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australian citizenship form 1290

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Australian Citizenship Form 1290: A Complete Guide

Becoming an Australian citizen is a milestone that opens doors to new rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. Whether you are a long term resident, a refugee, or someone who has met the residency requirements, the journey to citizenship starts with a single, crucial document: **Australian Citizenship Form 1290**. This guide will walk you through every step of the process—from understanding what the form is, to completing it accurately, to what happens after you submit it. By the end of this article, you will know exactly how to navigate the application and increase your chances of a smooth, successful outcome.

What Is Form 1290 and Why Is It Important?

Form 1290, officially titled “Application for Australian Citizenship,” is the primary application used by individuals who wish to become Australian citizens by conferral. It is a comprehensive form that collects personal details, residency history, language proficiency, and evidence of good character. The Australian Department of Home Affairs uses the information on this form to assess whether an applicant meets the statutory criteria for citizenship.

Key reasons why Form 1290 matters:

- Legal requirement: The Australian Citizenship Act 2007 mandates that all applicants submit this form.
- Centralised data: The form consolidates all information needed for assessment, reducing the need for multiple submissions.
- Transparency: The form’s structure helps applicants understand what evidence they need to provide.

Eligibility Criteria for Applying via Form 1290

Before you even pick up the form, you must confirm that you meet the eligibility requirements. These criteria are set out by the Department of Home Affairs and include:

1. Residency: You must have lived in Australia on a valid visa for at least four years, including 12 months as a permanent resident.
2. Good character: You must not have any serious criminal convictions and must meet the good character test.
3. English proficiency: You need to demonstrate an adequate level of English, which can be proven through language tests, schooling, or work experience.
4. Knowledge test: Applicants aged 18–59 must pass the Australian Citizenship Test, which covers Australian history, culture, and civic responsibilities.
5. Intent to reside: You must intend to live in Australia or maintain a genuine connection to the country.
6. Age: Applicants under 18 can apply as a dependent, but the process differs slightly.

Meeting these criteria is the first step; the next is to obtain and correctly complete Form 1290.

Where to Obtain Form 1290

Form 1290 is readily available from several sources, ensuring you have the most up to date version:

- Online: Download the PDF from the official Department of Home Affairs website. The online form can also be

completed digitally and submitted electronically.

- In person: Pick up a physical copy at any Australian immigration office or community service center.
- Third party agencies: Some migration agents provide the form as part of their service package.

Always verify that the version you are using matches the current legal requirements, as forms are periodically updated.

Step by Step: How to Complete Form 1290

Completing Form 1290 accurately is critical. Even minor errors can delay the process or result in a refusal. Follow this detailed, step by step guide to ensure you fill out every section correctly.

1. Personal Information

This section captures basic details such as:

- Full name (as per passport)
- Date of birth
- Current address
- Phone number and email
- Country of birth and nationality

Make sure the information matches exactly with your passport and other official documents.

2. Visa and Residency History

Provide a chronological record of your visas, including:

- Visa types (temporary, permanent, humanitarian)
- Dates of entry and exit
- Any visa extensions or changes

Attach supporting documents such as visa grant letters, entry stamps, or travel logs.

3. Language Proficiency

Applicants must demonstrate adequate English. Provide evidence such as:

- English language test scores (IELTS, TOEFL, PTE Academic)
- Proof of schooling in English (high school, university)
- Employment records indicating use of English
- Community service or volunteer work conducted in English

Include certified copies of your test results or other documents.

4. Knowledge Test

If you are between 18 and 59, you must pass the citizenship test. After you study the study guide, you can schedule the test at a designated testing center. Once you pass, attach the official test result to the form.

5. Good Character Declaration

Answer all questions honestly. Provide details on any criminal convictions, court proceedings, or immigration refusals. If you have had any legal issues, attach relevant court documents or discharge certificates.

6. Supporting Documents

Below are the most common documents you'll need to attach:

- Passport and visa pages
- Proof of residence (utility bills, lease agreements)
- Employment records (pay slips, tax returns)
- School or university transcripts
- English test certificates
- Police clearance certificates (if required)
- Evidence of community involvement

All documents must be in English or accompanied by a certified translation.

7. Signature and Date

Sign the form in the designated area and date it. If you are applying as a dependent, a parent or guardian must sign on your behalf.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even experienced applicants can slip up. Here are the top pitfalls to watch out for:

- Incorrect personal details: Even a typo in your name can cause delays.
- Incomplete visa history: Forgetting a visa period may raise red flags.
- Missing translations: Non English documents without certified translations are rejected.
- Late submission of the knowledge test result: The test result must be attached at the time of application.
- Failing the good character check: Disclose all relevant information; omission can lead to refusal.
- Using outdated forms: Always use the latest version to avoid administrative errors.

Fees and Payment Options

The current application fee for Australian citizenship via Form 1290 is **$650 AUD**. This fee covers the processing of the application and the citizenship test.

Payment methods include:

- Credit or debit card (online submission)
- Bank transfer (for paper submissions)
- Payment at a Service Australia office (cash or card)

Always keep the receipt or confirmation number; you may need it for reference.

Submission Process

Once your form is complete, you have two primary submission routes:

Online Submission

Using the Department’s online portal is the most efficient method. You’ll upload the PDF and supporting documents, pay the fee, and receive an electronic receipt.

Paper Submission

Mail the signed form and documents to:

Department of Home Affairs
Australian Citizenship Application Centre
GPO Box 999

Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

Use a tracked postal service and keep copies of everything you send.

Processing Time and What Happens Next

After submission, the Department of Home Affairs will:

1. Verify the documents and data.
2. Conduct a security and character check.
3. Schedule a citizenship interview if required.
4. Send a decision letter (approval or refusal).

Typical processing times:

- Standard application: 12–16 weeks.
- Expedited (for certain categories): 6–8 weeks.

During the waiting period, you can track the status through the online portal or by contacting the Citizenship Application Centre.

After Approval: The Citizenship Ceremony

Once approved, you will receive an invitation to a citizenship ceremony. This ceremony is a formal event where you take the Oath of Citizenship, officially becoming an Australian citizen. You can choose a ceremony in your local area or a national ceremony if you prefer. The ceremony also includes a welcome speech and an opportunity to meet other new citizens.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Can I apply if I have a criminal record?

It depends on the severity and recency of the offense. You must disclose all convictions. The Department will assess whether you meet the good character requirement.

2. Do I need to attend the citizenship test if I am over 59?

Applicants over 59 are exempt from the test, provided they meet other eligibility criteria.

3. How long does the citizenship test take?

The test is a 20 question multiple choice quiz, typically completed within 30 minutes.

4. Can I submit the application in a language other than English?

No. All forms and supporting documents must be in English or include certified translations.

5. What if my application is refused?

You will receive a refusal letter explaining the reasons. You can appeal the decision or re apply after addressing the issues.

Conclusion

Australian citizenship is a transformative step that requires meticulous preparation and attention to detail. By

understanding the purpose of **Form 1290**, verifying your eligibility, gathering the right documents, and completing the application accurately, you position yourself for a smooth approval process. Remember to stay informed about any updates to the form or eligibility rules, keep all receipts, and be honest throughout the application. With patience and diligence, you'll soon be able to celebrate your new status at an Australian citizenship ceremony, marking the beginning of a new chapter in your life.

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