to comment by a set date.

Advise the department if your circumstances change

If any of your circumstances change, such that any answer in your application or information given to the department is no longer correct, you must inform the department (in writing) as soon as practicable.

You must continue to do this until a decision is made on your application (or, in the case of a visa granted outside Australia, until you travel to Australia and are cleared by immigration). Your visa may be cancelled if you give incorrect information or fail to advise the department that some information is no longer correct. However, if you advise the department of the correct information before your visa is granted (or in the case of a visa granted outside Australia, before you are immigration cleared), your visa cannot later be cancelled on the basis of that incorrect information.

Processing applications

Processing of your application may be delayed if your application is 'pooled' (this only applies to points tested classes of visas) or if processing of the class of visa for which you have applied is suspended.

The department will send written communication about your application to the latest address for correspondence you have provided. Under migration law, you will be taken to have received written communication from the department if the department sends it to you at the last address for correspondence you have provided, whether or not you have actually received it. Therefore, it is important that you inform the department (in writing) immediately if your address for correspondence changes.

Written communication about your application can be sent to another person that you have authorised, but you will be taken to have received the communication that the department sends to that person. The department must be informed (in writing) of any address change for either you or your authorised person.

Visa decisions

Processing times vary between offices. You will be notified by the department when a decision has been made on your application.

If you are refused a visa, you will be notified why you were refused and, if applicable, where you can apply for merits review of the decision. You will be notified of your time to seek review or your time to depart Australia.

When the department notifies you, or a person you have authorised to receive written communication on your behalf, of the decision on your visa application, you will be taken to have received the notification:

- 7 working days after the date of the letter (if sent in Australia); or
- 21 days after the date of the letter (if sent outside Australia).

If the notification is handed to you, you will be taken to have been notified at that moment.

If the notification is faxed or e-mailed to you, you will be taken to have been notified at the end of that day.

You must abide by all conditions on your visa

If your visa is granted subject to conditions (for example, restrictions on work or study) you must abide by those conditions or your visa may be cancelled. If you wish to change those conditions or stay longer than your visa allows, contact the department for information about how to do this.

If you wish to leave Australia while your application is being processed, check with the department before you leave

You should inform the department if you intend to travel (either to or from Australia) during processing of your application. This is because your application will be refused if you are in the 'wrong place' when a decision is made:

- for most visas applied for in Australia, you must be in Australia when a decision is made;
- for most visas applied for overseas, you must be outside Australia when a decision is made.

In addition, if you have applied in Australia you must ensure before you leave Australia that you have a visa to return. Otherwise you may not be able to return to Australia and, if your application is refused, you may not have a right of review.

Bridging visas

If you apply for a visa in Australia you will be granted a bridging visa to keep you lawful, in case your current visa ceases before a decision is made on your application. It will also keep you lawful if your application is refused and you seek merits review of that decision.

If you wish to travel overseas, you will need to seek a specific 'travel' bridging visa which allows you to return to Australia. Even if you already have another visa which allows you to return to Australia, you should contact the department as soon as you return to Australia because your departure from Australia will automatically cease any bridging visa that was granted to you when you made your application for a new visa. This means you will not have a bridging visa to keep you lawful if your current visa ceases before your application is decided.

You must have a visa to remain in Australia

If you wish to stay longer than your visa allows, you should seek another visa. If you overstay your visa or your visa is cancelled, you risk being detained and removed from Australia.

Offices of the department in Australia

New South Wales

Parramatta Office

9 Wentworth Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150
Fax (02) 8861 4422

Sydney CBD Office

Ground Floor
26 Lee Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Fax (02) 8862 6096

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Regional Office

3 Lonsdale Street
BRADDON ACT 2612
Fax (02) 6248 0479

Victoria

Melbourne CBD Office

Ground Floor
Casselden Place
2 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Fax (03) 9235 3300

Dandenong Office

Level 5
76 Thomas Street
DANDENONG VIC 3175
Fax: (03) 9235 3206

Tasmania

Hobart Office

Ground Floor
188 Collins Street
HOBART TAS 7000
Fax (03) 6281 9579

Queensland

Brisbane Office

299 Adelaide Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Fax (07) 3136 7473

Cairns Office

Level 2
GHD Building
85 Spence Street
CAIRNS QLD 4870
Fax (07) 4051 0198

Thursday Island Office

Commonwealth Centre
Hastings Street
PO Box 299
THURSDAY ISLAND QLD 4875
Fax (07) 4069 1884

Western Australia

Perth Office

Wellington Central
Level 3
836 Wellington Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005
Fax (08) 9415 9766

South Australia

Adelaide Office

Level 3
55 Currie Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Fax (08) 7421 7653

Northern Territory

Darwin Office

Pella House
40 Cavenagh Street
DARWIN NT 0800
Fax (08) 8981 6245

Offices of the department overseas

There are over 70 offices of the department worldwide. Contact details for each can be found at

www.immi.gov.au/contacts/

Home page

*General
enquiry line*

www.immi.gov.au

Telephone **131 881** during business hours in Australia to speak to an operator (recorded information available outside these hours). If you are outside Australia, please contact your nearest Australian mission.