



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Border Protection**

Australian permanent resident information

An Australian permanent resident (permanent resident) is the name given to a non-citizen who is the holder of a permanent visa. A permanent resident can live, work and study without restriction in Australia.

A permanent resident has most of the rights and entitlements of a citizen, however there are differences:

- A citizen has an automatic right of entry to Australia, however if a permanent resident chooses to travel internationally, they need to ensure they have a permanent visa with a valid travel authority if they wish to return to Australia as a permanent resident.
- A citizen can vote in Australian Government elections. In most cases permanent residents cannot, however if a permanent resident was enrolled to vote (as a British subject) prior to 1984, they may remain eligible to vote.

Eligibility for Australian government services and benefits, for both citizens and non-citizens, is the responsibility of the government agency with policy responsibility for the service or benefit.

Following are some examples:

[Collapse all](#)

CollapsedSocial Security

Eligibility for social security benefits and associated services is normally defined in enabling legislation such as the *Social Security Act 1991* and the *Social Security (International Agreements) Act 1999* and associated international social security agreements between Australia and other countries. Advice about eligibility for benefits and services should be obtained from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink). More information is available at the [Department of Human Services](#)

[<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>].

CollapsedNational health scheme (Medicare)

Eligibility for Australia's Medicare scheme is governed by the *Health Insurance Act 1973*. Eligibility is available to an "Australian resident", as defined in that Act. In some cases visitors to Australia are eligible to some level of cover through a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement between Australia and another country. Eligibility should be confirmed with the Department of Human Services (Medicare). More information is available at the [Department of Human Services](#) [<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>].

CollapsedEducation

Each state government manages the school system within their state. This means that they provide funds and regulation for their schools. Both public schools and private schools exist in each state. The curriculum taught in each state or school may vary but the learning areas are the same in all.

The national government provides the funding for universities in all the states. Each is independent in

its governance. They set their courses and course content. A professional body must endorse a course for it to run. Typically, a university course takes three or four years of study. More information is available on the [Studying in Australia](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud) [<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud>]page.

CollapsedHigher Education Loans Program (HELP)

Under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, only Australian citizens and permanent humanitarian visa holders can access the Higher Education Loans Program (HELP) and the associated discount for up-front payments. More information is available at [Study Assist](http://www.studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist) [<http://www.studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist>].

CollapsedElectoral

Eligibility to enrol to vote in federal elections or referendums is limited to Australian citizens. Permanent residents who were already enrolled (as British subjects) as at 25 January 1984 may continue to be eligible to vote. More information is available at the [Australian Electoral Commission](http://www.aec.gov.au/) [<http://www.aec.gov.au/>].

CollapsedCitizenship conferral

Eligibility for Australian citizenship is governed by the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*. Eligibility is available to a “permanent resident” as defined in that Act. More information is available on the [Citizenship](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi) [<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi>]website.

CollapsedMigration sponsorship

Eligibility to sponsor a person for a permanent visa is governed by the *Migration Regulations 1994*. Eligibility is available to Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents and [Eligible New Zealand citizens](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Life/Cert/CSNZCA/Eligibility-CSNZCA). [<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Life/Cert/CSNZCA/Eligibility-CSNZCA>]