



# Protecting your privacy

## Key points

- We take great care to protect the personal information you provide to us
- Australian laws require us to safeguard your information against loss, misuse, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure
- Any staff member who breaches the relevant Acts may face criminal and/or civil penalties

## Keeping your personal information safe

There are laws to protect the personal information you provide when you apply for a passport.

The *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Passports Act 2005* regulate how the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) uses your personal information. An officer of DFAT who breaches these Acts may face a criminal or civil penalty, or both.

The *Privacy Act 1988* imposes strict legal requirements on the way in which DFAT collects, stores and discloses your personal information. It obliges DFAT to take all reasonable steps to protect your information against loss, misuse, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

## Applications

The information you give us when applying for a travel document is our primary source of information about you. DFAT may only use this information in accordance with its governing legislation, which includes establishing your eligibility for a passport by confirming your identity and citizenship.

The information may not be provided to other agencies or individuals except as allowed under the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Australian Passports Act 2005* or other relevant legislation.

## Disclosure to assess eligibility

To determine your eligibility for a passport, DFAT needs to verify the information you provide. Authorised officers may disclose your information to any agencies or individuals able to assist with verification. These include:

- the Australian Electoral Commission
- the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- state and territory road traffic authorities
- any other organisation or individual who issued or signed a document presented with a passport application or who is mentioned in that application.

## Disclosure for other reasons

Information may be disclosed for other limited purposes set out in the *Australian Passports Act 2005*.

These include:

- advising about the status of a passport
- law enforcement
- to assist with international travel by Australian passport holders
- confirming or verifying information about Australian passport holders and applicants
- the operation of family law and other matters.

Agencies to which DFAT may disclose your information for these purposes include, but are not limited to:

- the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Attorney-General's Department
- the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service
- Australian state and territory police
- Australian Federal Police
- Interpol and its member countries
- courts of the Commonwealth of Australia and of each state and territory
- member countries of the APEC Regional Movement Alert System.

Other disclosures may be made in certain limited circumstances where authorised under the *Privacy Act 1988*. For example, where legislation administered by another agency gives a legal right for that agency to access such information, disclosure of this information can be made.

## Disclosure to the Australian Electoral Commission

Information may be disclosed to the Australian Electoral Commission in accordance with section 92 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. This provision allows the AEC to request information held by other Commonwealth agencies for the purposes of preparing, maintaining or revising the Electoral Rolls.

In making any disclosure, DFAT must comply with its obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

## Privacy on the internet

DFAT does not collect personal information about you when you visit websites on DFAT's servers, unless you choose to provide that information.

However, our websites contain links to other sites. DFAT is not responsible for the content and privacy practices of other sites, and we encourage you to read the privacy policy of each site.

DFAT's website [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au) and the passports website [www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au) provide more information on our internet privacy policies.

## Who to contact

If at any time you believe we have not adhered to our privacy obligations or if you have any other questions on the material set out in this brochure, contact:

**Communications Unit**  
**Australian Passport Office**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**  
**R G Casey Building**  
**John McEwen Crescent**  
**BARTON ACT 0221**  
**Email:** [passports.australia@dfat.gov.au](mailto:passports.australia@dfat.gov.au)

You can obtain further information about your rights under the *Privacy Act 1988* from the Privacy Commissioner's website, [www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)

## Please safeguard your passport

Remember to safeguard your passport at all times. Please store it in the wallet provided to prevent damage. Additional fees apply to replace lost or stolen passports.

## We value your comments

We work hard to improve our service to you and we welcome your input about how our staff can make it even better. Please submit any compliments, complaints or comments to us in any of the following ways:

 [www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au)  
[passports.australia@dfat.gov.au](mailto:passports.australia@dfat.gov.au)  APIS 131 232

 **Communications Unit**  
**Australian Passport Office**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**  
**R G Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent**  
**Barton ACT 0221**

## Further information

For the latest information about passports and copies of our other publications, visit our website, [www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au) or call the Australian Passport Information Service (APIS) **131 232** in Australia. If you are overseas, contact an Australian diplomatic mission or consulate.

For travel advice and practical information to help you prepare for safe overseas travel, go to [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au).

## Accessibility

If you are not fluent in English, you can use the Australian Government's Translating and Interpreting Service at your passport interview at no cost. If you need an interpreter or are visually impaired and need general passport information, please call APIS on **131 232**.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service: TTY users telephone **133 677** and Speak and Listen users telephone **1300 555 727**. Ask for APIS on **131 232**.



[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)  
Every traveller, every trip.

