# Citizenship, young people and the law

If you are a young person of Māori or Pacific Islander background, you may not know if you are an Australian citizen. Being a citizen gives you more rights, like being able to apply for JobSeeker payments.

This fact sheet can help you:

* work out if you are an Australian citizen
* get proof that you are an Australian citizen
* understand some of your rights if you are an Australian citizen
* find more information and help.

## **Am I an Australian citizen**?

If you were born in Australia, you may be an Australian citizen.

You are an Australian citizen **from birth** if either of these applied at the time you were born:

* one or both of your parents were Australian citizens or permanent residents
* one or both of your parents were New Zealand citizens with a special category visa and you were born on or after 1 July 2022.

You are an Australian citizen **from your 10th birthday** if you were born on or after 20 August 1986 and lived in Australia until you turned 10. It is okay if you left Australia for study or holidays, as long as Australia was your main home.

## How do I prove I am an Australian citizen?

You can apply to the Australian Government’s Department of Home Affairs for a ‘citizenship certificate’. If you are under 16 years, your parent or guardian can apply for you.

To apply online, visit the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs webpage [Get a citizenship certificate](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/certificate/get-a-certificate) (https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/certificate/get-a-certificate).

You will need to:

* create an account
* prove your identity and include a passport-size photo of yourself
* ask a qualified person to confirm your identity and photo
* read and agree to terms and conditions
* pay an application fee.

You may need to include documents that prove you have lived in Australia, like school reports, immunisation certificates, club memberships and bank statements.

If you cannot use the online process, contact the Department and ask them to send you ‘Form 119: Application for evidence of Australian citizenship’. For contact details, go to ‘More information and help’ at the end of this fact sheet.

Keep a copy of your application and documents for your own records.

The Department will email or write to tell you if your application is successful.

## What are my rights if I am an Australian citizen?

You have more rights if you can prove you are an Australian citizen. For example, you can:

* apply for an Australian passport (so you can travel overseas and re-enter Australia easily)
* vote in state and federal elections and referendums
* sponsor your parents to apply for a parent visa
* apply for a job in the Australian Public Service or Australian Defence Force
* access benefits under the [National Disability Insurance Scheme](https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/am-i-eligible) (<https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/am-i-eligible>)
* apply for study loans through [StudyAssist](https://www.studyassist.gov.au/) (www.studyassist.gov.au).

### Can I still be deported?

### If you are an Australian citizen, you will not be deported (forced to leave Australia). However, if you are not an Australian citizen, you can be deported in some situations.

### Can I apply for Centrelink payments?

If you are an Australian citizen, you can apply for the full range of social security (Centrelink) payments, benefits and allowances. This includes JobSeeker and Austudy.

You can also apply for these payments if you are a New Zealander with a permanent resident visa.

For more information, visit [Services Australia](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/) (www.servicesaustralia.gov.au).

## More information and help

### Department of Home Affairs

Immigration and citizenship queries.

Website: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/certificate>

Phone: 131 881

### Federation of Community Legal Centres

Referral to a community legal centre near you.

Website: [www.fclc.org.au](http://www.fclc.org.au)

### Le Mana Pasifika – Centre for Multicultural Youth

Community projects and support for Pasifika young people.

Website: [www.cmy.net.au/young-people-community/community-connections/le-mana-pasifika](http://www.cmy.net.au/young-people-community/community-connections/le-mana-pasifika/)

### Victoria Legal Aid

Free information about the law and how we can help you. Use Legal Help Chat on our website or phone Legal Help, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 6pm, excluding public holidays.

Website: [www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 792 387

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