HANDY GUIDE TO IMMIGRATION, VISA AND CITIZENSHIP SERVICES

JULY 2024

With Compliments

Julian Hill MP

Federal Member for Bruce

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Our community is one of the most multicultural in Australia. So immigration, visa and citizenship services are of particular importance to the residents of the federal electorate of Bruce.

In fact, the most common questions raised with Julian are from local people seeking information about immigration, visa and citizenship matters. Given this, Julian has prepared this Handy Guide to immigration, visa and citizenship, to help you and your family access these important government services.

While MPs are not trained migration agents or migration lawyers, and hence are not able to give detailed migration advice, it is important that everyone in our community has good information available to help guide them. We hope this guide is of use.

Of course, Julian is also available to assist you if you encounter problems accessing these, or any other government services.

When Julian is away at the Parliament in Canberra, his staff are always happy to help you on his behalf and keep him fully informed. Julian will continue to stand up for the residents of Bruce and work to ensure that immigration services are easily accessed and fairly administered.

Information included in this guide is correct at the time of printing. This guide is intended to be used as general information only. Please confirm information on the Department of Home Affair's website (homeaffairs.gov.au/) before taking action.

After you have read the information in this guide, if you live in the Bruce electorate and have further questions regarding visa, citizenship or migration issues please email full details of your query to julian.hill.mp@aph.gov.au.

Please include your full residential address and a copy of your driver's licence and full details of the question or case.

Due to the complexity and number of queries, migration queries can only be considered by email.

Under Australian law MPs have no power to prioritise individual cases or make decisions, and are not able to contact case officers in the Department of Home Affairs.

In certain circumstances where an application is outside the standard processing time, Julian may be able highlight urgent situations (such as medical emergencies) to the Department.

Julian's electorate staff are not able to examine individual cases for people who live outside the Bruce electorate; in these circumstances you should approach your local MP or use the Contact the Minister form: Contact the Minister (homeaffairs.gov.au/).

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The Role of the Commonwealth Government

In Australia's system of Government, under the Commonwealth Constitution, immigration, visa and citizenship matters are the responsibility of the federal government and not State or Territory governments.

The Federal Parliament has the power to make laws relating to immigration. The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for administering those laws and making decisions on individual visa and citizenship applications.

Decisions regarding visa and citizenship applications are made independently of MPs, by public servants in the Department of Home Affairs.

A decision on a visa application is final, but may be subject to a right of appeal before an administrative tribunal.

In Australia, MPs have no decision-making power over individual applications and are not able to talk directly with case officers who make decisions on applications.

Therefore, contacting MPs or the Minister will generally not advance your application.

Immigration is central to Australia's story and national history. Australia's unique national story includes:

1. Over 65,000 years of continuous and ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civilisation and culture.
2. Our stable system of government - the democratic institutions, rights, freedoms and responsibilities we enjoy; a legacy of European settlement.
3. Modern multicultural Australia, where people from across the world come together, creating one of the world's most diverse societies.

Today, more than half of all Australians were either born overseas or have a parent born overseas. Immigration has been pivotal to Australia's nation building and our rich diversity.

This national pride and achievement has led successive Australian governments to maintain a planned immigration program. As a result, since World War Two, Australia has grown from a population of about 7 million people into a nation of more than 26 million people in 2022.

Australia's immigration program has changed significantly since World War Two. In the post-war period, Australia mostly attracted migrants from the United Kingdom and Europe.

The Whitlam Labor government proudly and finally abolished the old "White Australia Policy" in 1973, and introduced a non-discriminatory migration policy and the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975.

The Albanese Labor Government's Achievements

Under Scott Morrison and Peter Dutton, the previous Liberal Government broke Australia's visa and citizenship processing system.

The migration program was not designed in Australia's long-term interest.

When Labor formed government in 2022 there were over 1 million unfinalised visa and citizenship applications in the Department of Home Affairs. Many had been waiting for several years.

The Albanese Labor Government's October 2022 Budget included a $36.1 million funding investment to tackle the backlog in visa applications with funding maintained in the 2023 Budget. Over 500 new staff have been hired to help clear the Liberals' shocking visa backlogs.

Because of this investment, the visa backlog has been slashed and waiting times for many visas have been significantly reduced.

After nine years of delays, discrimination and cuts to departmental staffing, there is a significant amount of work to do to restore integrity to the administration of critical public services including visa and citizenship processing.

A new migration strategy will guide the future of Australia's migration program, boosting economic growth, supporting family and humanitarian migration, and ensuring Australia attracts the best and the brightest skilled migrants and international students.

The Albanese Government will continue to work with the Department to further improve processing timeframes in the coming months and years.

How Julian Hill MP can assist

If you live in the Bruce electorate, as your local MP, Julian may be able to explain your situation to the Department of Home Affairs, via a dedicated Parliamentary Liaison Unit, and request an update on the processing of an application (except for humanitarian applications).

In limited circumstances – such as when an individual application is beyond the Department's standard processing timeframe, or where an application meets certain guidelines for urgent escalation – Julian can write a letter to the relevant Minister.

In Australia, the Minister does not decide individual visa applications but may refer queries from MPs to the Department.

As previously noted, individual MPs have no power to make decisions and are not able to talk to processing areas or case officers.

Immigration is a highly specialised area of law, and individual MPs and their staff, who are not trained or qualified in this area, are unable to provide specific or detailed migration advice or talk to processing areas or case officers.

For general advice on accessing immigration, visa and citizenship services, Julian has prepared this Handy Guide.

For specific advice, including lodging an application and keeping the Department updated regarding your application, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

Making an application

The first step in applying for an Australian visa is to assess which visa option suits your or your family's needs.

You can find a full list of Australian visas here: Getting a Visa (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Most visa streams include the following information on the Department's website:

- Overview
- About this visa
- Eligibility
- Step by step
- When you have this visa

If you are unsure which visa is right for you, you can use the 'Visa Finder' tool on the Department of Home Affairs' website to explore visa options: Visa Finder (homeaffairs.gov.au).

For tailored or more detailed information about which visa is right for you or your family, you may also wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

The second step is to ensure that you meet all relevant eligibility requirements.

Details about eligibility requirements can be found on the Department's website under the 'eligibility' tab for each visa subclass.

For advice and information about satisfying eligibility requirements, you may also wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

Once you have chosen the appropriate visa and ensured that you meet all relevant eligibility criteria, the third step is to carefully follow the 'step-by-step' application process set out on the Department's website and apply for your chosen visa or Australian citizenship.

The step-by-step process will tell you whether you can apply online or on paper; what documents you need to provide and how to provide them; and how to pay the application fee

For more information about making an application using a paper form, you can visit the Department's website: Applying on Paper (homeaffairs.gov.au).

MPs and their staff cannot complete application forms – whether paper forms or online - on your behalf.

If you apply for a visa or citizenship online, you will need to do so through an 'ImmiAccount'. For more information about applying online, including how to create, access and manage your ImmiAccount, you can visit the Department's website: Applying online in ImmiAccount (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Once you have applied for your visa or citizenship, and paid any required application fee, you will receive an 'Acknowledgement of Application' letter from the Department of Home Affairs. This letter contains important information such as your Application ID and official application date.

It is important you keep a copy of your 'Acknowledgement of Application' letter.

The fourth step in applying for Australian citizenship or an Australian visa is to keep the Department updated in terms of your application and your contact details.

While your application is being processed, your or your family's circumstances might change. If this change is relevant to your application, you need to inform the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible.

The Department of Home Affairs will not accept information or documents about your application sent by MPs on your behalf. You or your authorised representative must contact the Department with any updated information or documents.

During processing of your application, the Department may request that you provide further information or documents. You must respond to requests for information from the Department within the timeframe advised.

If you cannot provide the information or documents requested, you should contact the processing area as soon as possible to explain why.

You must always keep the Department up to date with your current location and preferred contact details.

To update your contact details, you need to complete Form 929 – Change of contact and/or passport details and email it to the address on the form.

A list of all registered migration agents, can be found here: Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (mara.gov.au).

A list of Victorian lawyers, including accredited specialist immigration lawyers, can be found here: Looking for Legal Help (liv.asn.au)

People seeking asylum, refugees and disadvantaged migrants can access free legal advice regarding immigration, visas and citizenship issues through Refugee Legal (refugeelegal.org.au)

Common Visa Criteria

Visa Fees

Most visa applications require you to pay a fee. These fees help fund the Department's provision of immigration, visa and citizenship services. Visa fees increase over time as they are indexed each year on 1 July.

Visa fees must be paid for a valid application to be made. A list of visa fees can be found here: Fees and charges for visa (homeaffairs.gov.au). If you do not pay a required fee, the Department will not process your application.

English language

Many visas require people to demonstrate their English language ability via a test. This is mandatory for most skilled and student visas. Different visas require different scores, and these are listed in the 'eligibility' tab for each visa.

The Department of Home Affairs' website provides a detailed description of the relevant criteria for each of the English language scores: English language (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Biometrics

Many Australian visa applications require the applicant to provide biometrics. To meet this requirement, the Department will commonly collect a photo of the applicant's face with a digital camera, as well as a scan of all 10 fingertips with a digital finger scanner.

APPLICANTS OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA:

You will need to provide your biometrics at an Australian Biometrics Collection Centre (ABCC) if you apply:

- for a visa that is part of the biometrics program; and
- from a country that is part of the biometrics program.

If you are located in Pakistan, please visit your nearest ABCC at a time that is convenient for you. For all other locations, you must arrange an appointment first.

For more information, including a list of ABCCs, appointment bookings, and opening times in each country, see: Offices outside Australia (homeaffairs.gov.au).

For applicants outside of Australia, the Department does not collect fingerprints of children aged under 5 years; only their photograph is required

APPLICANTS WITHIN AUSTRALIA:
The Department will tell you if you need to provide biometrics. If you are required to do so, the Department will contact you by email or send you a letter of invitation to attend an appointment.

For more information, including appointment bookings, and opening times, see: Offices in Australia (homeaffairs.gov.au).

For applicants within Australia, the Department does not collect fingerprints of children aged under 10; only their photograph is required.

Health Checks

Australia enjoys some of the best health standards in the world. To maintain these standards, most visa applicants must meet minimum health criteria before a visa can be granted.

A full list of 'who needs health examinations' can be found here: Health (homeaffairs.gov.au)

Inside Australia, health examinations must be arranged through the migration medical services provider, Bupa Medical Visa Services.

Outside Australia, health examinations must be provided by one of the Department's approved panel physicians or clinics. You can contact a panel physician by finding the immigration office nearest to you.

For detailed information about medical examination requirements, including how long a health check is valid for, visit the Department's website: Health (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Health Waivers

Some people may be unable to meet the health requirement. In limited circumstances, applicants may be eligible to receive a health waiver.

You cannot apply for a health waiver. If you fail to meet the health requirement and a health waiver is available for your visa subclass, your visa processing officer will contact you to advise you of this and seek further information from you.

This is a complex process and will only be considered if an applicant meets all other eligibility criteria for the visa.

Overview of Common Immigration Applications

CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS

The previous Liberal government made a terrible mess of the Australian citizenship program.

Thousands of applications were delayed for years due to the Liberals' funding cuts to the Department of Home Affairs. This especially affected complex applications.

In its first year, the Albanese Labor Government slashed citizenship processing times by 42 per cent, repairing the backlog and bringing it to its lowest level in six years.

Australian citizenship is precious, and the community must have confidence in how cases are considered, and decisions made. The Government is committed to reinstating a citizenship system that is fair, efficient and inclusive.

Direct Pathway to Australian Citizenship for New Zealanders

The Albanese government has provided eligible New Zealand citizens living in Australia with a direct pathway to Australian citizenship.

All Special Category Visa holders are able to apply directly for citizenship without becoming permanent residents first, as long as they meet a four-year residence and other eligibility requirements.

This is a fair change for New Zealanders living in Australia, and brings their rights more in line with Australians living in New Zealand. This is consistent with the government's ambition to build a fairer, better managed and more inclusive migration system.

Many New Zealand citizens choose to live in and contribute to Australia, so it is reasonable they have the opportunity to become Australian citizens and enjoy the rights and obligations that come from citizenship.

For more information about the updated pathway to permanent residence or citizenship for New Zealand citizens living in Australia, visit the Department's website: New Zealand citizens (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Ways to Become an Australian Citizen

You can become a citizen of Australia in different ways. 'Conferral' and 'descent' are the most common ways to apply. To find out which citizenship pathway best suits you, review the eligibility criteria on the Department's website: Become an Australian citizen (homeaffairs.gov.au).

If you need advice in relation to your particular situation, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

Become an Australian citizen by conferral – Permanent residents or New Zealand citizens:

You usually need to be a permanent resident and meet certain criteria before you can apply to become a citizen by conferral.

To meet the eligibility criteria for this pathway, you must:

- be a permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen holding a Special Category (subclass 444) visa (SCV) when you apply and when the Department decides your application;
- be in Australia when the Department decides on your application; and
- intend to live in Australia or maintain a lasting link with Australia while overseas.

For a comprehensive list of eligibility criteria for this citizenship pathway, visit the Department's website: Eligibility (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Become an Australian citizen by descent:

You could be eligible for Australian citizenship by descent if you were born outside Australia and one (or both) of your parents at the time of your birth was also an Australian citizen at that time.

To be meet the eligibility criteria for this pathway, you must:

- have been born outside Australia;
- ensure that the person you are claiming descent from was your parent at the time of your birth and was also an Australian citizen at the time of your birth; and
- be of good character if you are 18 years old or over when you apply

For a comprehensive list of eligibility criteria for this citizenship pathway, visit the Department's website: Eligibility (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Other pathways:

Become an Australian citizen (by conferral) – Child 15 years or younger applying on their own

This is for permanent residents aged 15 years or under who apply on their own.

Become an Australian citizen by conferral – Born to a former Australian citizen

This is for children of former Australian citizens where the parent lost their Australian citizenship under specific circumstances.

Become an Australian citizen by adoption – Child adopted under Full Hague Adoption Convention/bilateral agreement by Australian citizen
This is for a child born overseas who is adopted by an Australian citizen outside Australia through an international adoption arrangement under the Hague Adoption Convention or a bilateral agreement.

Become a citizen by conferral – Person born in Papua before independence in 1975
This is for people born in Papua before independence from Australia in 1975 and who had a parent born in Australia as it is now known, and who was an Australian citizen at the time of your birth.

Become a citizen by conferral – Person with an incapacity or impairment
This is for people who have an incapacity or impairment that prevents them from sitting the Australian citizenship test.

Become an Australian again
This is for people who used to be Australian citizens and wish to resume their citizenship.

Become a citizen by conferral – Born in Australia and are stateless
This is for people who are born in Australia, are not and have never been a national or citizen of any country, and are not entitled to acquire the nationality or citizenship of another country.

Including a Dependant Child

A parent can include a dependent child aged 15 years or younger in their application at no extra cost. The child must be an Australian permanent resident.

If a parent is not applying to become an Australian citizen, a child 15 years or younger can apply on their own and must pay the associated fee. See Child 15 years or younger applying on their own.

A parent cannot include a child aged 16 years or older in their application.

Citizenship Processing

Processing timeframes

The Department's standard processing timeframe covers the time from lodging your application to the citizenship ceremony.
Your application might take longer to process if:

- you do not complete it correctly;
- you do not include all the documents the Department requires, or the Department needs more information from you; or
- it is difficult to verify the information you provide.

To view the Department's standard processing timeframes for Australian citizenship by conferral; Australian citizenship by descent; and Evidence of Australian citizenship, visit Citizenship processing times (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Keeping the Department updated

You must provide the Department with any extra documents you are asked for, and let the Department know if any of your details have changed since the application was made.

If you applied online, you can check how far your application has progressed by signing into your ImmiAccount.

Travelling outside Australia

You should inform the Department if you need to travel outside Australia while your application is being processed or while you are waiting for your ceremony.

If you need to travel, you must travel on your current passport. You must also make sure you have a valid visa that allows you to re-enter Australia.

You will need to apply for a Resident Return visa if the travel conditions on your visa have expired or are about to expire.

If you are a non-citizen and you do not hold and cannot access a travel document from your country of nationality, you may be eligible for a Convention Travel Document, also known as a Titre de Voyage, where:

- you are in Australia; and
- you are not an Australian citizen; and
- the Department of Home Affairs has recognised you as a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

For more information about Convention Travel Documents, including how to apply, visit the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website: Non-citizen travel documents (passports.gov.au)

Citizenship Test and Interview

As part of the process for Australian citizenship by conferral, the Department may invite you to attend an appointment. At the appointment, the Department will confirm your identity and your understanding of Australian citizenship.

If you are required to attend an appointment, the Department will send you a letter with the appointment details.

Citizenship appointments are usually in two parts: a citizenship interview and a citizenship test.

Citizenship interview:
The citizenship interview is to confirm your identity and confirm you are eligible to sit the citizenship test. You will need to take the original photo identity documents you provided in your application, and any other documents the Department asks you to bring. For more information about the citizenship interview, including the f documents you may need to provide, visit the Department's website: Citizenship test and interview (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Citizenship test:
The citizenship test is part of the application process for most applicants for Australian citizenship by conferral.

Passing the citizenship test will show you have a basic knowledge of the English language, an understanding of what it means to become an Australian citizen, an adequate knowledge of Australia, and an understanding and commitment to Australian values based on freedom, respect and equality.

To pass the test you must:

- answer 20 multiple choice questions
- answer all 5 of the Australian values questions correctly, and
- get a mark of at least 75% overall.

For more information about the citizenship test, including resources to help you prepare for the test, visit Prepare for the test (homeaffairs.gov.au).

You do not need to sit the test in certain circumstances. For more information, go to 'Who doesn't sit the test' on the Department's website: Learn about the citizenship interview and test (homeaffairs.gov.au)

When you receive a decision

You will receive a letter from the Department of Home Affairs when they have made a decision on your citizenship application.

If your application is refused:
If the Department refuses your citizenship application, they will send you a letter explaining their reasons for reaching that decision.

Your notification letter will advise you on:

- the reasons for the Department's decision;
- how and where to lodge a request for a review; and
- time limits for requesting a review.

A decision by the Department to refuse your application is subject to review by an independent tribunal. Julian cannot provide advice on seeking a review, or the grounds on which to challenge the Department's decision. These are decisions for you to make, and you may wish to seek advice from a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

If a citizenship application is refused by the Department, unfortunately it is a legal matter and therefore not something your local MP is able to assist with.

If your application is approved:

If the Department approves your citizenship application, they will send you a letter. If you need to attend a citizenship ceremony, the Department or your local council will send you an invitation at a later date.

Most applicants for citizenship by conferral must attend a citizenship ceremony and make the Australian Citizenship Pledge to become a citizen. This completes the process to become an Australian citizen. You will receive your Australian citizenship certificate at your ceremony.

If your application is approved and you are required to attend a ceremony in order to be conferred citizenship, the Department will send you an invitation letter about four weeks before the event.

The time between the approval of your application and your ceremony can vary. For the most up-to-date information regarding wait times, visit the Department's website: Ceremony wait times (homeaffairs.gov.au)

For more information about the citizenship ceremony, including what happens on the day, visit the Department's website: Citizenship ceremony (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Getting an Australian Passport

You cannot apply for an Australian passport until you have received your citizenship certificate from the Department.

For information about applying for an Australian passport, including how long it takes, visit the Australian passport office website at www.passports.gov.au.

Enrolling to vote

Voting in state and federal government elections is compulsory for Australian citizens.

You must enrol to vote if you are aged 18 years or older.

At your citizenship ceremony, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) will give you an information sheet with a QR code to assist you in enrolling to vote online.

You can also visit the AEC website at www.aec.gov.au/enrol to enrol online, or contact the AEC by phone on 13 23 26 to request an enrolment form be sent to you.

PARTNER VISA APPLICATIONS

Under the former Liberal government, the family migration program was broken.

Serious concerns had been raised in relation to partner visa processing over many years, including the lawfulness of an annual limit on the number of visa grants; long delays in processing applications; and the discriminatory approach to partner visa applications from applicants of certain nationalities.

Thousands of couples and families were separated for years due to the Liberals' immigration policies, and funding cuts to the Department of Home Affairs.

The Albanese Government has provided funding for hundreds of new staff in the Department of Home Affairs to reduce the cruel and deliberate partner visa backlog and improve processing times.

A specialised team is dedicated to processing partner visa applications that have been under consideration for longer than five years. The Government has also revoked and replaced Ministerial Direction 80, so that all partner visa applications are treated fairly.

The Liberals' backlog is now being cleaned up, and the Government remains fully committed to a demand-driven model for partner visas, and will continue to work with the Department to improve processing timeframes.

How Australia's Partner Visa System Works

Partner visas are usually a two-stage process, where applicants gain a provisional (temporary) visa in the first instance, and a permanent visa is granted later.

Partner visas have different subclasses depending on whether the applicant is onshore (in Australia) or offshore (overseas) at the time of application.

For all partner visa applications, there is a requirement to provide 'evidence of relationship'. This is an important requirement, and you should look to provide as much supporting evidence as possible when you apply. For advice and information about satisfying this, and any other eligibility requirements, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

For onshore applicants

The provisional visa subclass is the 820 Partner Visa (temporary). This visa lets the de facto partner or spouse of an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen live in Australia temporarily. Getting this visa is the first step towards a permanent Partner visa (subclass 801).

For more information about the subclass 820 Partner Visa, visit the Department's website: Subclass 820 Partner Visa – About this visa (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Important Application Requirements - Subclass 820 Partner Visa

You must be in Australia when you apply for a subclass 820 Partner Visa and when the Department of Home Affairs decides your temporary visa application. Any family members listed as dependent applicants to this partner visa application must also be in Australia at the time of lodgement and decision.

To apply for a subclass 820 Partner Visa, you must be sponsored by your spouse or de facto partner who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen.

For more information about eligibility requirements, including those which apply to both applicant and sponsor, visit the Department's website: Subclass 820 Partner Visa – Eligibility (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Transition to Permanent Residency – Subclass 801 Partner Visa:

Once you are granted a Partner Visa (subclass 820) or a Dependent Child (subclass 445) visa, you will automatically be considered for a subclass 801 Partner Visa (Permanent).

Generally, two years must have passed since you applied for the combined 820 and 801 visa for you to be assessed for the permanent visa.

However, if you were in a long-term relationship or your sponsor held a specific visa before you applied, you might be granted the permanent visa within less than two years. The Department of Home Affairs will let you know if this applies to you.

For more information about the transition to permanent residency via a subclass 801 Partner Visa, visit the Department's website: Subclass 801 Partner Visa – Step by step (homeaffairs.gov.au).

For offshore applicants

The provisional visa subclass is the 309 Partner Visa (temporary). This visa lets the de facto partner or spouse of an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen live in Australia temporarily. Getting this visa is the first step towards a permanent Partner visa (subclass 100).

For more information about the subclass 309 Partner Visa, visit the Department's website: Subclass 309 Partner Visa – About this visa (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Important Application Requirements – Subclass 309 Partner Visa:

You must be outside Australia when you apply for a subclass 309 Partner visa. Any family members listed as dependent applicants to this partner visa application must also be outside Australia at the time of lodgement.

To apply for a subclass 309 Partner Visa, you must be sponsored by your spouse or de facto partner who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen.

For more information about eligibility requirements, including those which apply to both applicant and sponsor, visit the Department's website: Subclass 309 Partner Visa – Eligibility (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Transition to Permanent Residency – Subclass 100 Partner Visa:
Once you are granted a Partner Visa (subclass 309) or a Dependent Child (subclass 445) visa, you will automatically be considered for a subclass 100 Partner Visa (Permanent).

Generally, two years must have passed since you applied for the combined 309 and 100 visa for you to be assessed for the permanent visa.

However, if you were in a long-term relationship or your sponsor held a specific visa before you applied, you might be granted the permanent visa within less than two years. The Department of Home Affairs will let you know if this applies to you.

For more information about the transition to permanent residency via a subclass 100 Partner Visa, visit the Department's website: Subclass 100 Partner Visa – Step by step (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Travelling to Australia to Marry Your Partner

If a couple is engaged to be married, the subclass 300 Prospective Marriage visa lets the fiancé or fiancée of an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen come to Australia to marry their prospective spouse and then apply for a Partner visa.

For more information about eligibility requirements, including those which apply to both applicant and sponsor, visit the Department's website: Subclass 300 Prospective Marriage visa – Eligibility (homeaffairs.gov.au).

If you and your partner want to stay in Australia after you marry, you can apply for an onshore Partner visa (subclass 820 and 801) before your Prospective Marriage visa ends.

For advice and information about transitioning from a prospective marriage visa to an onshore partner visa application after you marry, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

What if you marry before the subclass 300 application is processed?
If you get married before the Department finalises your prospective marriage visa application, you are no longer eligible for this visa.

You can lodge a request to be considered for a Partner (Provisional) visa (subclass 309)and Partner (Migrant) visa (subclass 100) by attaching the following to your initial application:

- evidence that your marriage is valid (registered marriage certificate issued by the relevant legal authority);
- a request to be considered for a Partner (Provisional) visa (subclass 309)and Partner (Migrant) visa (subclass 100); and
- a statement telling the Department you want to withdraw your Prospective Marriage visa application.

After you have attached these documents, you should let the Department know by using the Partner Processing Enquiry Form.

For advice and information about transitioning from a prospective marriage visa application to an offshore partner visa application after you marry, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

If you do not withdraw your application, it will be refused as you no longer meet the eligibility requirements for the visa.

Including Family Members in Your Partner Visa Application

You can include members of your family unit in your application either:

- when you first lodge your visa application, or
- by adding a dependent child after you lodge your application but before the Department decides on your application.

For partner visa purposes, you are a member of the main applicant's 'family unit' if you are:

- the main applicant's spouse or de facto partner;
- the main applicant's child, or their partner's child, who is not engaged, married or in a de facto relationship and is:
    - aged under 18 years, or
    - aged 18 to 23 years and dependent on the main applicant or the main applicant's partner, or
    - aged 23 years or older and dependent on the main applicant or the main applicant's partner due to a partial or total physical or mental disability
- the dependent child of a child above.

What to do if you have a newborn child after you apply for a partner visa?

If you have a child while your partner visa application is being processed, you need to inform the Department as soon as practicable.

For information on what to do if your child is born after you apply, please visit the Department's website: You had a baby (homeaffairs.gov.au).

For advice or further information about including family members in your partner visa application, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

Request Priority Processing

Generally, it is not possible to have a partner visa application prioritised, as applications are processed in order of lodgement date in the interests of fairness.

However, where the Department is satisfied that an application involves exceptional circumstances of a compassionate and compelling nature, they may depart from the processing order and prioritise an individual application.

Given the very high threshold, priority processing is seldom approved by the Department and only in very rare circumstances such as life-threatening medical situations.

You can submitting a request for priority processing through this webform or via your ImmiAccount. You should upload as much supporting evidence as possible to your ImmiAccount when you lodge the request.

MPs cannot request prioritisation of a partner visa – that is something that you or your authorised representative need to do directly.

Afghan Partner Visas

Even after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, the previous Liberal Government was shamefully slow in processing Afghan partner visa cases. Given the compelling and compassionate circumstances that apply, and the enormous backlog the previous government presided over, all visas for partners from Afghanistan have been prioritised.

The number of Afghan citizens waiting for years for their partner visa applications to be finalised has been steadily reducing since the Albanese Labor Government provided additional funding for visa processing staff.

If you are the family member of someone from Afghanistan who has applied for a visa, and you have an enquiry in relation to the application, you can contact the Department here: Contact form for Afghanistan (homeaffairs.gov.au).

HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM

The Albanese Government is committed to generous and flexible humanitarian and settlement programs that meet Australia's international protection obligations, and position Australia as a global leader in international resettlement efforts.

Due to unprecedented humanitarian need, the Department of Home Affairs has received an overwhelming number of humanitarian visa applications in recent times.

Priority is given to those who have the greatest resettlement need, including people who are assessed as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and referred to Australia for resettlement; applicants proposed by a close family member; and vulnerable cohorts within refugee populations including women and children, ethnic minorities and identified minority groups.

In Australia, MPs have no role in determining who gets priority - this is decided by the Department, independently of politicians.

The Department will not provide updates on individual Refugee and Humanitarian visa applications and it is not possible to provide a processing timeframe for these applications. This is due to the volume of applications and their complexity, as well as individual factors (including location and the applicants' ability to provide documents and meet processing requirements) that make every case different.

For advice regarding a humanitarian visa application, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer, registered migration agent or refugee legal services.

Afghan Humanitarian Visas

The Government has allocated at least 26,500 dedicated visa places for Afghan citizens to migrate to Australia under the offshore Humanitarian Program through to 2026. Alongside priorities for the Humanitarian Program, including split families and those with close ties to Australia, priority for these places will be given to people outside Afghanistan who are:

- certified former Locally Engaged Employees (LEE) and their immediate family members (spouses and children under 18 years);
- immediate family members (spouse, children under 18) of holders of Refugee and Humanitarian (Class XB) visas;
- refugees who have been referred by UNHCR to Australia for resettlement; and
- women and girls, ethnic minorities, and other identified minority groups.

Unfortunately, people outside of these groups will face considerable difficulty obtaining a humanitarian visa due to the number of people who have applied.

Due to overwhelming numbers, many people who meet the priority criteria will nonetheless not be granted a visa given the demand.

In certain circumstances your local MP may be able to provide a letter of support to the Department, where applicants are outside Afghanistan, meet published priority criteria and have a reasonable prospect of being granted a visa.

If you live in the Bruce electorate and have sponsored a family member from Afghanistan, and you are seeking a letter of support for the application, please send Julian an email including:

- A copy of your driver's licence showing your current address
- Copies of the 681 and 842 forms and the acknowledgement letter from the Department.
- Advise if you have been certified by the Minister for Defence or the Minister for Foreign Affairs as a Locally Engaged Employee of Australia in Afghanistan
- Explain how your family meet the priority criteria
- Confirm where the applicants are physically located now

Julian can then consider whether a letter of support can be provided.

The Department's Afghanistan update page is updated regularly:Afghanistan update (homeaffairs.gov.au)

The update page contains information about the processing of humanitarian visa applications for Afghan citizens.

The update page contains a contact form for applicants and their family, and the Department has requested that people use this form to submit their enquiries: Contact form for Afghanistan (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Community Support Program

The Community Support Program (CSP) is designed to provide a sustainable model for private sponsorship of refugees that complements, rather than competes with, the existing Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program categories. It allows Australian communities and businesses, as well as families and individuals, to propose and support humanitarian visa applicants with employment prospects.

To be eligible for the CSP, you must:

- be outside your home country and outside Australia
- be subject to substantial discrimination in your home country
- satisfy all Class XB (subclass 202) criteria of the Global Special Humanitarian visa
- be aged between 18 and 50

- have adequate English and demonstrate this at a visa interview
- have a job offer (or a pathway that leads to employment) and/or personal attributes that would enable you to become financially self-sufficient within 12 months of arrival in Australia

You must also have people in Australia who are willing to financially support your visa application and settlement. Support may come from communities, businesses, friends and/or family.

If you wish to apply for the CSP, you must work with an Approved Proposing Organisation.

For more information about the CSP, including how to apply, visit the Department's website: Community Support Program (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot

The Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) provides an opportunity for community members to welcome refugees into Australia and directly support their settlement journey and integration into communities.

CRISP operates as a dedicated settlement pathway for refugees who:

- do not have family links in Australia; and
- are referred to Australia by the UNHCR for resettlement.

A total of 1,500 refugees will be settled through CRISP up until 30 June 2025.

For more information about CRISP, visit the Department's website: Helping Refugees (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Humanitarian Visa Refusal

In Australia, visa decisions are made by the Department. If a humanitarian visa is refused, there is nothing that an MP or the Minister can do and there is no right of appeal of humanitarian visa decisions under Australian law.

People are able to lodge another Refugee and Humanitarian visa application if there is additional information that was not considered in a previous application, or if circumstances change.

The decision to lodge a subsequent visa application, as well as any evidence required to address the reasons for your initial refusal, is not something your local MP can advise on. These are decisions for you to make, and you may wish to seek advice from a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent in this regard.

VISITOR VISA APPLICATIONS

A visitor visa (subclass 600) allows a successful applicant to visit Australia for the period or dates specified on the visa grant letter.

The visitor visa subclass is split into several streams, the most common of which are the Sponsored family stream and the Tourist stream.

The Tourist stream visa allows you to visit Australia to see family and friends but does not require a sponsor.

For information or advice about which Visitor visa stream best suits you or your family, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

"The Albanese Government is proud to have reduced the standard processing time for visitor visa applications by over 75% since coming into office."

Applying for a Visitor Visa

The Department of Home Affair's website takes you through how to lodge a Visitor visa application, step by step: Step by step (homeaffairs.gov.au). There are additional requirements for a Sponsored Family Visitor visa: Visitor visa (subclass 600) Sponsored family stream (homeaffairs.gov.au)

An important requirement of any visitor visa application is the requirement to provide supporting documents that evidence an intention to stay in Australia only temporarily.

Guidance on proving this requirement is found under Step Two ('Gather your documents') and then 'Genuine Visitor Documents'.

Remember, it is not what you tell the Department, it is what you prove with evidence to the Department that matters.

Applicants from some countries will face significant difficulties in providing sufficient evidence to convince the Department that this 'genuine temporary entrant' requirement is met. This is because the Department must take into account an applicant's country of residence.

If an applicant is a citizen of a country where there is a serious civil unrest, political instability or other significant circumstances, the Department may be less confident that a temporary visa-holder will return home prior to the expiry of their Australian visa.

What if my Visitor visa is refused?

These are not political decisions – they are made by the Department and politicians do not decide where cases are processed or what the decisions are.

The Department has to make decisions based on intelligence they receive, patterns for other visa-holders and the evidence provided.

If a Visitor visa is refused, MPs and the Minister have no power to change that decision. Only through a successful appeal to a review tribunal can the decision be changed. Visa appeals can take a long time and cost a significant amount of money, so many people choose to lodge a new application with additional evidence instead.

You may choose to lodge a further visa application, providing more information and additional evidence to respond to the Department's concerns:

- Have you provided full evidence to the Department of your current employment or studies?
- Any property or major assets you own?
- Any record of other international travel? To which countries?
- All bank account statements?
- Spouse, children or close family members that gives a strong reason to return?
- What other evidence could you provide?

Remember, it is not what you tell the Department, it is what you PROVE with EVIDENCE to the Department that matters.

You need to provide clear evidence of everything.

In some cases, some people have had success by only inviting one family member to visit and offering to pay a financial bond - through lodging a Sponsored Family Visitor visa application - to guarantee they will depart before the end of their stay.

This may help to convince the Department that the applicant is a genuine temporary visitor, as having other family members remain in their home country is sometimes seen as a greater incentive to return.

Given the complexity of some visitor visa applications, you may wish to engage a professional migration agent who is expert in visitor visa applications, especially if you are applying for a second time after the Department has rejected an initial application.

ONSHORE PROTECTION CLAIMS

Permanent protection

If you arrived in Australia legally and you cannot return to your home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, you may be eligible for a Protection visa (subclass 866).

This visa is for people who arrived in Australia on a valid visa and want to seek asylum. It allows you to stay in Australia permanently, only if you, or a member of your family unit, engage Australia's protection obligations and meet all other requirements for the grant of the visa.

For information about Australia's onshore protection obligations, visit the Department's website: Australia's protection obligations (homeaffairs.gov.au).

For advice about seeking permanent protection after your arrival in Australia, you may wish to contact Refugee Legal (refugeelegal.org.au). MPs cannot assist with these visa applications.

TPV and SHEV holders

If you currently hold or formerly held a Temporary Protection visa (subclass 785) or a Safe Haven Enterprise visa (subclass 790), and you arrived in Australia before 14 February 2023, you may be able to apply for a Permanent Resolution of Status visa (subclass 851) (see 'TPV and SHEV Conversion' below).

TPV AND SHEV CONVERSION

There are thousands of Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) holders in the community who have lived through years of migration limbo due to the policies of the previous Liberal Government.

The Albanese Labor Government has delivered on its election commitment to provide a permanent visa pathway for existing TPV and SHEV holders.

This will empower TPV and SHEV holders to move forward with their lives – to more fully contribute to Australia, gain secure employment, grow businesses, study more easily, sponsor eligible family members to Australia, and pursue a pathway to Australian citizenship.

Eligible visa holders will be able to apply for a permanent Resolution of Status (subclass 851) visa.

Resolution of Status visa applicants are not required to undergo a further protection obligations assessment and most applicants will not need to attend an interview.

If you lodged a TPV or SHEV application with the Department before 14 February 2023 that has not been finally determined (including a subsequent TPV or SHEV application), the Department will convert your application to a Resolution of Status visa application.

TPV and SHEV holders who do not have a further application pending with the Department need to lodge a Resolution of Status visa application via their ImmiAccount.

You must make an application for a Resolution of Status visa before your existing TPV or SHEV expires.

Applicants for a Resolution of Status visa will be required to satisfy all visa requirements. You can find out more on the Department's website: Subclass 851 Resolution of Status (homeaffairs.gov.au)

The Government has committed millions of dollars to boost the capacity of specialist community refugee and immigration legal service providers to support TPV and SHEV holders to apply for a Resolution of Status visa.

Refugee Legal are available to provide free application assistance to TPV and SHEV holders:

Phone: (03) 9413 0133 (9 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Friday)
Email: RoSVisa@refugeelegal.org.au
Website: Refugee Legal (http://refugeelegal.org.au/get-help/tpvs-shevs-conversion-to-a-permanent-visa/)

MPs are not able to write letters about individual TPV or SHEV conversion cases as they make no difference to the outcome and divert departmental staff from processing applications.

BRIDGING VISA ISSUES

Bridging visas may be granted to applicants whose primary visa application is still being assessed, has been refused, or is being appealed.

The appropriate bridging visa will vary depending on which of these categories apply to you.

Bridging Visa A (BVA):
This temporary visa generally allows you to stay in Australia after your current substantive visa ceases and while your new substantive visa application is being processed.

For more information, including relevant eligibility criteria for this bridging visa, visit the Department's website: Bridging Visa A (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Bridging visa B (BVB):
This bridging visa allows you to leave and return to Australia during a specified travel period while your application for a substantive visa is being processed.

For more information, including relevant eligibility criteria for this bridging visa, visit the Department's website: Bridging Visa B (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Bridging visa C (BVC):
This temporary visa generally allows you to stay in Australia after your current substantive visa ceases and while your new substantive visa application is being processed.

For more information, including relevant eligibility criteria for this bridging visa, visit the Department's website: Bridging Visa C (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Bridging visa E (BVE):
This visa lets you stay lawfully in Australia while you make arrangements to leave, finalise your immigration matter, or wait for an immigration decision.

For more information, including relevant eligibility criteria for this bridging visa, visit the Department's website: Bridging visa E (BVE) - Subclass 050 and 051 (homeaffairs.gov.au)

For advice about the different bridging visa categories, you may wish to contact a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

MINISTERIAL INTERVENTION

The Minister has powers under the Migration Act 1958 to replace a decision of a merits review tribunal on a person's case with a decision that is more favourable to that person, if the Minister thinks it is in the public interest to do so.

This means that if you have had a visa application refused by the Department, and the Department's decision has been affirmed by an independent review tribunal, the Minister may still intervene to grant you a visa.

The Department assesses requests for ministerial intervention against the Minister's guidelines, which describe the types of cases that might be referred for the Minister's consideration, and those where it would be inappropriate for the Minister to consider intervening.

Under the guidelines for ministerial intervention, only a small number of requests are referred by the department to the Minister, and very few requests are successful.

You can find out more about ministerial intervention, including the types of unique or exceptional circumstances that may be brought to the Minister's attention at the Department's website: Ministerial intervention (homeaffairs.gov.au)

PARENT VISAS

There are a number of options for parent visas, both permanent and temporary, that enable parents of Australian citizens, permanent residents and eligible New Zealand citizens to reunite with their children in Australia:

- Aged Parent visa (subclass 804)
- Contributory Aged Parent (Temporary) visa (subclass 884)
- Contributory Aged Parent visa (subclass 864)
- Contributory Parent (Temporary) visa (subclass 173)
- Contributory Parent visa (subclass 143)
- Parent visa (subclass 103)
- Sponsored Parent (Temporary) visa (subclass 870)

More information on each of these visa subclasses is available on the Department of Home Affairs' website at: immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/family-migration-program/visa-options/about-parent-visas

Parent visa applications are subject to capping and queuing. This means that there are a maximum number of visas that can be granted each year. Once that number is reached, no more visas can be granted that year and all remaining applications will remain in the queue until a place becomes available in future years.

Because all parent visa applications involve compassionate elements, there is no ability to escalate or apply for priority processing of parent visas.

Parent visa applications are assessed strictly in lodgement date order.

Once an application has been received and assessed against the core visa criteria, it is assigned a queue date and placed in a queue. Queued applications are released in date order for final processing throughout the year.

The Labor Government has significantly increased the number of parent visas available, after several cuts to visa places by the former Liberal Government.

However, despite this, waiting times for parent visas remain considerable because many more people apply for parent visas than there are places available.

Further information on Parent visa processing times and queue dates is available at the Department of Home Affairs' website: https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-processing-times/family-visa-processing-priorities/parent-visas-queue-release-dates

SKILLED AND BUSINESS VISAS

There is a wide range of work and skilled visas, both temporary and permanent, sponsored and independent, for people in different circumstances.

You can link to the eligibility criteria and other important information for each of these visa subclasses at the Department's website under 'Working and skilled visas': Visa list (homeaffairs.gov.au)

Decisions about skilled visa applications are made independently of MPs by the Department of Home Affairs and it is generally not possible to provide letters of support for individuals' skilled visa applications.

If you require advice or assistance regarding a skilled visa application, you may wish to consult a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

The Albanese government will continue to work with the Department, to make sure that prospective migrants, temporary residents and Australian businesses do not experience extended waiting periods for skilled visa applications.

Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189)

This visa lets invited workers, with skills Australia needs, to live and work permanently anywhere in Australia.

To be eligible for this visa, you must:

- have an occupation on the relevant skilled occupation list
- have a suitable skills assessment for the occupation
- be invited to apply for this visa
- satisfy the points test

For more information about the skilled independent visa, including how to submit an expression of interest, visit the Department's website: Be invited to apply (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Skilled Regional visa (subclass 887)

This visa is for people who have lived and worked in specified areas of regional Australia on a previous, eligible visa.

To be eligible for this visa, you must:

- hold an eligible visa or have held an eligible visa that expired outside Australia during the concession period

- have lived for at least two years and worked full time for at least 1 year in a specified regional area, unless COVID-19 concessions apply
- have complied with the conditions of the eligible visa you hold or have held

Subclass 887 applicants can assist by making sure their applications are completed correctly, with all necessary supporting documents attached in your ImmiAccount, including an up-to-date Australian Federal Police clearance.

Applicants should notify the Department of any change of circumstances such as a change of address or addition of a new family member, and ensure all documents are current.

For more information about the skilled independent visa, including relevant eligibility requirements, visit the Department's website: Skilled Regional visa (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Skills Assessments

Many skilled visa applications require a 'skills assessment'. These assessments are conducted by 'skills assessing authorities' and check whether people are sufficiently qualified or experienced to work in a particular occupation.

More information, including which visa subclasses require a skills assessment, can be found here: Skills assessment (homeaffairs.gov.au).

After you Receive a Decision on Your Visa Application

You will receive a letter from the Department of Home Affairs when they have made a decision on your visa application.

If Your Application is Refused

If the Department refuses your visa application, they will send you a letter and a decision record.

The decision record will advise you on:

- the reasons why the Department reached the decision; and, where relevant,
- how and where to lodge a request for a review; and time limits for requesting a review.

A decision by the Department to refuse your application is often subject to review by an independent tribunal. MP's cannot provide advice on seeking a review, or the grounds on which to challenge the Department's decision.

These are decisions the applicant must make, and you may wish to seek advice from a qualified immigration lawyer or registered migration agent.

Unfortunately, if a visa application is rejected by the Department, it is a legal matter, and therefore not something the Minister or any MP has power to change.

If Your Application is Approved

If the Department grants you an Australian visa, it is critical that you comply with the conditions of that visa.

Many of the visa conditions – for instance the expiry date, if applicable – will be found on your visa grant letter.

For a comprehensive list of visa conditions, including work and travel conditions, visit the "When you have this visa" tab under the relevant visa subclass on the Department's website.

Alternatively, the Department's Visa Entitlement Verification Online system (VEVO) allows visa holders, employers, education providers and other organisations to check visa conditions. To view your visa conditions via VEVO, visit the Department's website: Check visa details and conditions (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Settlement Services for Newly Arrived Australians

Australia has a long and proud tradition of resettling migrants and refugees and vulnerable people in humanitarian need. With the right support, migrants and refugees can make extraordinary contributions and become outstanding members of society.

Government and community organisations provide Australian residents with many services. Some permanent migrants and temporary visa holders may not be eligible for all the services described, or there may be a financial charge for some services.

Settlement services can provide eligible migrants with practical assistance such as opening a bank account, applying for a driver's licence, finding a family doctor, registering for English language classes, contacting Centrelink, enrolling in Medicare and applying for a tax file number.

You can find more detailed information in the Beginning a Life in Australia booklet which has been translated into 39 different languages and is available at: https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/settle-in-australia/beginning-a-life-in-australia

A list of locally-based settlement support service providers is included below:

Acholi Community Association in Australia Inc

Address: 2 Newman Ave, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: 0413 084 431
Email: jamesotto@y7mail.com

The Acholi Community Association in Australia offers support to newly arrived Acholi-speaking Sudanese migrants.

Advocacy for Oromia Association in Victoria Inc

Address: 39 Clow St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0466 521 524
Email: info@advocacy4oromia.org

The Advocacy for Oromia Association in Victoria provides assistance settlement support to members of the Australian Oromo community.

Afghan Australia Philanthropic Association Inc.
Address: PO Box 321, Endeavour Hills, VIC, 3802
Phone: (03) 9706 2787
Email: aschna1@hotmail.com
Website: www.aapa.org.au

The Afghan Australia Philanthropic Association provides settlement support and assistance to members of the Afghan community and newly arrived migrants including sporting groups for young men, Pashto language classes, music classes and various social and cultural celebrations.

Afghan Australian Welfare Association Inc.
Address: PO Box 446, Doveton, VIC, 3177
Phone: 0402 473 948
Email: amirranay@gmail.com

The Afghan Australian Welfare Association provides welfare support including housing to the Afghan community.

Afghan Australian Women & Youth Association
Address: 7 Canterbury Cl, Narre Warren, VIC, 3805
Phone: (03) 9704 1583
Email: malali_aschna@hotmail.co.uk

The Afghan Australian Women & Youth Association aims to help Afghan women and young people understand and integrate in Australian society whilst keeping Afghan culture alive.

Afri-Aus Care Inc
Address: 186 Foster St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9794 9195
Email: info@afri-auscare.org
Website: www.afri-auscare.org

Afri-Aus Care are a group of diverse professionals who provide support services to migrant youth from African and other backgrounds, and their families who are at risk or experiencing mental health issues, family and intergenerational conflict or are in the court system due to offences arising from these circumstances. Services offered relate to mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, legal support, youth support and education and training.

AMES Australia
Address: 60 Douglas St, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: 13 26 37
Email: srssapplications@ames.net.au
Website: www.ames.net.au

AMES offer a range of English language and other training courses, case management services, employment mentoring programs, and referrals to material aid support.

Arkan Rohingya Community of Australia
Address: 1/35 Hemmings St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0401 306 831

The Arkan Rohingya Community of Australia promotes cultural activities within the Rohingya community and assists Rohingya people with understanding and integrating into the Australian community.

Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation Inc
Address: 1/9 Carson St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0406 310 077, 0411 456 400, 0416 161 846
Email: abro.aus@gmail.com
Website: www.abro.org.au

The Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation provides social support, welfare assistance, educational and cultural awareness programs and English classes for Rohingya refugees in Victoria.

Australian Red Cross
Address: Level 1, 280 Thomas St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 8327 7370 (hotline)
Website: www.redcross.org.au

Emergency relief appointments five days a week; Monday to Friday between 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM.

If you are an asylum seeker or migrant who is unable to access any other support and you are suffering financial hardship, the Red Cross may be able to assist with groceries and transport vouchers, healthcare and essential medicines and referrals to other support services and activities.

Australian Syrian Charity (ASC)
Address: 287 Sydney Rd, Brunswick, VIC, 3056
Phone: 0480 124 793
Email: admin@australiansyriancharity.org.au
Website: www.australiansyriancharity.org.au

The Australian Syrian Charity empowers newly arrived Syrian refugee families, enabling them to be self-sufficient and integrate into Australia. They can provide financial assistance, social activities and support, and English classes.

Bakhtar Cultural Association
Address: PO Box 4273, Narre Warren, VIC, 3805
Phone: 0435 945 591
Email: bassir.qadiri@gmail.com
Website: www.bakhtar.org.au

The Bakhtar Cultural Association provides relief support to disadvantaged community members and addresses issues such as family and domestic violence, gender equity and equality, health literacy, disability, mental health, homelessness and work safety.

Bor Youth Association in Victoria
Address: 1/62 Fintonia Rd, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: 0431 199 660
Email: diingdeng@yahoo.com

The Bor Youth Association in Victoria provides assistance to young people from the Bor region of South Sudan.

Burmese Muslim Organisation Inc
Address: 69 Jacksons Rd, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: 0430 382 445
Email: jsawlwin@yahoo.com.au

The Burmese Muslim Organisation provides settlement support and welfare services to Burmese refugees in Victoria regardless of their race, religion, colour and sex.

Burmese-Australian Women Organisation Inc
Address: 69 Jacksons Rd, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: 0414 256 834
Email: zubedasawlwin@yahoo.com.au

The Burmese-Australian Women Organisation Inc provides settlement support, welfare services and educational, social and cultural programs to all Burmese refugees in Victoria.

Cambodian Association of Victoria
Address: 52 Queens Ave, Springvale, VIC, 3171
Phone: (03) 8522 8432
Email:admin@cav.net.au
Website: www.cambodianassociation.com.au

The Cambodian Association of Victoria provides welfare and support services to members of the Cambodian community, including on issues relating to immigration, employment, accommodation, education, health and finance.

Carers of Africa Inc
Address: 18 Mason St, Dandenong VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9793 6704
Email:info@carersofafrica.org.au
Website: www.carersofvictoria.org.au

Carers of Africa provide holistic assessment, counselling and support for people from culturally and linguistically diverse and African heritage who have issues with their physical and mental health, illness and substance abuse, as well as supportive community visits to individuals, counselling and mentoring, legal services and housing services.

CatholicCare
Address: Level 2, 33-35 Princes Highway, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone:(03) 8710 9600
Email:dandenong@ccam.org.au
Website: www.ccam.org.au

CatholicCare's Dandenong Branch offers services for the community including alcohol and other drug services, asylum seeker support including housing, counselling and family dispute resolution, English conversation programs, job readiness programs, pre-marriage education programs and settlement engagement transition support.

Casey Tamil Manram
Address: Berwick Senior Citizens Centre, 110 High St, Berwick, VIC, 3806
Email: info@caseytamilmanram.org.au
Website: www.caseytamilmanram.org.au

The Casey Tamil Manram provides support to new Tamil migrants.

Centre for Multicultural Youth
Address: 243 Lonsdale St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 8594 1561
Email: info@cmy.net.au
Website: www.cmy.net.au

The Centre for Multicultural Youth offers them tools, linkages and pathways that support them to overcome a range of barriers including understanding the migration system, registering with essential services, accessing health and mental health services, accessing education, training and employment pathways, accessing accommodation and housing support and navigating financial or legal difficulties.

Eastern and Central African Communities of Victoria Inc
Address: Paddy O'Donoghue Centre, 18 - 34 Buckley St, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: (03) 9510 0167
Email: eacacov@eacacov.org.au

The Eastern and Central African Communities of Victoria provides holistic social service support for migrants and refugees from Africa.

Federation of South Sudanese Associations in Victoria Inc
Address: Shop 31, Level 1, Hub Arcade, 15-23 Langhorne St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0478 189 638
Email: fssav15@gmail.com

The Federation of South Sudanese Associations in Victoria advocates for policy development, service delivery and social justice for South Sudanese Australians in Victoria.

Hazara Australian Community Association of Victoria
Address: 23 - 25 Doveton Ave, Eumemmerring, VIC, 3177
Phone: (03) 8794 8668
Email: behsudiali@yahoo.com

The Hazara Australian Community Association of Victoria assists the Hazara community with connecting to social and community services and filling out forms.

Hazara Shamama Association of Australia Inc
Address: Level 1, 5/73 Walker St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0435 803 774
Email: shamama.org@gmail.com

The Hazara Shamama Association of Australia assists refugees and migrant communities from Afghanistan through provision of settlement support services.

Korok Women's Association Inc
Address: 1/10 Nockolds Cr, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: 0432 334 799
Email: jwanamaria@hotmail.com

The Korok Women's Association is an association of Bari women from the equatorial region of South Sudan.

Liech Nuer Community Association Inc
Address: 18 Moodemere St, Noble Park, VIC, 3174
Phone: (03) 9546 4164
Email:
gmagockgaluak3nuer_adok@yahoo.com

The Liech Nuer Community Association supports Sudanese migrants with cultural activities, employment assistance, cultural orientation and travel assistance.

Life Without Barriers
Address: Level 2, 1 - 7 Langhorne St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 8752 8501
Website: www.lwb.org.au

Life Without Barriers provides case management services, employment mentoring programs and referrals to material aid support. Life Without Barriers provides Status Resolution Support Services funded by the Department of Home Affairs.

Nasir Community Association Inc
Address: PO Box 7156, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0401 592 543

The Nasir Community Association is an association of Nasir people from South Sudan and part of the Nuer community.

Oromo Women Association in Australia South Pacific Region Inc
Address: PO Box 7208, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0402 757 391
Email:likkeegossa@hotmail.com

The Oromo Women Association in Australia South Pacific Region provides social support, welfare assistance and settlement support for Oromo women in Australia and the South Pacific.

Settlement Services International
Address: Level 1, 118 Walker St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 1800 749 174
Email:info@ssi.org.au

Settlement Services International provide a wide-range of settlement services to recently-arrived migrants from all backgrounds and is a registered Status Resolution Support Services provider.

South East Community Links
Dandenong
Address: 186 Foster St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9791 8344

Noble Park
Address: 60 Douglas St, Noble Park, VIC, 3173
Phone: (03) 9547 0511

Springvale
Address: 5 Osborne Ave, Springvale, VIC, 3171
Phone: (03) 9546 5255

Email:info@secl.org.au
Website: www.secl.org.au

South East Community Links offer a wide range of settlement services for people who have come to Australia as migrants or refugees, including housing, financial, family, education and medical problems. Settlement services are offered at each of the three listed office locations between 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.

The Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network
Address: 39 Clow St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0469 963 416
Email: ahwfn1@gmail.com
Website:
www.hazarawomensnetwork.com.au

The Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network aims to help Hazara women through regular training and free English classes.

South Eastern Region Melbourne Oromo Community Association in Victoria Australia Inc
Address: PO Box 7028, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9704 0049
Email:dfayisa11@gmail.com

The South Eastern Region Melbourne Oromo Community Association in Victoria Australia assists new refugees with settlement through the Migrant Resource Centre.

South Eastern Melbourne Vietnamese Association Council
Address: Level 1, 292 Springvale Rd, Springvale, VIC, 3171
Phone: (03) 8510 0481
Email: info@semvac.org.au
Website: www.semvac.org.au

The South Eastern Melbourne Vietnamese Association Council provides free general advice and assistance to community members who have limited English skills.

Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre
Address: 39 Clow St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9767 1900
Email: smrc@smrc.org.au
Website: www.smrc.org.au

The Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre provides settlement support services for migrants and refugees in South East Melbourne, including aged care, driver education, complex case management, education and employment assistance and other training services.

Union of Greater Upper Nile States
Address: 39 Clow St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9676 1994
Email: paluguns@gmail.com

The Union of Greater Upper Nile States provides settlement services to South Sudanese Australians.

Victorian Afghan Associations Network
Address: 3/33 Robinson St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0435 946 488
Email: vaan.network@gmail.com
Website: www.vaan.org.au

The Victorian Afghan Associations Network is an assembly of a dozen registered Afghan community groups that provide settlement and other support services to members of the Afghan community.

Victorian Arabic Social Services
Address: 39 Clow St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 0435 946 488
Email: vaan.network@gmail.com
Website: www.vaan.org.au

Victorian Arabic Social Services provides a range of support including counselling, casework, referrals, advocacy, community development, mediation and social, cultural and linguistic support to people of Arabic speaking backgrounds.

Victorian Myanmar Muslim Community Inc
Address: 33 Hope St, Springvale, VIC, 3171
Phone: 0430 302 663
Email: masmai73@gmail.com

The Victorian Myanmar Muslim Community provides assistance to refugees and asylum seekers with tasks such as filling out paperwork, linking individuals with required services and accommodation and transport support.

Victorian Tamil Cultural Association
Address: PO Box 2286, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9794 7942
Email: kumararr@anz.com

The Victorian Tamil Cultural Association assists newly arrived migrants with their settlement needs.

Wellsprings for Women
Address: 79 Langhorne St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 9701 3740
Email: administration@wellspringsforwomen.com
Website: www.wellspringsforwomen.com

Wellsprings for Women is a female-only service with childcare available for women in the Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia area. Wellsprings for Women also provide case management services to women impacted by mental health, isolation, family violence, poverty and homelessness, education on human rights, gender equality, prevention of family violence, parenting and mental health, as well as classes on English literacy and numeracy, computer literacy and business and vocational program pathways.

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)

The Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program is funded by the Department of Home Affairs to provide temporary needs-based support if you are unable to support yourself while resolving your immigration status.

- You may be eligible to receive SRSS if you are:
- Unlawful and living in the Australian community
- An unauthorised maritime arrival and have lodged a valid Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) application
- A non-unauthorised maritime arrival and have lodged a valid protection visa application
- A holder of a Bridging Visa E (BVE)
- Facing significant barriers that are impacting on your ability to resolve your immigration status
- Recently released from immigration detention.

If you are an asylum seeker living in the community, you can apply for SRSS by contacting a contracted SRSS provider. The SRSS provider will assist you in completing any necessary forms to apply for SRSS. Below are local SRSS providers in the area:

Life Without Barriers
Address: Level 2, 1 - 7 Langhorne St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: (03) 8752 8501
Website: www.lwb.org.au

Life Without Barriers provides case management services, employment mentoring programs and referrals to material aid support. Life Without Barriers provides Status Resolution Support Services funded by the Department of Home Affairs.

Settlement Services International
Address: Level 1, 118 Walker St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 1800 749 174
Email:info@ssi.org.au

Settlement Services International provide a wide-range of settlement services to recently-arrived migrants from all backgrounds and is a registered Status Resolution Support Services provider.

You can find out more about Status Resolution Support Services here: Status Resolution Support Services (homeaffairs.gov.au)

Useful Contacts

Refugee Legal
Address: Level 5, 333 Exhibition St, Melbourne, VIC, 3000
Advice line: (03) 9413 0100
Afghanistan legal hotline: (03) 9413 0166
Email: refugeelegal@refugeelegal.org.au

Refugee Legal provide free specialist legal assistance to people seeking asylum, refugees and disadvantaged migrants.

Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA)
Enquiry form: https://portal.mara.gov.au/enquiry/
Website: https://www.mara.gov.au

OMARA register and oversee register migration agents. They are able to help people who need migration advice understand their rights and find a registered migration agent.

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)
Phone: 131 450

TIS National provide a free interpreting service for people who do not speak English. The number above is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Department of Home Affairs
Address: GPO Box 241, Melbourne, VIC, 3001
Phone: 131 881

The Department of Home Affairs oversea immigration, border security, citizenship and other important programs through the Australian Government.

Commonwealth Ombudsman
Address: Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442, Canberra, ACT, 2601
Phone: 1300 362 072
Online form: https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/contact-us

The Commonwealth Ombudsman is an independent body able to oversee and investigate government departments

Dandenong Library
Address: 225 Lonsdale St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 1300 630 920
Email: cgdlibraries@cgd.vic.gov.au

The Dandenong Library provide a Language and literacy service which can help to fill out forms and applications. You can call to make an appointment.

Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)
Address: GPO Box 9955, Melbourne, VIC, 3001
Phone: 1800 228 3001
Email: enquiries@aat.gov.au

The AAT provide independent merits review of administrative decisions made by the Australian Government, including some decisions made by the Department of Home Affairs.

National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)
Address: GPO Box 605, Canberra, ACT, 2601
Phone: 1300 489 844
Website: enquiries@aat.gov.au

The NACC are able to receive reports about corruption in the federal public sector and may assess and investigate reports.

Visa and citizenship cases can have a large psychological toll on applicants and their families. Support services who may be able to help include:

Headspace
Address: 211 Thomas St, Dandenong, VIC, 3175
Phone: 1800 367 968
Email: enquiries@headspacedandenong.com.au

Headspace specifically provide assistance to young people who may need counselling, work or study services.

Beyond Blue
Address: GPO Box 1883, Melbourne, VIC, 3001
Phone: (03) 9810 6100
Email via their online form here: https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/contact-us

Beyond Blue provide free mental health information and support to the community.

Lifeline
Phone: 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support)
Text: 0477 13 11 14
Contact online: https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/

Lifeline provide 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services to all Australians.

For more local government and community services including safety, support and legal services, visit the handy guide on Julian's website www.julianhillmp.com

45 Robinson St
Dandenong VIC 3175

(03) 9791 7770

julian.hill.mp@aph.gov.au

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