

## Building a safe, prosperous and respected nation

# Services > Citizenship > Citizenship Amendment Act 2005: Frequently Asked Questions

- [Return to Citizenship home page](#)

The Citizenship Amendment Act 2005 came in effect on 21 April 2005. The Act tightened the criteria and vetting processes for New Zealand citizenship and reduced the likelihood of successful forgery and misuse of New Zealand travel documents. The key features of the Citizenship Amendment Act 2005 are included in the following 'Frequently Asked Questions':

### What were the key citizenship provisions in the Citizenship Amendment Act?

The Act:

- increased the standard period of residence in New Zealand from three years to five years;
- removed the provision for special treatment for the spouses of New Zealand citizens so that applicants for the grant of citizenship who are married to New Zealand citizens are required to meet the five-year residency period;
- no longer counts the time spent in the country on temporary permits towards the qualifying period of residence for citizenship;
- required that citizenship must be registered at birth. This helps the Government to manage entitlements to services;
- strengthened the vetting of applications; and
- increased the penalties for current offences (e.g. unlawfully issuing a citizenship document or altering a citizenship record could result in a term of imprisonment of up to ten years and/or fine up to \$50,000).

### Why were these changes introduced?

The Government introduced the Act to address international security issues affecting New Zealand and enhance the integrity of the citizenship application process.

### When did the changes take effect? Are any of the provisions retrospective?

The legislative provisions came into effect on 21 April 2005.

3rd citizenship by birth provisions came into effect on 1 January 2006.

**What are the citizenship by birth provisions? Why were they introduced? When were they introduced?**  
Until the end of 2005 most children born in New Zealand (or in the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau) were automatically New Zealand citizens at birth (with few exceptions).

From 1 January 2006, children born in New Zealand (or in the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau) acquire New Zealand citizenship at birth only if at least one of their parents:

- is a New Zealand citizen; or
- has permanent residency (i.e. is entitled to be in New Zealand or Australia indefinitely); or
- is entitled to reside indefinitely in the Cook Islands, Tokelau or Niue.

For further information see: Changes to Citizenship by Birth in New Zealand from 2006: Frequently Asked Questions.

#### **Was there a change to the citizenship fee?**

There are no plans to change the citizenship fee as a result of the legislation. However, prices are normally reviewed every few years. Our fees are set on a cost recovery basis.

#### **Where can I find out more information about applying for New Zealand citizenship?**

- By visiting our website: [www.citizenship.govt.nz](http://www.citizenship.govt.nz); or
- [contacting us](#) for further information.

---

**i.govt.nz**

Prove and confirm your identity securely when dealing with government service providers on the Internet.

---

**[newzealand.govt.nz](http://newzealand.govt.nz)**

The Department of Internal Affairs

## The Department of Internal Affairs

Te Tari Taiwhenua

**Building a safe, prosperous and respected nation**

### Services › Citizenship › Citizenship Amendment Act 2005: Frequently Asked Questions

+ [Return to Citizenship home page](#)

The Citizenship Amendment Act 2005 came in effect on 21 April 2005. The Act tightens the criteria and vetting processes for New Zealand citizenship and reduces the likelihood of successful forgery and misuse of New Zealand travel documents. The key features of the Citizenship Amendment Act 2005 are included in the following 'Frequently Asked Questions':

#### What were the key citizenship provisions in the Citizenship Amendment Act?

The Act:

- + increased the standard period of residence in New Zealand from three years to five years;
- + removed the provision for special treatment for the spouses of New Zealand citizens so that applicants for the grant of citizenship who are married to New Zealand citizens are required to meet the five-year residency period;
- + no longer count the time spent in the country on temporary permits towards the qualifying period of residence for citizenship;
- + requires that citizenship must be registered at birth. This helps the Government to manage entitlements to services;
- + strengthened the vetting of applications; and
- + increased the penalties for current offences (e.g. unlawfully issuing a citizenship document or altering a citizenship record could result in a term of imprisonment of up to ten years and/or fine up to \$50,000).

#### Why were these changes introduced?

The Government introduced the Act to address international security issues affecting New Zealand and enhance the integrity of the citizenship application process.

#### When did the changes take effect? Are any of the provisions retrospective?

The legislative provisions came into effect on 21 April 2005.

The citizenship by birth provisions came into effect on 1 January 2006.

[Back to top](#)

**What are the citizenship by birth provisions? Why were they introduced? When were they introduced?**

Until the end of 2005 most children born in New Zealand (or in the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau) are automatically New Zealand citizens at birth (with few exceptions).

From 1 January 2006, children born in New Zealand (or in the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau) acquire New Zealand citizenship at birth only if at least one of their parents:

- + is a New Zealand citizen; or
- + has permanent residency (i.e. is entitled to be in New Zealand or Australia indefinitely); or
- + is entitled to reside indefinitely in the Cook Islands, Tokelau or Niue.

For further information see: [Changes to Citizenship by Birth in New Zealand from 2006: Frequently Asked Questions](#).

**Was there a change to the citizenship fee?**

There are no plans to change the citizenship fee as a result of the legislation. However, prices are normally reviewed every few years. Our fees are set on a cost recovery basis.

**Where can I find out more information about applying for New Zealand citizenship?**

By visiting our website: [www.citizenship.govt.nz](http://www.citizenship.govt.nz), alternatively you can [contact us](#) for further information.

---

**[i.govt.nz](http://i.govt.nz)**

Prove and confirm your identity securely when dealing with government service providers on the Internet.

---

**[newzealand.govt.nz](http://newzealand.govt.nz)**