

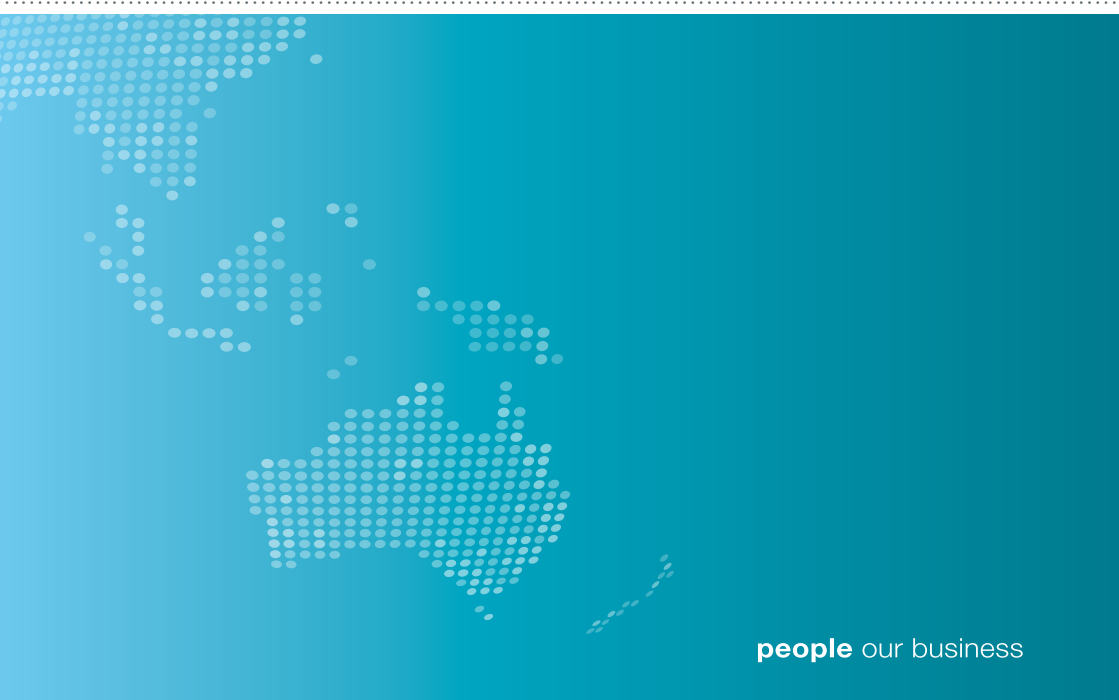


Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Citizenship**

Living in the Australian community

Information for people who arrived by boat

English



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Contents

Introduction	2
Frequently used terms	3
What is a bridging visa?	4
What is community detention?	6
Your identity	7
Living in the community with a bridging visa	8
Finding a home	10
Employment	12
Education	14
Handling your money	15
Looking after your health	16
Connecting with people	18
Transport	20
Australian laws	21
Australian values	22
Returning home	23
Emergency contacts	24
Important numbers and websites	24

Introduction

This booklet is for people who came to Australia by boat, without a visa, to seek protection. It tells you things you need to know about being in Australia if you are granted a bridging visa or if you are placed in community detention.

Living in the Australian community has more responsibilities than you had in the detention centre. This booklet tells you where to find more details to help you take on these responsibilities.

You can find general information about immigration processes in your own language at www.immi.gov.au/ima

Interpreting service

A challenge you will face in the Australian community is communicating in English. Even if you speak English well, you may still need an interpreter for certain things.

TIS National provides free interpreting services when you need to communicate with approved government, medical and not-for-profit organisations.

To use TIS National to interpret a phone call:

- phone on **131 450**
- tell the operator:
 - your language (in English)
 - the organisation you want to call
 - the number you need to call
 - **don't hang up** — you'll be connected to an operator who speaks your language.

To have an interpreter go to an appointment with you, ask the person or organisation you have the appointment with to book an interpreter. They will need to complete an *On-site Interpreter Booking Form* available at www.immi.gov.au

For more information about TIS National, visit www.immi.gov.au/tis

Frequently used terms

immigration department	Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
case manager	Officers from the immigration department who may be assigned to help you resolve your immigration case.
community case worker	Someone who does not work for the immigration department but is paid by them to help you with things such as finding accommodation.
community status resolution officer	Officers from the immigration department who make sure people living in the community on bridging visas resolve their immigration case.
IAAAS agent	Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS) agent. IAAAS agents do not work for the immigration department but are paid by them to help you with your application for a protection visa. They are qualified to provide advice about migrating to Australia and are available to you free-of-charge.
IHMS card	The International Health and Medical Services (IHMS) card is given to people in community detention so they can get medical treatment with an assigned doctor.
Medicare	The Australian health care program funded by the government.
Medicare card	Official Australian Government health card. If you are eligible for one, the government will pay for some of your medical expenses with certain doctors and medical centres.
the minister	The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.
transitional support	Temporary help provided through a community case worker when you first leave detention.

What is a bridging visa?



If the minister grants you a bridging visa, you have permission to live lawfully in the Australian community for a short time.

A bridging visa is not a permanent visa or a protection visa. It allows you to live in the community temporarily. Specific details about your bridging visa are in your visa grant letter. This includes when it will expire.

Bridging visa conditions

The conditions for each bridging visa can be different. It is important you understand the details of each visa and what you can and cannot do.

You need to check your bridging visa grant letter to find out if you can work or study.

If your bridging visa allows you to work, you must tell your community case worker when you find a job.

There is no guarantee you will be found to be a refugee and get a protection visa.

Your family can only apply for limited places in Australia's migration program — if you get a protection visa.

If you are not found to be a refugee, you must return to your home country.

Your responsibilities

You **must** comply with the conditions of your bridging visa or it could be cancelled. If this happens you could be returned to immigration detention and may not be granted another bridging visa.

Be aware of your bridging visa expiry date. Make sure contact the immigration department at least a week before your visa expires so you remain lawful in the community. If your visa expires you risk being taken back to immigration detention.

How to report to the immigration department

The reporting condition on a bridging visa means that you must contact the immigration department in person, or by phone, at a certain date and time.

To report to the immigration department by phone, using an interpreter:

1. Phone TIS National on **131 450** and say the name of your language to get an interpreter. This must be Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm.
2. Tell the interpreter you need to call the bridging visa reporting line on **1300 728 662**.
3. Don't hang up the phone. They will connect you to the immigration department and interpret the call for you. You must have your boat identity number ready so the immigration department can identify who you are and then ask some questions about your living arrangements.

Information about your protection visa application is not available from the bridging visa reporting line.

What is community detention?



If the minister decides to place you in community detention you must live at the house chosen for you. This is temporary accommodation only. All household items provided with this house belong to the government and are for your use while you live there and cannot be sold or given to someone else.

The immigration department will deduct some money from your income allowance before you receive it to pay part of the cost of the house.

Community detention allows people to live in the community rather than in a detention facility. However, you are still considered to be detained.

You can move about freely in the community without needing to be accompanied by an immigration officer or guard. However, you are still an unlawful non-citizen. This means that you do not have the rights or entitlements of a person holding a valid visa.

Your duties

You must:

- report to the immigration department when you are asked to
- stay at the house you are placed in
- get permission from the immigration department to do any voluntary work
- not do any paid work
- move out of the house when directed by the immigration department or a community case worker.

If you do not obey the conditions of your community detention placement, you may be returned to a detention centre.

Your identity



In Australia your identity is very important. You must provide documents that prove who you are. People have to use their real name every time they sign a document or it may not be valid.

You will need to prove your identity for many purposes, such as to:

- open a bank account
- rent a house
- apply for a job if eligible
- buy a mobile phone
- apply for a driver's licence
- buy alcohol or cigarettes if over 18 years old.

In the community you can prove your identity by showing your passport, driver's licence, or an official proof of age card issued by the government to show that you are over 18 years old.

Sometimes, you may need to show your Medicare card, a bank card (it is called debit card in Australia) or a credit card.

The immigration department needs proof of your identity to complete a number of processes, including assessing your claims for protection as well as character and security checks.

To prevent delays in processing your immigration case you should provide us with as much information as quickly as possible.

Original identity documents or papers are best. This may include a current or expired passport, your birth certificate or an identity card. Other documents can be useful to confirm things like your nationality or where you have lived.

This may include a marriage certificate, registration cards from other countries or the United Nations refugee agency.

If there is uncertainty about your identity, the immigration department will need to investigate to find out your true identity. It is a crime for people in Australia to use someone else's identity documents or provide false documents or information. This means you must make sure you do not do this, as there may be serious legal consequences.

Living in the community with a bridging visa



If you are granted a bridging visa you will receive some initial assistance provided by service providers for up to **six weeks**. Assistance may include:

- a small amount of money for basic living costs paid every two weeks
- low-cost accommodation (such as a homestay arrangement, boarding house, backpackers, or budget motel)
- information about finding long-term accommodation to rent
- help to access food and public transport
- help to open a bank account
- referral to organisations for counselling and general medical
- orientation into your local area, including shopping and transport.

If you are provided with short-term accommodation you will need to pay some money for this. The immigration department and your community case worker will choose the type, location and length of time you can stay there, according to government rules.

You may be able to stay in that accommodation longer but it will be at your own cost. You should speak with your community case worker or the owner of the house where you are staying if you wish to do this.

Service providers are there to help you. You should follow any of their instructions and treat them with respect. They are unable to receive gifts or money. They can refuse to help anyone who is threatening, violent or abusive, or who behaves disrespectfully or inappropriately.

After six weeks you will be responsible for your own accommodation and managing all of your living costs. This includes finding a place to live and, if your bridging visa allows, looking for a job. If you have family or friends in Australia who can help you, please tell your case manager before you leave immigration detention.



Where to live

Before you leave the detention centre, think carefully about where you want to live in Australia. If you are placed in short-term accommodation it is only available for up to six weeks. You will need to find a longer term home to live in as soon as you can. It can take several weeks to find suitable rental accommodation in Australia.

Updating your contact details

A condition of your bridging visa is that you must provide your full home address and phone numbers to the immigration department. This will ensure the immigration department can contact you, if needed, to tell you important information about your bridging visa or protection visa application.

You must tell the immigration department your new address before you move house. You can tell your case manager (if you have one) or phone the immigration department on **131 881** to update your contact information.

It is your responsibility to keep your contact information current with **all** organisations working with you on your immigration case.

Keeping your IAAAS agent informed

If you have an IAAAS agent (the lawyer or migration agent you may have been given), they will contact you about your case and inform you of any decisions made by the immigration department. You must stay in contact with your IAAAS agent. It is your responsibility to you give them your contact details, including your phone number and address and tell them if your contact details change.

There may be a time limit to lodge a review application. If your IAAAS agent cannot contact you quickly, you could miss a chance to appeal a negative decision.

Finding a home



Bridging visa holders are free to choose where to live. Housing in Australia can be expensive. To find somewhere affordable, you may have to live away from city centres or share a house with someone else. Large cities such as Sydney and Melbourne are more expensive to live in than other cities and regional towns. You also have to save money to pay for things like phone calls and electricity.

Each time you move house, you must tell the immigration department two days before you move, even if you are staying in the same town or city. You can contact the immigration department between Monday and Friday by phone on **131 881**. This is a condition of your bridging visa.

If you are placed in community detention, you will be placed in a low-cost house to live. You must stay at this house every night unless you receive approval from the immigration department to stay somewhere else. This is a requirement of being in community detention.

Looking after your house

It is your responsibility to look after the house you live in. This includes:

- keeping the house clean including floors and curtains
- taking care of furniture and other items inside and outside the house
- watering the plants if there is a garden.

If you have any questions, you can ask a friend or community case worker.

Renting

You can look for a house to rent in newspapers or on the internet. You can also ask a real estate agent.

When you rent a house, you are called the tenant. The owner of the house is called the landlord or property owner. You can rent a house through a real estate agent or directly from a landlord.

You will have to sign a lease or contract before you move in. This will include the length of time you agree to rent the house. Make sure you understand all the forms before you sign them.



You must pay your rent on time or the landlord could remove you from the house. Sometimes, the owner or the real estate agent may ask to visit to inspect the condition of the house. This is common for all people renting in Australia to make sure the house is clean and that nothing is damaged.

You may need to pay a rental bond when you sign the lease or contract. This is usually the same amount of money as four weeks rent.

The bond money will be given back to you after you move out of the house, as long as you have paid all of your rent and not done any damage to the house. If you have damaged the house or have not paid your rent, the landlord is allowed to keep the bond money.

You can research the cost of living in different areas on the internet or in newspapers.

A community case worker can help you understand the tenancy laws and your responsibilities to the landlord.

There are also organisations that can help explain tenancy laws. Contact the organisation in the state or territory where you are living in Australia:

Tenants New South Wales (NSW)
133 220 www.tenants.org.au

Tenants Union of Victoria (Vic)
(03) 9416 2577 www.tuv.org.au

Consumer Protection Advice Line (WA)
1300 304 054
www.commerce.wa.gov.au/tenancy

Anglicare Tenants Information and Advocacy Service (SA)
(08) 8305 9200
www.anglicare-sa.org.au/tias

Tenants Union of Queensland (Qld)
1300 744 263 www.tuq.org.au

Tenants Union ACT
(02) 6247 2011
www.tenantsact.org.au

NT Tenants Advice Service
1800 812 953
www.dcls.org.au/tenants-advice.html

Tenants Union of Tasmania
1300 652 641 www.tutas.org.au

Employment



You need to check each bridging visa grant letter to see if you are allowed to work.

Employers will ask for proof that you can work legally in Australia. You can show them your Immigration Evidence Card and bridging visa grant letter.

If you have a bridging visa without permission to work or are placed in community detention, it is illegal for you to work in Australia.

How to find a job

Finding a job will take time. You will need to be patient and keep trying as you may be competing with local people with experience working in Australia.

Your experience, education or training from your home country may not be recognised in Australia.

Many businesses want to employ people who speak and write good English.

To gain Australian work experience, you may start with casual shift work or jobs that require less skill in an industry similar to the one you want to enter.

Job interview

A job interview is when the employer talks with you to decide if you are suitable for a particular job. You will give a good impression if you arrive on time, dress neatly and are confident. Bring a list of your experience and education (this is called CV or resume) and other relevant information. You may be asked a lot of questions. Think about your answers and reply honestly. After the interview, ask for feedback and write down what you could do better in the next interview.

You can get help from Job Services Australia, the government's employment services. This includes help to write a resume, use job search facilities and access training. For more information contact:

Job Services Australia 136 268

For information in various languages visit www.deewr.gov.au/translated-information-job-services-australia



Working in Australia

The government makes laws on wages and working conditions. These vary among different types of jobs. If you are unsure about your rights at work contact:

Fair Work Infoline 131 394

For information in various languages visit www.fairwork.gov.au/languages

Income tax

You must have a Tax File Number and provide this to your employer to work in Australia. The employer will deduct tax from your wage when you earn a certain amount of money.

For information contact the Australian Taxation Office on 132 861 or visit www.ato.gov.au/tfn

Education



Going to school

In Australia, most young children attend a kindergarten or pre-school before starting school. Primary school is for 5 to 12 year old children. High school is for 13 to 18 year olds.

The law is all of your children must attend school until the age of 15. Older children can discuss education options with a case manager or a community case worker.

Learning English

Being able to speak and understand English will help you live in Australia. You may be offered an English course during your first weeks in the community.

You will need to pay for the cost of travel to and from the course and bring your own food and drinks.

Ask your community case worker if you are eligible to join a class.

Further education

First check your bridging visa grant letter to find out if you are allowed to study.

If you are allowed to study, you will need to pay any costs. Your options include:

- study at a technical college (called TAFE) or a community college
- complete an apprenticeship to learn a trade (that means learning skills with an employer who sponsors you)
- study at a university.

For more information, visit www.gooduniguide.com.au

Handling your money



You will need to carefully manage your money and save to pay for costs such as rent, phone, electricity and/or gas bills, food and transport.

You will need to plan how much to save for your living costs each week. The MoneySmart website www.moneysmart.gov.au has information in English and other languages to help you calculate a family budget and do banking.

If you are receiving income support payments from the government, you must tell your community case worker if you are paid any money from working. Any income support payments are small and based on your basic needs.

If you do not tell your community case worker that you have received money for work, you will have to pay the income support payments back and may be charged with fraud. If you receive a criminal conviction this could negatively affect your protection visa application.

Banking

If you receive an income allowance from the government, it will need to be put in a bank account in your name. Most employers put wages into bank accounts too. You should open an account as soon as possible. The bank will require identity information.

You will be given a debit card with a personal identification number (PIN) and/or a password to use your account. Do not tell anyone the PIN number and do not keep it with the debit card to keep your money safe.

You can use your debit card and number to:

- get money out from the bank or out of a machine (called an ATM)
- pay for goods or services, without using cash.

Banks may charge you fees to use ATMs and for managing your account. Ask the bank questions so that you understand all the fees and charges.

Looking after your health



Basic tips

The best way to protect yourself, your family and other people from illness is to be healthy and hygienic. You should always wash your hands before handling food and after coughing or sneezing, using the toilet or handling animals or pets.

Doctors

If you are not feeling well, make an appointment with a doctor or medical centre near you. You may need to wait for an appointment. In Australia, you may have to wait weeks or months to see a specialist doctor.

For an emergency, go to your nearest hospital or phone **000** (triple zero).

If you are in community detention, you will have an IHMS card. This is for a specific doctor and pharmacy, so you should see them if possible. Always remember to take your IHMS card with you.

Medicare

If you have a bridging visa, you can apply for a Medicare card at a Medicare office. This means that some of your medical costs will be paid by the government.

You need to show your Medicare card whenever you see a doctor or visit a hospital.

Depending on the situation, you will:

- pay some of the cost not covered by Medicare, or
- pay full price, then take the receipt to a Medicare office to get some of the money back, or
- not need to pay, because Medicare will pay for your treatment.

For more information, visit the Medicare website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

Dental care

Dental care in Australia is expensive and you may have to wait a long time to get a dentist appointment. The government will only pay for problems with your teeth that cause severe or chronic pain if left untreated — this is called emergency dental care.



If you have a community case worker, they can help you make arrangements for emergency dental care. For all other dental treatments, you will need to pay for treatment with a dentist yourself.

Your emotional wellbeing

If you feel lonely, unhappy or helpless, you can ask a doctor or medical centre to refer you to a counsellor. A counsellor is a professionally trained person who helps people with emotional or mental health issues. The counsellor will keep your discussions with them confidential. If you are receiving transitional assistance, ask your community case worker or the immigration department about getting help.

There are services that offer free emergency counselling. If you feel distressed or want to talk to them, their contact information is:

- *Lifeline* 131 114
www.lifeline.org.au
- *Mens Line Australia* 1300 789 978
www.menslineaus.org.au
- *Relationships Australia Crisis Line*
1300 364 277
www.relationships.org.au

Violence in the family

In Australia, it is illegal to be violent, at home or in public, towards anyone, including a family member.

There is a 24 hour support service to help anyone who experience violence in the family. The contact information for this service is:

National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling line
1800 737 732
www.1800respect.org.au

Gambling

You should get help if gambling is causing problem for you or your family. Contact information for this service is:

Gambling Help Online 1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

Connecting with people



Mobile and telephone calls

If you want to call people overseas or in another state in Australia, you can buy phone cards from supermarkets and shops selling newspapers. They are also called pre-paid calling cards. You can use them from any phone but there may be higher costs if you call from a mobile phone.

Before you sign a contract to buy a mobile phone, make sure you understand all the terms and conditions and costs (such as the charges for using the internet on your mobile phone). If you do not understand the contract, ask a friend or your community case worker for help.

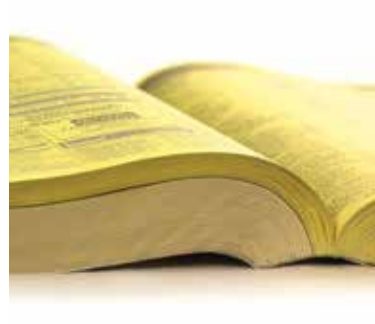
It may be best to purchase a prepaid mobile phone so you don't end up with costs you cannot afford to pay.

Remember to tell important contacts like the immigration department, your IAAAS agent, lawyer or any other key contacts working with your protection visa application if you change your telephone numbers. This is so they can contact you about your immigration case if they need to.

Internet access

Libraries and community centres may have free or low-cost internet access. They may teach you how to use it too. You can also pay to access the internet at an internet café.

Before signing any contract to connect the internet to your house, make sure you have money to pay for it and that it meets your needs. Find out if you move from the house you rent after a few months whether the internet connection can move with you and any costs this may incur.



Public libraries

You can borrow books, audio books, music and DVDs for free from public libraries. They often have computers with internet and printers. Many libraries also offer free English classes. To search for a library near you, visit www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries

Social activities

Joining in social sports and community events is a great way to meet new people and learn new skills. Some ideas include:

- play sport or do physical exercise like soccer, volleyball or cricket at a local park or sporting ground
- go to community events or free events such as barbeques, outdoor musical concerts or picnics
- help in charity or community groups and learn new skills at the same time.

You can find information at community centres, libraries and places of worship such as local mosques, churches or temples.

White Pages and Yellow Pages

Residential, business and government phone numbers are listed in the White Pages. The Yellow Pages lists businesses by type. You can use them on the internet at:

- www.whitepages.com.au
- www.yellowpages.com.au

Printed copies of the White Pages and Yellow Pages are delivered to Australian homes every year. You can also find them in a library or post office.

Transport



Most Australian cities have good, low-cost public transport. Usually you need to buy a ticket each time you use a train, bus, ferry or tram, unless it is a free service. If you do not buy a ticket, you may be fined.

You can ride a bicycle to get around. You must wear a safety helmet and follow the same rules as cars. It is Australian law to protect your safety. Many cities and towns have good cycling paths or sections of the road for bicycle riders.

Driving and road safety

To legally drive a car or motorcycle in Australia, you must have a driver's licence and keep it with you whenever you are driving.

You may need to have an English translation of your non-Australian driver's licence or apply for an Australian driver's licence. Check your state or territory government's website for information about requirements in the state or territory you live in.

For your own safety, you also need to know and obey Australian road laws. If you drive faster than the speed limit as shown in the road signs, or if someone in your car is not wearing a seat belt, you break the law. Also, it is illegal to use a mobile phone while driving or to drink more than the legal limit of alcohol. More information about the road laws is available from your state or territory government's website.

In Australia, for their own safety and by law, babies and young children must travel in a proper car safety seat. This is called a child restraint. If you do not follow these requirements you are placing your children in danger and can be fined. To find out more about it, visit www.kidsafe.com.au

Australian laws



Everyone must obey the laws, at home and in public. Australian laws are made by governments elected democratically by the people. The laws maintain our society in an orderly, free and safe way for everyone. It is important for you to learn about the laws in Australia, so that you understand your rights and duties and what actions may be against the law.

Australia does not tolerate people who are violent, who use words to abuse or threaten others, who make sexual comments or unacceptable physical contact. A person who behaves like this may be arrested and charged by the police. It is illegal to use someone else's personal details, such as credit card numbers, without the owner agreeing to it. It is a crime to apply for government benefits that you are not entitled to receive.

Your actions may affect your protection visa application and placement in the community. You should take your duties seriously and obey Australia's laws and the conditions of your stay in the Australian community.

Australian police

Australia's police protect people's safety and property in the community, prevent crime and keep the peace. There is no need to be afraid of the police in Australia, they are there to help. However, you cannot give money or gifts to a police officer. It is a crime to bribe a police officer for any reason.

Legal assistance

For help understanding your legal responsibilities in Australia for things such as legal problems, criminal matters, family breakdown, child support, mental health, domestic violence, debt, housing, social security and immigration, you can request free assistance from Legal Aid. To find an office visit www.nla.aust.net.au and click on the state or territory you are staying in on the map of Australia.

Australian values



Like all countries, Australia is unique in its culture and how things are done. If you do not understand something, be open and ask questions.

Take time to talk with friends, family and other people. Learn about Australia's customs, the English language and how Australians behave in the community.

What are Australian values?

Australia is a free and democratic society. We expect everyone in Australia to follow some important principles and values, including:

- We value everyone's freedom and dignity.
- We are all equal and we respect each other.
- Everyone is free to choose what they say or when they want to speak.
- Everyone is free to choose their religion. The Australian Government does not favour one religion over another.
- Everyone is free to associate with who they wish to.
- We support democracy in our parliament and the rule of law.
- Everyone is equal under the law.

- Men and women are equal.
- Everyone has the right to make their own decisions.
- We respect peace.
- We tolerate, respect and support people in need.

Many other countries share these values. Although different people may say or practise these values differently, the meaning is still the same.

How you dress

Everyone is free to choose how they dress in Australia. Many people dress casually to feel comfortable. For example, when it is hot, they wear a t-shirt and shorts. How people dress does not reflect their moral values.

In some places where you work, social and sporting clubs, cinemas and other places, you may need to dress according to their rules, such as wearing shoes that don't show your toes or shirts with collars.

Most of the time, you are free to dress to express your character, or to wear traditional clothes for religious reasons.

Returning home



If you want information about returning to your home country, you can talk to the immigration department or the International Organization for Migration (IOM). IOM is an independent organisation that can answer your questions about returning home. They know that it is an important decision for you.

If you decide to leave Australia, IOM can also help you to start your life back in your home country. This can include meeting you at the airport, arranging transport to your home town, food, a short-term place to live, medical treatment and some cash.

IOM will also help you develop a long-term plan that works for you. It may include helping you get training to improve your skills and find a job, or helping you start your own small business in your home country.

For more information contact IOM:

- phone **1300 116 986**
- email AVRaustralia@iom.int
- visit www.iomaustralia.org

If you wish to return home directly through the immigration department, contact your case manager if you have one, or phone the Community Status Resolution Service on **1300 853 773**.

Emergency contacts



In an emergency, telephone 000 for:

- **Police**
- **Ambulance**
- **Fire brigade**

Calls to 000 (triple zero) are free and for emergencies only. Be ready to say your name, where you are, the telephone number you are calling from and what service you need.

If you cannot speak English, first tell the operator what kind of help you need by saying 'Police', 'Ambulance' or 'Fire'. Then say the name of your language in English. An interpreter will talk to you, so do not hang up. The interpreter will help you talk to the police, ambulance or fire service.

Important numbers and websites

Department of Immigration and Citizenship	131 881 www.immi.gov.au www.immi.gov.au/ima
Community Status Resolution Service	1300 853 773 www.immi.gov.au/csrs
Bridging visa reporting line	1300 728 662
International Organization for Migration	1300 116 986 www.iomaustralia.org
Medicare Australia	132 011
TIS National	131 450 www.immi.gov.au/tis



