



## Bridging visas

### Information for people who arrived by boat

The Australian Government has decided some people who arrived by boat without a valid visa can live in the Australian community. This is while their immigration cases are being finalised. If you arrived from 13 August 2012 and are placed in the community, remember you can still be transferred to a regional processing country such as Papua New Guinea or Nauru.

To live in the community people are given a bridging visa – this is a temporary visa. If you are granted a bridging visa, it will not make a difference to your protection claim. It only allows you to live outside immigration detention temporarily.

### What are the conditions of my bridging visa?

A bridging visa has certain requirements, or conditions. These are set on an individual basis. You can find your conditions in the visa grant letter.

**You need to know and understand what your conditions are. You must comply with them.**

All bridging visa holders need to:

- report to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) when told, and
- tell DIAC the address where you will live.

Reporting means you must contact DIAC. You do this in person at an office or by calling at a time and date a DIAC officer tells you.

You must tell DIAC the address where you live. If you decide to live somewhere else, you must tell DIAC at least two working days before moving. This is even if you stay in the same town or city. You can move to another area in Australia but you need to speak to DIAC first. This is to see if moving will affect any other ongoing arrangements you have.

### How long is my bridging visa valid for?

Specific details about your bridging visa will be given in your visa grant letter from DIAC. This includes when it will expire. Only the minister can decide to grant you another bridging visa.

It is important that you keep DIAC informed of your contact details. DIAC can then contact you before your bridging visa expires to make arrangements to come into an office to talk about your situation. If you do not attend a DIAC office when arranged, the minister cannot grant you another visa.

### Can I work?

You need to check the conditions of your bridging visa. This will tell you if you can work or not. If you can work, the money you earn can help support you in Australia. Anyone found to be working illegally can have their visa cancelled and be returned to detention.

### Will I receive any support services?

You may receive up to six weeks of support from a service provider. If needed, some people will get further assistance. Speak to DIAC for more information.

### Can I study?

You must check the conditions of your bridging visa. If your bridging visa allows you study, you can do so at your own cost.

### Can I travel overseas?

You can leave Australia any time but if you do, your bridging visa will cease. You will not be permitted to re-enter Australia and your protection claim will no longer be assessed.

### Can I go home?

Yes. You can choose to withdraw from your immigration process and return home any time. Speak with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) confidentially for information. Call them on **1300 116 986** (local call cost) or email [AVRaustralia@iom.int](mailto:AVRaustralia@iom.int)

### What happens if I don't comply with my bridging visa conditions?

It is important that you understand the conditions of your bridging visa and comply with these. If you don't, your visa can be cancelled and you could be returned to detention. Remember, you must also behave according to Australian standards and laws while in Australia.

### What happens now?

You will be placed in the community and if you are having your protection claim assessed in Australia, your case will continue to be processed. This takes time. It is important you keep working with DIAC and your Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS) migration agent, if you have been assigned one. This will help you receive a final decision about your protection claim.

If you have arrived since 13 August 2012, you will be told more about the processing of any claims you may have soon.

### Can I refuse a bridging visa?

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

### Who can I contact for information?

If you have any questions or concerns about your bridging visa conditions or immigration process, speak to your DIAC case manager before leaving detention. Once in the community you can also contact DIAC using the details below. There are DIAC offices in every state and territory of Australia. Addresses are listed in the telephone directory. You can also phone **131 881** (local call cost) or visit [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

For interpreting assistance, phone TIS National on **131 450** (local call cost). When someone picks up the phone tell them your language in English and ask for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.