



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

# LIVING AND WORKING OVERSEAS



[smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au)

Every traveller, every trip.

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At any one time there are about one million Australians living and working overseas. Whatever your reason for moving overseas, being properly prepared for your new environment can help you to make the transition less stressful and allow you to adapt more easily to your new lifestyle.

This brochure is designed to provide Australians planning to live and work overseas with guidance and information about issues to consider. It should be read in conjunction with the *Travel smart: hints for Australian travellers* publication, available at **smartraveller.gov.au**.

When you travel or live abroad, you leave behind Australia's support systems, emergency service capabilities and medical facilities. The Australian Government will do what it can to help Australians in difficulty overseas, but there are legal and practical limits to what can be done to assist travellers in other countries. You should have realistic expectations about this and read the *Consular Services Charter*, available at **smartraveller.gov.au**, before you go.

## Before you go – be prepared

The better prepared you are, the safer and more enjoyable your travel will be.

### Read the travel advice

Start with the latest travel advice for your destination at **smartraveller.gov.au**. This advice will give you information on the main risks you may face and some precautions you can take while travelling and living overseas.

### Register before you travel

Make sure you register your travel and contact details online at **smartraveller.gov.au** before you travel. This will make it easier to contact you in an emergency, whether it's a natural disaster, civil disturbance or family issue. The registration information you provide is protected by Australia's strict privacy laws.

## Case Study

During widespread civil unrest in Kenya, Australian High Commission staff contacted registered Australians frequently to check on their welfare and offer consular support. One Australian family didn't register and subsequently had no information or instruction when the area they were in was attacked. If the family had registered their details with the Australian Government, the High Commission in Kenya could have included them in their coordinated evacuation plan. Instead, they fled across the border without government help, placing themselves at risk.

## Smartraveller tip



We recommend you register your travel and contact details with Smartraveller or with the local Australian mission so we can contact you in the case of an emergency.

## Subscribe to travel advice

While at **smartraveller.gov.au**, subscribe to receive free email updates to travel advice. This will help you stay across any changes to the safety and security situation, local laws and health issues in the countries you're living in or visiting.

## Travel insurance

If you can't afford travel insurance, you can't afford to travel.

We strongly advise you to take out comprehensive travel insurance. If you already have employment in the country you'll be living in, before you leave check whether you're covered by your employer. You should make sure you're covered for all medical expenses for injury or illness, as well as theft of valuables, damage to baggage and cancellations or interruptions to flight plans. It will save you worry and a possible financial burden. Medical costs overseas can be in the tens of thousands of dollars and many people have been burdened financially in paying these costs when things go wrong.

Compare insurance policies and make sure the cover you choose suits your needs and is valid for the whole time you'll reside overseas. Always read the product disclosure statement carefully and ensure that you understand exactly what your travel insurance covers.

You may be able to obtain insurance for yourself and your family under the one policy. However, be aware that insurance coverage varies from policy to policy. Make sure you confirm all the details of your

coverage with your insurance provider and ensure you receive written confirmation of your policy.

If you're living overseas and extend your stay, don't forget to extend your insurance before it expires to make sure you're never without it. You may need to consider local insurance to cover your needs instead of long-term travel insurance.

If medical cover is offered as part of your employment agreement, make sure you clearly understand the terms of the insurance policy.

The Australian Government won't pay for your medical treatment overseas or medical evacuation to Australia or a third country. Expatriates and travellers without appropriate insurance are personally liable for covering any medical and associated costs they incur.

For more information on travel insurance, including tips for choosing a policy that's right for you, visit **[smartraveller.gov.au](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au)**.

## Passports and visas

Your passport is your most important travel document. All Australian citizens must have a valid passport before leaving Australia and maintain a valid passport while overseas. All children travelling overseas, including newborn infants, must have their own passport.

Be aware that countries have different passport validity requirements. Make sure your passport has at least six months validity from your planned date of return to Australia. Carry extra passport photos just in case your passport is lost or stolen and you need to replace it while you're away.

If you're planning to work overseas, early preparation is essential. You should find out well in advance what rules and regulations apply to obtain a residency permit, work permit or working visa by contacting the foreign mission (embassy, high commission or consulate) of the country where you want to work. Some countries require your prospective employer to sponsor you before your work permit or visa can be issued. Find out all the conditions on this before you leave Australia.

Failing to obtain the appropriate working visa or permit before you start your new job may be a criminal act in that country and could result in your detention and/or removal from the country. Be aware that a tourist visa may not allow you to undertake any form of work—including voluntary or unpaid activities.

If you intend to depart and re-enter the country you're working in, enquire about a multiple-entry visa.

The APEC Business Travel Card provides streamlined entry to several regional countries for Australians who travel frequently in the Asia–Pacific region for trade and investment. Visit **[www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)** for details.

Some countries have specific entry and exit requirements, including compulsory vaccinations. Remember to also check the visa requirements of countries you might be transiting on your way to your final destination. The contact details of foreign missions in Australia can be found in *White Pages* or online at **[www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html)**.

More information on Australian passports can be found at **[www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au)** or by calling the Australian Passport Information Service on **13 12 32** in Australia.

## Remember

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Australia and Australian missions overseas cannot help you arrange visas or work and residency permits for other countries.
- A visa does not guarantee entry to a foreign country.
- In most cases, a tourist visa does not allow you to work in a foreign country including voluntary or unpaid activities.

## Dual nationality

Being a national or citizen of more than one country is called dual nationality.

Some countries offer citizenship to people who marry their citizens, or to persons whose parents or grandparents were born in that country.

If you plan to live or work in a country of which you may be considered a national, you should be aware of the implications of local laws concerning issues such as military service, divorce and child custody. Before leaving Australia, seek advice in writing with the embassy or consulate of that country in Australia. The contact details of foreign embassies and consulates in Australia can be found at **[www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html)**.

Some countries allow nationals who have been living abroad to enter and stay for a limited time before incurring obligations for military service. In others, there is no such period and the obligation is imposed immediately upon arrival.

In these countries, dual nationals may be 'called up' and, if they don't report for duty, may be regarded as defaulters whether they were aware of the call-up or not. They could then either be imprisoned, or inducted into the military forces when they next arrive in the country or attempt to leave the country. Even dual nationals who have passed the age for military service may be considered defaulters for failing to report at the required time.

You may be prevented from obtaining Australian consular assistance if the country you're in considers you to be one of its citizens.

If you hold another country's passport, seek advice about using it. Take your Australian passport and use it to depart from and return to Australia.

For further information, read the *Dual nationals* publication available at **[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)**.



## Working holidays

Australia has reciprocal arrangements with a number of countries which allow Australians to work while on holiday there. Australians who want to participate in these programs need to apply for a working holiday visa with the foreign mission of the country they wish to work and holiday in before they travel. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship website at **[www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)** provides information on countries and regions participating in the Working Holiday Program with Australia.

## Voting

When you go overseas there are requirements you must meet in order to remain on the electoral roll, and in some cases to avoid a fine. Familiarise yourself with your electoral responsibilities by visiting the Australian Electoral Commission website at **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**. Bulletins are published on **[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)** to advise of state and federal elections, including information for Australians who choose to vote while overseas.

## Planning your trip

Research and preparation before you leave can save you a lot of hassle.

### Research your destination

Find out about the political, cultural and economic environment of your destination so you'll know what to expect on arrival. Consult the travel advisory for your destination at **smartraveller.gov.au** and either purchase a guide book or search the internet for recent information. Talk with family or friends who are familiar with the countries you'll be visiting. You could also consult DFAT's country briefs available at **www.dfat.gov.au** to learn more about your destinations.

### Important documents

If you intend to stay overseas for an extended period, it's recommended that you take your personal records with you, including certificates relating to:

- birth, name change and marriage
- citizenship
- divorce and custody arrangements
- police checks
- educational qualifications.

Keep originals with you and be sure to leave copies with a friend or family member in Australia in case you misplace them overseas. You should also ensure that you have the necessary work visas or permits before you depart Australia. Immigration authorities may refuse entry if they assess that documents you carry indicate you may violate local visa conditions. If in doubt, check with the foreign mission of the country you're planning to work in prior to your departure.

Some countries may require your original documents to be translated and/or authenticated. Information on legalisation services is available at **smartraveller.gov.au**. Confirm any requirements for your documents before you leave Australia. Some legalisation services can only be performed in Australia.

## International Driving Permit

When living or working in a foreign country, you may be required by law to obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP). An IDP is proof that you hold a valid driver's licence in your home country and must be carried with a valid Australian driver's licence. In Australia, IDPs are issued by state and territory IDP authorities – contact details are available at **smartraveller.gov.au**. If you're residing overseas for an extended period, check with local authorities on requirements for obtaining a locally issued licence.

## Welfare benefits

If you live overseas permanently, you won't be able to continue to receive your Australian social security payment, except for certain pensions or certain payments from Centrelink in countries with which Australia has an agreement. For more information visit **www.centrelink.gov.au**.

## Taxation overseas

The amount of tax that Australians must pay if they are earning money overseas will depend on personal circumstances. For further information, visit the Australian Taxation Office website, **www.ato.gov.au**, or call **13 28 61**.

If you earn an income overseas, you may be required to pay tax on that income in the country where it's earned. Australia has reciprocal agreements in place with only a few countries to prevent double taxation. You should check the rules and regulations with the other country's foreign mission before you leave Australia.

## Superannuation

Australia has bilateral social security agreements with a number of countries. These agreements remove the issue of double superannuation that can occur when employees are sent to work temporarily in another country and the employer or employee is required to make superannuation (or equivalent) contributions under the legislation of both countries for the same work.

For more information visit **[www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)** or call **13 10 20**.

## Medical facilities

Find out about current local health issues and standards of medical care. Try to familiarise yourself with existing conditions by talking to people who have worked in the country you're going to live in. You can also read the 'Staying Healthy Overseas' section of this brochure.

## Language

If you're planning to work in a non-English speaking country, you may find it beneficial to undertake language training. Even 'survival' language skills can be helpful.

## Children and infants

If you're travelling with children or you expect your child to be born while overseas, find out what you can about baby products, childcare facilities and schooling before you travel.

## Birth of an Australian citizen

A person born outside Australia who is the biological child of an Australian citizen can apply for Australian citizenship by descent with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

Parents of children born overseas should obtain an application for Australian citizenship by descent (form 118) from the DIAC website, **www.immi.gov.au**. Contact the nearest DIAC overseas office (located at selected Australian embassies, high commissions or consulates) for information on how to lodge a citizenship application.

Contact details for Australian missions abroad can be found at **www.dfat.gov.au/missions** and in the *Travel smart: hints for Australian travellers booklet*. This booklet is issued free with your passport and is also available online at **smartraveller.gov.au**.

Further information on Australian citizenship is available at **smartraveller.gov.au** or by calling the Citizenship Information Line on **13 18 80**.

## Baby products

If you're travelling with babies or very young children, it's a good idea to research the availability of baby products at your destination before travelling so you can stock up on items that may be difficult to source.

## Childcare facilities

Overseas childcare facilities, nannies and babysitters, including those on cruise ships, are not bound by Australian regulations, and standards can differ greatly from those in Australia. Make sure you're satisfied with the level of care provided before leaving your child in the care of others.

For useful ideas on how to select reputable childcare providers, visit the National Childcare Accreditation Council website, **www.ncac.gov.au**, or review the Child Wise 'Choose with Care' program available at **www.childwise.net**. You can also contact Child Wise on **1800 991 099** (free call within Australia).

## Schooling

If you have school-age children and are planning to move overseas, it's important that you arrange for appropriate schooling for your children before leaving Australia. Take copies of your children's school records in case they are needed.

For children wanting to return to attend university in Australia, it's important to research the implications of completing their secondary education overseas.

## Exchange students

If you're considering a student exchange program, you should satisfy yourself that proper practices are in place to protect you or your child. Be aware that the standards of selection and screening of host families may vary.

## Staying safe overseas

You can take practical steps to stay safe overseas and avoid running into difficulties and dangerous situations.

### Carefully assess job offers

Unfortunately, not every job overseas will be trouble-free. If you're offered employment overseas, you should do some research before you accept the offer. There is limited assistance our consular officers can offer if, once you arrive, your working conditions are not as advised or expected.

- The conditions of employment offered to you are important. Check what currency you'll be paid in. Is the local currency convertible and, if not, are there any restrictions on repatriating funds? What arrangements will you need to make for contributions to your superannuation or pension scheme?
- Find out as much as you can about the organisation or company and relevant labour laws. Ask others who have worked for the organisation or speak to a current employee.
- Find out which visas and insurance you may need.
- Find out if your employer will pay for your accommodation, utilities, telephone calls and the cost of transport to and from work each day.
- If you are going to a non-English speaking country, find out if your employer will pay for language training.
- Does the company offer different standards of accommodation for single and married members of staff? Find out if you'd be expected to share accommodation with other employees. If you need to arrange your own accommodation, do some research before your leave.
- Check to see if airfares, health and dental insurance coverage provided by the company extends to members of your family.
- Will the company pay for relocation costs, school fees and residency permits?

- Find out if you'll be paid sufficient salary and allowances to cover basic in-country costs of living.
- Women should be particularly wary of employment opportunities with companies that offer quick and easy money for entertainment or hostess jobs. Many of these organisations are involved in prostitution.
- Examine the terms of your contract carefully and, if possible, have it reviewed by a lawyer before accepting the job offer. Find out what rights and restrictions govern your ability to terminate your employment contract. Make sure you fully understand the financial and other conditions of the job offer.

## Case study

Around 200 Australians were employed by the same firm in the United Arab Emirates. When the employer began to experience financial difficulties, the employees' monthly salary payments stopped. In addition, many of the Australians risked being evicted from their homes as the company also covered accommodation as part of their employment agreement and had now ceased to pay the rent. While most of the employees had enough savings to return to Australia or to cover the shortfall while they found new employment, several did not and had to wait some weeks for funds borrowed from relatives to be transferred.

## Smartraveller tip



Consider making financial provisions and plans in the event there are issues with your employment or salary payments.



## Inform others

Before departing Australia, consider advising people and organisations you deal with of your forwarding address. If you're unsure of where you'll be living overseas, it's often useful to have your mail forwarded to a friend or family member.

You can also use the services of a commercial organisation to forward mail to you overseas. Check the *Yellow Pages* directory under 'Postal Services' for company details. Please note that Australian missions cannot receive or store personal mail on your behalf.

## Money and valuables

### Settling-in expenses

Before you leave Australia, make sure you have sufficient funds to get settled in your new country. If you're going overseas to work, your employer may provide you with a settling-in allowance, but this may not be paid to you for a few weeks.

Remember that living expenses vary in different parts of the world. There are many expenses to take into account when setting up a new home, such as connecting utilities. Find out what your obligations are up front so there are no surprises. If you run out of money and need to borrow from family or friends, it may take some time for the funds to reach you.

Shipping your personal and household belongings overseas can be very expensive. Assess what you need and find out what you can buy when you get there. If you know where you'll be working, you should check with your employer to see if they will cover the relocation of your goods and if they will provide you with essential items on your arrival.

Check with the foreign mission of the country you're going to about import and customs regulations, as you may not be allowed to bring certain items into the country.

## Banking overseas

If you're staying in a country for an extended period of time, you may want to set up a bank account in that country. Your bank in Australia may also be able to help with recommending banks overseas.

Before departing Australia it's also advisable to check with your bank about the ease and cost of transferring money internationally between accounts in Australia and the country in which you'll live. It's important to find out if your host country has any rules which could limit the amount of funds you can transfer between your Australian bank accounts and your host country. Currency laws can be quite restrictive, so do your research. Speak to an accountant or the Australian Taxation Office for more information.

## Additional hints on banking

- Organise a variety of ways of accessing your money overseas, such as debit and credit cards, traveller's cheques and cash.
- Check with your bank whether your ATM card will work overseas.
- Register with your bank the period you expect to be away.
- Never let your credit card out of your sight.
- Make two photocopies of your credit and ATM cards and other valuable documents such as your travel insurance policy, passport and visa. Keep one copy with you in a separate place to the original and leave the other copy with someone at home.

## Bribery

It's a criminal offence under Australian law for an Australian resident, citizen or company to bribe or attempt to bribe a foreign public official, whether in Australia or another country. An Australian in another country who bribes or attempts to bribe an official of that country can be prosecuted in an Australian court.

Australian law provides sentences of up to 10 years in prison and fines for people and companies found guilty of bribing or attempting to bribe foreign public officials. For further information, visit **[www.ag.gov.au/foreignbribery](http://www.ag.gov.au/foreignbribery)**.

## Local laws and customs

Familiarise yourself with local laws and show sensitivity to local customs.

Read the travel advice for your destination at **[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)** for practical information on local laws and customs. In some cultures conservative standards of dress and behaviour apply; for example, people may be deeply offended by revealing clothing. Do some research on your destination before you leave to find out about local sensitivities.

Be aware that local laws and penalties, including ones that may appear harsh by Australian standards, apply to you. Age or health concerns are not valid excuses. Many countries apply capital punishment, including for narcotics-related crimes. Every year many Australians of all ages are arrested overseas on drug charges.

## Drugs

Do not use, carry or get involved with drugs.

Every year Australians are arrested overseas on drug charges. Don't be fooled into thinking that carrying or taking drugs overseas is worth the risk. Australians do get caught and some countries impose tough penalties including life imprisonment and the death penalty. Even the possession of small quantities of so-called 'soft drugs' can attract jail sentences or heavy fines.

Avoid getting into trouble with drugs overseas by following these simple precautions:

- Obey the law – do not purchase, take or travel with drugs.
- Lock your bags as a precaution against tampering or theft.
- Don't leave your bags unattended in public areas or in the care of a stranger.
- Never carry anything into or out of another country for someone else.
- Ensure any prescription medication is carried in its original packaging, accompanied by a letter from your doctor indicating what the medication is and that it's for personal use.

Ensure your medication is not considered illegal overseas by contacting the nearest foreign mission of the country you're visiting before your departure. Contact details are available at [www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html).

In some countries the presence of illegal drugs detected in blood or urine tests is considered possession. You may also be charged with possessing drugs if trace amounts are found on your body, bloodstream, clothes or luggage. Amounts of even 0.05 grams or less can lead to a conviction for drug possession and lengthy minimum mandatory prison sentences.

If arrested, you have the right to contact the Australian Government, but consular assistance cannot override local law, even when local laws may appear harsh by Australian standards. The Australian Government cannot get you out of jail.

### Alcohol

While 18 is the minimum drinking age in Australia, this limit is higher in some countries. Check the limit before you leave to avoid breaking the local law.

### Keep in touch

When overseas, regularly contact your family and friends. It's important to let them know of any changes to your plans and that you're well. You may be having a great time, but forgetting to contact family and friends can cause them needless stress and anxiety. Each year, DFAT receives thousands of calls from worried families who haven't heard from loved ones overseas and are concerned for their safety.

Providing regular and detailed information to your family and friends will assist them to provide accurate information to DFAT if there is a serious concern for your welfare while overseas and need our help.

### Getting married

Laws regarding marriage vary from country to country, which can result in legal complications. Anyone intending to marry overseas should contact either a legal practitioner or the foreign mission of the country in which they would like to marry for details of the requirements that must be met.

If you plan to marry overseas, be aware that some countries impose strict limitations on women's rights to property entitlements, inheritance, divorce, alimony, child support and custody. Accordingly, make sure you understand the legal, cultural and religious implications of marrying overseas for yourself, your intended spouse, existing children or children you may have in the future.

In certain countries, Australian women who marry nationals of those countries can be subject to strict family controls and may be prevented from leaving that country without their husband's permission. You should contact the embassy or consulate of that country to obtain information about laws regarding marriage. Contact details for foreign embassies and consulates are available at [www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html).

### Divorce overseas

Divorce law varies from country to country. Rules regarding child custody and asset splitting can also be different. If your spouse is a citizen of the overseas country, he or she may have more rights than you do. Always make sure you understand the local laws and procedures and seek the advice of a reputable lawyer before making decisions.

### Same-sex relationships

Homosexuality is illegal in some countries and engaging in a homosexual act could incur severe punishment. Consult the travel advisory for your destination at [smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au) to find out if there are any country-specific local laws or sensitivities you should be aware of. Remember, a violation of local laws could result in penalties being imposed, including imprisonment, corporal punishment and, in some countries, even the death penalty.

## Death

When an Australian citizen dies abroad, the nearest Australian mission should be notified as soon as possible. The costs for local burial or transporting a body back to Australia can be quite expensive. Make sure it's included in the provisions of your employment agreement or take insurance to cover this cost before you leave Australia. Otherwise, in the case of your death, your family or friends must bear these expenses.

For further information get a copy of the publication, *Death overseas*, available at **[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)**.

## Staying healthy overseas

Think about your health needs before you travel.

### Health checks and vaccinations

Make an appointment with your doctor or travel clinic for a basic check-up at least six to eight weeks before you depart and find out if any vaccinations or health checks are required for your destination.

### Medication

If you're taking medicines overseas, we recommend that you:

- discuss with your doctor the medication you'll need to take
- carry a letter from your doctor detailing what the medication is, how much you'll be taking with you, and stating that it's for your own personal use
- leave the medication in its original packaging so it's clearly labelled with your name and dosage instructions.

If you're travelling with medication, make sure it's legal in the countries you're visiting by contacting the relevant foreign mission in Australia.

Contact details are available at [www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html).

If you have to inject your medication, it may be preferable to carry your own needles and syringes, if it's allowed in the countries you're visiting. If you buy needles and syringes overseas, make sure they are sealed and sterile.

If you need to purchase medication at your destination, be careful not to buy imitation or counterfeit medications and prescription drugs, and always check the strength of a medication with a doctor. Be aware that packaging and labelling may be similar to those available in Australia, but the strength and active ingredients can vary from country to country.



It's an offence to carry or send Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicine overseas unless it's for your own personal use, or for the use of someone travelling with you. You could be fined \$5,000 and spend two years in prison if you break the law. Additional information is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or by calling the PBS information line on **1800 020 613**.

More information on travelling with medication is available at [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au) or by calling the Overseas Drug Diversion information line on **1800 500 147**.

### Prescription glasses

If you wear glasses, take along a spare pair and/or a copy of the prescription so that they can be replaced more easily if lost or broken.

### Medical certificate of proof of HIV/AIDS testing

Many countries require long-term foreign residents and students to prove that they are free of HIV. Consult the foreign mission of the country you'll be living in or visiting to find out whether an HIV/AIDS test is required and if test results from Australia are accepted.

If Australian results are not accepted, check the type of test you'll need to take overseas and if you can supply your own disposable needle.

### Reciprocal health agreements

Australia has reciprocal healthcare agreements with Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

These agreements enable Australians to access urgent or emergency treatment overseas. However, medical services are only provided when it would be unreasonable to delay treatment until the person returns to Australia. It's important to remember that healthcare agreements are no substitute for travel insurance. They won't cover you if a doctor recommends medical evacuation back to Australia.

## Useful links

To find out more about health and vaccination issues you can visit:

- World Health Organization – **[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)**
- Australian Immunisation Handbook – **[www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)**

Further information about health care when travelling overseas and international health agreements is available at the Medicare Australia website, **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)**, or by calling **13 20 11**.

## Getting help overseas

The Australian Government will do what it can to help Australians in difficulty overseas, but there are limits to what can be done.

### Consular services

DFAT provides assistance to Australians who find themselves in trouble overseas. This support is referred to as consular services; however, there are legal and practical limits to what can be done.

The *Consular Services Charter* sets out the standard of services all Australians can expect to receive from consular staff, including what they can and cannot do, and is available at **[smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au)**.

### Kidnapping and hostage-taking

There is an ongoing high threat of kidnapping in a number of locations globally, including areas in Africa, Asia, Central and South America. You should carefully read the travel advice for the countries you intend to visit. Due to the extremely dangerous security situation and access limitations in some locations, the Australian Government's ability to provide consular assistance to Australian citizens may be severely limited.

The Australian Government's longstanding policy is that it does not make payments or concessions to kidnappers. The Australian Government considers paying ransoms increases the risk of further kidnappings.

## Contact details

Contact details for Australian missions overseas are available at **[www.dfat.gov.au/missions](http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions)**. A directory of Australian missions overseas also appears in the 'Getting Help Overseas' section of *Travel smart: hints for Australian travellers*. This publication is issued with your passport and is also available online at **[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)**.

Australia has an agreement with Canada to provide consular assistance to Australians in some countries. Canadian missions providing consular assistance to Australians are also listed in the *Travel smart: hints for Australian travellers* publication.

The 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre in Canberra can also be contacted for assistance from anywhere in the world on **+61 2 6261 3305** or **1300 555 135** (local call cost within Australia).

## Contact your travel insurance provider

Travel insurance companies often have 24-hour assistance centres that you can contact from anywhere in the world. If you get sick overseas or are involved in a medical emergency, you should contact your travel insurance provider as soon as possible. Make sure you take your travel insurance policy information and contact numbers with you so you can easily contact your insurer from overseas. Consider leaving details of your travel insurance policy with family or friends back home.

For more information on insurance, read the 'Travel Insurance' section of this brochure.

## Counselling services

Australians in need of counselling services overseas can contact our Consular Emergency Centre on **+61 2 6261 3305** to be transferred to a Lifeline telephone counsellor.

## Other Smartraveller publications

DFAT publishes a range of brochures with travel hints for specific travel groups, and information about how to cope with unexpected events, available at [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au).

### Titles include:

- Travel smart: hints for Australian travellers
- Consular Services Charter
- Arrested or jailed overseas
- Backpacking overseas
- Death overseas
- Dual nationals
- Sexual assault overseas
- Travelling with children
- Travelling seniors
- Travelling well
- Travelling women
- When someone is missing overseas

Copies of these brochures are also available at DFAT state and territory offices, Australian Passport Offices, and Australian missions overseas. You can also order copies online at [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au).

The brochures *Travelling well*, *Travelling seniors* and *Dual nationals* are also available online in a number of community languages at [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au).

## Top 10 travel tips

1. Check the latest travel advice at **smartraveller.gov.au** and subscribe to receive free email notifications each time the advice for your destination is updated.
2. Take out comprehensive travel insurance and ensure it covers you for the places you plan to visit and the things you plan to do.
3. Before travelling overseas, register your travel and contact details online at **smartraveller.gov.au**, or at the local Australian embassy, high commission or consulate once you arrive so we can contact you in case of an emergency.
4. Obey the laws of the country you're visiting even if these appear harsh or unfair by Australian standards. Don't expect to be treated differently from the locals just because you're Australian.
5. Make sure you have the right visas for the countries you're visiting or transiting and check any other entry or exit requirements.
6. Make copies of your passport details, insurance policy, traveller's cheques, visas and credit card numbers. Carry one copy in a separate place to the original and leave a copy with someone at home.
7. Check with health professionals for information on recommended vaccinations and other health precautions. Remember that vaccinations can be an entry requirement to some countries. Also find out about taking medication overseas—certain medicines aren't allowed in some countries.

8. Make sure your passport has at least six months' validity from your planned date of return to Australia. Carry extra passport photos in case your passport is lost or stolen and you need to replace it while you're away.
9. Keep in contact with friends and family back home and give them a copy of your itinerary so they know where you are.
10. Check to see if you're regarded as a national of the country you plan to visit, and whether dual nationality will have any implications for your travel plans.

# smartraveller.gov.au

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3. Take out comprehensive **travel insurance** to cover hospital treatment, medical evacuation and any activities you plan to undertake in the countries you intend to visit.

While every care has been taken in preparing this brochure, neither the Australian Government nor its agents or employees, including any member of Australia's diplomatic and consular staff abroad, can accept liability for any injury, loss or damage arising in respect of any statement contained herein.

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Information for travellers and travel advisories are available from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Smartraveller website [smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au).

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