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Fact Sheet 17 – New Zealanders in Australia

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Under various arrangements since the 1920s, there has been a free flow of people between Australia and New Zealand.

The 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement has allowed Australian and New Zealand citizens to enter each other's country to visit, live and work, without the need to apply for authority to enter the other country.

The movement of New Zealanders to and from Australia relates primarily to the economic conditions prevailing in both countries. In particular, the number of New Zealanders in Australia increases in times of economic buoyancy in Australia relative to New Zealand and decreases when economic conditions are slow.

At 30 June 2010, an estimated 566 815 New Zealand citizens were present in Australia.

Visa requirements

On 1 September 1994 amendments made to the *Migration Act 1958* resulted in a number of changes to migration legislation.

One of the changes introduced was the legal requirement for all non-citizens lawfully in Australia to hold visas.

As a result, the Special Category Visa (SCV) was introduced for New Zealand citizens. In practical terms, there was no change to procedures for New Zealand citizens wanting to come to Australia. They continue to need only a valid New Zealand passport to travel to Australia and in most cases, do not need to seek a visa before travelling¹.

At the time of presenting their passports for immigration clearance New Zealand citizens are considered to have applied for a visa and, subject to health or character considerations, will automatically receive an SCV which is recorded electronically.

Their New Zealand citizens' passports are stamped, showing the date of arrival in Australia. This is the only evidence provided or necessary to show the New Zealand citizens are holders of an SCV.

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who become New Zealand citizens after their arrival in Australia can, subject to health and character considerations, obtain an SCV from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, [www.dia.gov.au](#)



New Zealand citizens who were already in Australia before 1 September 1994.

New Zealand citizens who were already in Australia before 1 September 1994 and were still in Australia on that date automatically became SCV holders on 1 September 1994.

Is it necessary to apply for a permanent residence visa?

It is not necessary for a New Zealand citizen who holds an SCV to apply for or be granted permanent residence in Australia. The SCV allows a New Zealand citizen to remain and work in Australia lawfully as long as that person remains a New Zealand citizen.

In conjunction with the introduction of the new bilateral social security arrangement between Australia and New Zealand on 26 February 2001, the Australian Government also announced that New Zealand citizens who arrive in Australia on or after 27 February 2001 must apply for, and be granted, Australian permanent residence if they:

- intend to access certain social security payments not covered by the bilateral agreement
- obtain Australian citizenship or sponsor their family members for permanent residence.

Under transitional provisions, these changes do not affect New Zealand citizens who:

- were in Australia on 26 February 2001 as SCV holders
- were outside Australia on 26 February 2001, but were in Australia as an SCV holder for a total of 12 months in the two years prior to that date, and subsequently returned to Australia
- have a certificate, issued under the *Social Security Act 1991*, stating that they were residing in Australia on a particular date. These certificates are no longer issued.

Australian citizenship

Applying for citizenship

New Zealand citizens who arrive on or after 27 February 2001 may be eligible for Australian citizenship if they have a permanent visa or meet the transitional provisions described above.

New Zealand citizens aged 16 and over applying for Australian citizenship should check the information on penal clearance certificates available from the department's website.

See: [Character and Penal Clearance Requirements](#)

People who arrived in Australia before the age of 16 and have not resided in New Zealand are not required to provide character and penal clearances.

Further information is available on the department's citizenship website.

See: www.citizenship.gov.au

Citizenship by birth—before 1 September 1994

Every person born in Australia on or after 26 January 1949 and before 20 August 1986 is an Australian citizen by birth (with the exception of certain children born to diplomats and certain other excluded people).

Following amendments to the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* (the Act), a person born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 is an Australian citizen by birth only if at least one of the parents was an Australian citizen or permanent resident at the time of the person's birth. However, this did not include the children of New Zealand parents.

This is because most New Zealanders in Australia between 20 August 1986 and 31 August 1994 were 'exempt non-citizens'². The Act specifically excluded the children of 'exempt non-citizens' from obtaining Australian citizenship by birth.

When the Migration Reform Act came into effect on 1 September 1994, the term 'exempt non-citizen' ceased to apply and SCVs were introduced for New Zealand citizens.

Citizenship by birth—from 1 September 1994 to 26 February 2001

From 1 September 1994 to 26 February 2001, a child born in Australia to a New Zealand citizen parent who held an SCV, is an Australian citizen by birth.

Citizenship by birth—from 27 February 2001

A child born in Australia on or after 27 February 2001 to New Zealand citizen parent/s is not an Australian citizen by birth, unless the New Zealand citizen parent:

- was not affected by the 26 February 2001 changes
- held an Australian permanent resident visa or Australian citizenship.

Note: Children born to a New Zealand parent who was living in Australia temporarily as a diplomat or as the holder of a special purpose visa (that is guests of government, aircrew or armed forces and their families) are not Australian citizens by birth.

Automatic acquisition of citizenship on 10th birthday

A child born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 who did not acquire Australian citizenship at birth automatically acquires it on their 10th birthday if they have been ordinarily resident in Australia for 10 years from birth. This provision operates regardless of the parent/s immigration or citizenship status.

Statistical information

Arrivals and departures

New Zealand citizens are not counted as part of Australia's annual migration program. They are included in settler arrival and net overseas migration figures (when arriving or leaving for more than a 12-month period).

In the 2009–10 financial year 36 519 New Zealand citizens came to Australia as permanent and long-term arrivals. This represented a decrease of 23.6 per cent on the previous year. In the same financial year 24 447 arrived as permanent settlers and 12 072 were long-term arrivals. This represented a 26.0 per cent decrease on the previous year for permanent arrivals and an 18.1 per cent decrease on the previous year for long-term arrivals. These large decreases may be a reflection on the global financial crises in 2008–09.

Permanent and long-term departures of New Zealand citizens increased in 2009–10. Permanent departures increased to 9210 (up 8.6 per cent) and long-term departures increased to 7490 (up 2.7 per cent).

In 2009–10 New Zealand citizen net permanent and long-term movement was 19 819, a decrease of 38.1 per cent from the previous year and a significant downturn from the high growth of 2007–08. In 2009–10 24.6 per cent of permanent and long-term New Zealand citizen arrivals stated they intended to live in New South Wales, 35.8 per cent in Queensland, 20.7 per cent in Victoria and 14.4 per cent in

Western Australia.

New Zealand itself has high immigration in proportion to its population.

It also has a high level of emigration, much of which is to Australia.

Level of skill

In 2009–10, 8227 (33.9 per cent) of permanent New Zealand citizen arrivals were skilled, 3969 (16.2 per cent) were semi-skilled or unskilled, 1351 were believed to be employed but did not provide an adequate description to properly classify their occupation and the remainder were either not in the labour force or unemployed.

New Zealanders in the labour market

New Zealand citizens have a high labour-force participation rate (76.9 per cent at June 2010) compared with those born in Australia (68.5 per cent). This is partly related to the concentration of New Zealanders in the young adult age groups.

At June 2010, people born in New Zealand had an unemployment rate of 6.0 per cent, compared with 4.9 per cent for Australia-born.

Short-term arrivals

During 2009–10, short-term arrivals of New Zealand citizens totalled 1 406 334, an increase of 3.8 per cent over the previous year.

Notes

1. New Zealand citizens with medical conditions or criminal convictions should approach the nearest Australian immigration office to discuss their entry to Australia before travelling to Australia.
2. An 'exempt non-citizen' was a person who was exempt from the requirement to hold an entry permit and was regarded as a permanent resident for periods spent in Australia.

Further information is available on the department's website.

See: www.immi.gov.au

The department also operates a national general enquiries line.

Telephone: 131 881

Hours of operation: Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm (recorded information is available outside these hours).

Fact Sheet 17. Produced by the National Communications Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Canberra.

Last reviewed November 2010.

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