

Fact sheet - New Zealanders in Australia

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Background

The Australian and New Zealand Governments have had arrangements in place since the 1920s to facilitate a free flow of people between the two countries.

The 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement has allowed Australian and New Zealand citizens to enter each other's country to visit, live and work, without the need to apply for authority to enter the other country before travelling.

The movement of New Zealand citizens to and from Australia depends on a number of factors, for example the economic conditions of both countries. The number of New Zealand citizens in Australia increases in good economic times in Australia relative to New Zealand, and decreases when the economic conditions slow.

At 30 June 2013, an estimated 640 770 New Zealand citizens were present in Australia.

Special Category Visa

Since 1 September 1994, all non-citizens in Australia must hold a visa.

The Special Category visa (SCV) is a temporary visa introduced for New Zealand citizens. A New Zealand citizen wanting to enter Australia needs to present a valid New Zealand passport and incoming passenger card for immigration clearance. By doing so, New Zealand citizens are considered to have applied for a visa and, subject to health or character considerations, will be granted an SCV. This visa is recorded electronically and the person's passport may be stamped, showing the date of arrival in Australia.

New Zealand citizens with tuberculosis or any criminal convictions (that resulted in imprisonment or a suspended sentence) should approach the nearest Australian immigration office to discuss their entry to Australia before travelling to Australia.

Those who use the SmartGate automated border processing system at airports will be advised they have been granted a visa and can request to have their passport stamped.

People who become New Zealand citizens after their arrival in Australia, or enter on a passport from another country, can apply for an SCV at a departmental office.

In general, New Zealand citizens who were in Australia on 1 September 1994 automatically became SCV holders on that date.

More information about the SCV is available.

See: [Special Category Visa](#)

Changes introduced on 26 February 2001

A new bilateral social security arrangement between Australia and New Zealand was announced on 26 February 2001. This agreement sets out arrangements for payment of age pension, disability support pension and carer payment to New Zealand citizens in Australia.

It also recognised the right of each country to determine access to social security benefits not covered by the agreement, and to set related residence and citizenship rules according to the respective country's national legislative and policy frameworks. In line with that principle Australia introduced a number of supplementary changes.

As a result, the *Social Security Act 1991* requires New Zealand citizens who arrived in Australia after 26 February 2001 to apply for and be granted an Australian permanent visa to access certain social security payments (including income support payments) that are not covered by the bilateral agreement.

To support this requirement, changes were also made to citizenship and migration legislation to require New Zealand citizens to become permanent visa holders if they want to obtain Australian citizenship or sponsor their family members for a permanent visa.

Under transitional arrangements, these changes did not affect New Zealand citizens who:

- were in Australia on 26 February 2001 as SCV holders
- were outside Australia on 26 February 2001, but were in Australia as an SCV holder for a total of 12 months in the two years prior to that date, and subsequently returned to Australia
- have a certificate issued under the *Social Security Act 1991* stating that they were residing in Australia on a particular date. These certificates are no longer issued.

For more information in relation to the social security entitlements of New Zealand citizens in Australia contact the Department of Human Services.

See: [Department of Human Services](#)

Do New Zealand citizens need to apply for a permanent visa?

The SCV is a temporary visa. However, it allows a New Zealand citizen to remain indefinitely and live, work or study in Australia lawfully as long as that person remains a New Zealand citizen.

As the SCV is not a permanent visa, visa holders do not have the same rights and benefits as Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents.

Both Australian permanent residents and SCV holders are generally not able to:

- vote in Australian government elections
See: [Australian Government Elections](#)
- access student loans
See: [Study Assist](#)
- join the Australian Defence Force
See: [Department of Defence](#)
- obtain ongoing work for the Australian Government.
See: [Australia Public Service Commission](#)

Whether New Zealand citizens apply for an Australian permanent visa is ultimately a decision for each person to make based on their individual circumstances.

All Australian permanent visas have legislated eligibility requirements that must be met. Not all New Zealand citizens will qualify, or continue to qualify, for an Australian permanent visa. This should be taken into account when making the decision whether to settle permanently in Australia.

More information is available about New Zealand citizens entering or living in Australia.

See: [New Zealand citizens](#)

Australian citizenship

Applying for citizenship

Those New Zealand citizens covered by the transitional arrangements are able to apply for Australian citizenship without first becoming a permanent visa holder. Those arriving on or after 27 February 2001 must first apply for and be granted a permanent visa. All applicants for Australian citizenship aged 18 years and over must satisfy character requirements.

New Zealand citizens who apply for Australian citizenship and who do not hold a permanent visa must provide overseas penal clearance certificates to support their application. This is because these clients generally have not provided those certificates prior to becoming resident in Australia.

This applies to New Zealand citizen applicants aged 18 years or over regardless of how long they have resided in Australia.

New Zealand citizens who arrived in Australia before the age of 18 years and have not left Australia since are not required to provide this information. More information about applying for Australian citizenship is available on the department's website.

See: [New Zealand citizens living in Australia](#)

Citizenship by birth—before 1 September 1994

People born in Australia on or after 26 January 1949 and before 20 August 1986 became an Australian citizen by birth, with the exception of children born to a parent who was living in Australia temporarily as a diplomat or as the holder of a special purpose visa, for example guests of government, air crew or armed forces and their families.

Following amendments to the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948*, a person born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 and before 1 September 1994 is only an Australian citizen by birth if at least one of their parents was an Australian citizen or permanent resident at the time of their birth.

This does not include the children of New Zealand citizens who were in Australia as 'exempt non-citizens'. Children born in Australia to these New Zealand citizens between 20 August 1986 and 31 August 1994 were also 'exempt non-citizens'. They were not required to hold an entry permit and were regarded as a permanent resident for the period of time they spent in Australia prior to 1 September 1994.

Citizenship by birth—from 1 September 1994 to 26 February 2001

A child born in Australia between 1 September 1994 and 26 February 2001, to a New Zealand citizen parent who held an SCV or a permanent visa is an Australian citizen by birth.

Citizenship by birth—from 27 February 2001

A child born in Australia on or after 27 February 2001 to a New Zealand citizen parent is not an Australian citizen by birth unless the New Zealand citizen parent:

- held an Australian permanent visa
- was a dual Australian-New Zealand citizen
- was covered by the transitional arrangements for the 26 February 2001 changes.

Automatic acquisition of citizenship on 10th birthday

A child born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 who did not acquire Australian citizenship at birth automatically acquires it on their 10th birthday if they have been residing in Australia since their birth. This provision operates regardless of the parents' immigration or citizenship status.

Statistical information

Permanent and long-term arrivals and departures

New Zealand citizens are not counted as part of Australia's annual migration program. They are included in settler arrival and net overseas migration figures (if they are in Australia for 12 months or more over a 16 month period). New Zealand has high immigration in proportion to its population. It also has a high level of emigration, much of which is to Australia.

In the 2012-13 financial year 52 012 New Zealand citizens came to Australia as permanent and long-term arrivals. This represented a decrease of 13.7 per cent on the previous year. Of these 41 230 arrived as permanent settlers and 10 782 were long-term arrivals. This represented a 6.9 per cent decrease on the previous year for permanent arrivals and a 32.6 per cent decrease on the previous year for long-term arrivals.

Permanent departures of New Zealand citizens increased in 2012-13 to 10 875 (up 19.5 per cent from 2011-12) but long-term departures decreased to 5829 (down 15.4 per cent).

This represents a net permanent and long-term increase of New Zealand citizens in Australia during 2012-13 of 35 308, a decrease of 20.3 per cent on the previous year. Of these 20.2 per cent stated they intended to live in New South Wales, 32.6 per cent in Queensland, 23.0 per cent in Victoria and 19.8 per cent in Western Australia. Of those who indicated they had an occupation, 59.2 per cent were skilled, 20.0 per cent were semi-skilled and around 20.7 per cent were unskilled or were believed to be employed but did not provide an adequate description to properly classify their occupation.

New Zealanders in the labour market

New Zealand citizens have a high labour-force participation rate (78.2 per cent at July 2012) compared with those born in Australia (68.0 per cent). At July 2012, people born in New Zealand had an unemployment rate of 4.8 per cent, compared to 4.9 per cent for people born in Australia.

Short-term arrivals

During 2012-13, short-term arrivals of New Zealand citizens totalled 1 051 529, an increase of 0.3 per cent over the previous year.

This is general information only. For case specific advice, please contact the Department.