



# Bridging visas

## Information for people who arrived by boat

A bridging visa allows you to live in Australia temporarily while your immigration case is finalised. It is not a permanent visa. Being granted a bridging visa does not affect the processing of your protection claim.

A bridging visa has conditions. There are certain requirements you must comply with to stay in the community.

The bridging visa grant letter explains the requirements, how long your bridging visa is valid, and whether you are allowed to work. Ask questions if you do not understand what you are allowed or not allowed to do.

Your behaviour in Australia matters. All people must follow Australia’s laws and behave responsibly. Some actions can significantly affect whether you are able to remain in Australia.

Here are some important things you are expected to do as part of being allowed into the community.

Things you should do	Consequence if you do not
Keep your phone number and house address current with all important people (migration agent, lawyer, service provider). This is your responsibility.	You will miss important information about your immigration case if you cannot be contacted.
Tell immigration your new house address and phone number two business days before you move.	This is a bridging visa requirement. The visa can be cancelled and you will be detained.
Follow Australian laws. Do not take part in any illegal activity which could result in you being arrested by the police.	The bridging visa can be cancelled if you are charged with a crime. You will be detained. You may not be granted a permanent visa.
Report to the immigration department when asked. Attend any scheduled appointments.	This is a bridging visa requirement. Missing appointments will show you are not cooperating and staying in contact with immigration.
Give immigration any original documents that support your identity. Do not obtain or use false documents.	Your case will take longer to process if you do not have sufficient identity information. Giving false documents or information is a crime.
Be aware of when your bridging visa expires. Immigration will contact you around this time to organise a meeting with you.	You will be unlawful if you stay in Australia without a valid visa. Income support and Medicare will stop.
Follow all other bridging visa requirements.	If you work without permission, the visa can be cancelled and you will be detained.

### Can I refuse the bridging visa?

No. If the minister decides to grant you a bridging visa, you cannot be held in immigration detention.

## Will I receive any support?

You may receive up to six weeks of support from a service provider to help you in your first weeks. You may be eligible for basic income support until your protection claim is processed. You will be able to access basic healthcare through Medicare while you are cooperating with the immigration department.

## Can I travel overseas?

If you leave Australia, your bridging visa will cease and you will not be permitted to re-enter Australia. If you are later granted a Protection visa, you will be able to travel overseas, but not to your home country. The Protection visa can be cancelled if you return to your home country without prior permission.

## Can I sponsor my family overseas to join me here?

No. You do not have a permanent visa. The right way for your family to join you is for them to:

- register with their nearest United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR), or
- apply through Australia's family migration program – only if you obtain a permanent visa.

## What is criminal behaviour?

Any action you take that is harmful to someone else is criminal behaviour. This includes violence of any kind, damaging property, lying to a government official, using someone else's credit card, and giving false identity documents. The bridging visa can be cancelled due to criminal behaviour in Australia or overseas.

Australia does not tolerate people who use words to abuse or threaten others, or who make sexual comments. Any unacceptable and uninvited physical contact can be reported to police. It does not matter if you did not know or were intoxicated or made a mistake – you are responsible for your own actions.

## Where do I send my original identity documents?

For information about what documents to send, refer to the document called '*Who are you?*'. Send your original identity documents safely by registered post to:

Identity Analysis Centre  
GPO Box 717  
Canberra City ACT 2601.

Include your name, phone number, date of birth and boat identity number.

## Who do I need to contact when I'm in the community?

You must inform the immigration department each time you move house or change your phone number. To do this, email [bvreporting@immi.gov.au](mailto:bvreporting@immi.gov.au) or phone **1300 728 662**. Include your name, phone number, date of birth and boat identity number. For interpreting assistance, phone **131 450** (local call cost), tell them your language in English and ask for immigration.

It is your responsibility to give your address and phone contact details to all other important people helping you, for example migration agent, lawyer, and any community service provider. Immigration does not do this.

## Where can I get information and help?

Once you are in the community, contact your community case worker if you have questions.

If you find living in Australia difficult, the International Organization for Migration – IOM – can give you information about returning home. Phone **1300 116 986** (local call cost) or visit [www.iomaustralia.org](http://www.iomaustralia.org)