

Australian Citizenship

The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, in conjunction with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), conducts Citizenship Ceremonies for residents within our municipality who wish to become Australian citizens and have successfully completed an application. Once approved by DHA you will be invited to a ceremony, generally within 3 months, although waiting times can vary. Invitations are sent approximately 4 weeks before the ceremony.

These ceremonies are usually held at the Peninsula Community Theatre in Mornington and at the Rosebud Memorial Hall on Australia Day. Ceremonies are conducted approximately every 2 months. In attendance at these ceremonies are the Mayor and Councillors of the Mornington Peninsula Shire, members of Parliament, representatives of the Australian Electoral Commission, guest speakers and Council officers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does Australian Citizenship mean?

Becoming a citizen represents a commitment to Australia and its people. It gives a sense of belonging because you can fully participate in all aspects of Australian life. Australian Citizenship is an important step in your migration story. Becoming an Australian citizen means that you are making an ongoing commitment to Australia and all that this country stands for. It is also the beginning of your formal membership of the Australian community. It is the step that will enable you to say "I am Australian". People granted Australian Citizenship have the same responsibilities and privileges as Australian born citizens.

What are the responsibilities of Australian citizens?

Australian citizens have an obligation to:

- Obey the law;
- Defend Australia should the need arise;
- Serve on a jury if called to do so; and
- Vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in referenda.

What are the privileges of Australian citizens?

As an Australian citizen you have the right to:

- Apply for work in the Australian Public Service or in the Australian Defence Force;
- Seek election to parliament;
- Apply for an Australian passport and re-enter Australia freely;
- Register children born overseas as Australian citizens by descent; and
- You might also be able to seek consular assistance from an official overseas.

Am I eligible to become an Australian citizen?

Applicants must:

- Be a migrant with permanent residence and satisfy the residence requirement;
- Intend to reside, or to continue to reside, in Australia or to maintain a close and continuing association with Australia;
- Be of good character if over 18 years of age; and
- Successfully complete the Citizenship test (if required).

Applications for children?

Children under 16 years of age are usually included on a responsible parent's application form. A child's citizenship status is dependent on various factors and it is highly recommended that you contact DHA for details.

Can I retain dual citizenship?

It is possible to hold citizenship of two or more countries if the law of those countries allow. This is known as dual or multiple citizenship. People can become dual citizens automatically, or after being granted citizenship of another country. For example, an Australian citizen may automatically gain citizenship of another country through marriage, while a permanent resident of Australia may become a dual citizen by becoming an Australian citizen. Prior to 4 April 2002, Australian citizens who became citizens of another country lost their Australian Citizenship automatically.

Australia allows its citizens to hold dual nationality. Other countries may not. To check if your country allows its citizens to hold dual or multiple citizenships, contact the embassy or consulate of that country in Australia.

How much does it cost to become a citizen?

The cost of your application and time taken from lodgement to notification of a decision will vary according to your eligibility and which form you need to use to apply. The maximum cost will be \$A285. For children under 16 years applying on the same form as a parent there is no charge. A concession fee of \$40 is available to applicants who have a permanent financial disadvantage and are recipients of certain pensions from Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Applicants who are exempt from paying the fee may include persons who have served in the Australian Defence Force for a period of at least 90 days and British and Maltese former child migrants who arrived in Australia under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme between 22 September 1947 and 31 December 1967. There is no cost to sit the Citizenship test.

How will I be notified if my application is accepted?

DHA will send you a letter informing you if your application has been accepted. You will then be sent an invitation by the Shire to attend a Citizenship Ceremony within the Shire, generally within 3 months of being approved, however waiting times can vary and could take up to 6 months. Citizenship Ceremonies are held approximately every 2 months.

Can I bring a friend or family member to the ceremony?

The ceremony is a celebration of your Citizenship, so family and friends are encouraged to attend the ceremony. Up to 4 guests may be invited per candidate.

Application process for Australian citizenship

There are 10 steps in the application process. The time it takes to apply for and be granted Australian citizenship varies.

- Step 1. Ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria
- Step 2. Check that you meet the residence requirement
- Step 3. Prepare for your citizenship test
- Step 4. Gather your original documents and have copies of them certified
- Step 5. Complete your application form
- Step 6. Lodge your application form, certified copies of your documents and the correct fee
- Step 7. Attend your citizenship appointment – ensure you bring all your original documents
- Step 8. Sit the citizenship test at your appointment
- Step 9. Await notification of the department's decision
- Step 10. Attend a citizenship ceremony and make the pledge

Who Do I Contact for Further Information?

For all information on becoming an Australian citizen and sitting the Citizenship test please contact the Citizenship information line on 131 880 (business hours are 8.30am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday). An interpreting service is also available as part of this service.

Alternatively you can visit the very comprehensive Citizenship website at www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Citi.

If you have any questions regarding your Citizenship Ceremony, please contact Linda Yorke, Governance Officer on 5950 1439 or any of our Customer Service Centres.

Information correct as at 29 December 2017.