

NEW ZEALAND CITIZENS VISAS IN AUSTRALIA

This fact sheet gives information about Australian visas for New Zealand citizens and their families. There is a separate fact sheet for New Zealand citizens and Australian citizenship ([click here](#)).

Australia has a strong relationship with New Zealand as a close neighbour and special rules for visas and citizenship have been made.

New Zealand citizens can apply for permanent visas to Australia through the family and skilled migration programs, but they also can get a 'Special Category Visa (subclass 444)' which allows them to stay and also gives a pathway to citizenship.

What is a Special Category Visa (subclass 444)?

A Special Category visa (subclass 444) allows New Zealand citizens to visit, study, stay and work in Australia for as long as you stay in Australia.

When does an SCV visa end?

The visa starts on the date the visa is granted and ceases on the date you leave Australia. You must apply for a new SCV if you want to enter Australia again.

The visa ceases if the Department cancels the visa or you are granted a permanent visa or you become an Australian citizen.

When might NZ citizens not be eligible for an SCV visa?

You may not be able to get an SCV visa if you have:

- been convicted of crimes and sentenced to prison for at least one year, or
- been removed or deported from Australia or another country in the past, or
- a 'No further stay' (8503) condition on your visa

How do you apply for the SCV visa?

Applying for the SCV is free.

If the Department refuses your visa, they will tell you why they refused and whether the decision can be reviewed.

Applying on entry to Australia

You must have a valid New Zealand passport before you enter into Australia.

The visa application is usually processed at the airport or seaport where you enter Australia.

You need to show your completed incoming passenger card with your valid New Zealand passport to an officer. Health and character questions can be answered on SmartGate, the automatic processing through passport control.

If you meet all the visa and immigration rules, you will be granted the visa and immigration cleared. The visa will be electronically added to your passport.

Applying after entry to Australia

If you already hold another temporary visa before entering into Australia, you can only apply for an SCV *after* you have entered Australia.

You may also apply for an SCV after you have entered Australia if you:

- became a New Zealand citizen and passport holder after you have entered Australia
- entered on a passport that is not a New Zealand passport, or
- had a New Zealand citizen baby born in Australia. A baby will hold any visa that you and the other parent held when the baby was born, and will be added to any unfinalised visa applications you may have before the Department at the time of your baby's birth. New Zealanders with a child born in Australia, who is not an Australian citizen at birth, can apply for New Zealand citizenship by descent and a passport for the child as soon as they are born.

You will need to apply online (Form 444) and request an SCV appointment. The Department of Home Affairs will contact you with a date and time for your appointment and may also contact you about any other documents you may need to put in.

You must hold a valid visa while the SCV application is being processed. If your current visa will expire before the Department decides the application, you should apply for a Bridging visa to keep you lawful during the processing.

The Department will let you know their decision in writing. If your application is successful, the visa will be linked to your New Zealand passport.

Your obligations on the SCV visa

You must remain a New Zealand citizen while you hold an SCV.

If you are no longer a New Zealand citizen, your SCV will cease. You must apply for and be granted a different visa to remain lawful in Australia.

You must obey Australian laws while you remain in Australia.

You must continue to meet the character requirements. The Department may cancel your visa if you do not meet the character requirements.

Benefits

The type of social security benefits you can claim will depend on whether you are a protected or unprotected SCV holder.

Protected SCV holders

If you live in Australia on a protected SCV, you may claim all Centrelink payments and concession cards.

You are a protected SCV holder if you arrived in Australia on a New Zealand passport and were either:

- In Australia on 26 February 2001
- In Australia for 12 months in the 2 years immediately before 26 February 2001
- Assessed as a protected SCV holder before 26 February 2004

Non-protected SCV holders

You are generally a non-protected SCV holder if you're a New Zealand citizen who arrived in Australia after 26 February 2001.

You generally cannot claim income support payments but there are some family and health care Centrelink payments you can get (such as Family Tax Benefit; Newborn and Child care payments and Health Care Card). These are found on the Services Australia webpage for New Zealand citizens ([link](#))

New Zealand citizens on SCVs after 1 July 2023

From 1 July 2023 New Zealand citizens can apply directly for Australian citizenship if they have been living in Australia for four years and are considered a permanent resident for citizenship purposes.

The changes from 1 July 2023 about citizenship for SCV holders do not affect social security payments for protected and non-protected SCV holders. The changes only make you a permanent resident for citizenship purposes. You are not a permanent resident for social security or other purposes. However, once you are a citizen then you can get all benefits that Australian citizens can get (see Fact Sheet on Australian citizenship for NZ citizens).

New Zealand Citizen Family Relationship visa (subclass 461)

You can apply for this visa if you are not a New Zealand citizen but have family that are New Zealand citizens on an SCV visa.

With this visa, you will be able to live, work and study in Australia for 5 years.

You can travel to and from Australia as many times as you want during the 5-year period.

If you were a member of the family unit of a New Zealand SCV holder and have or have held a 461 visa, but you are now no longer a member of that family unit, you may still be able to get a further 461 visa unless you become the member of some other family unit.

This is legal information only, not legal advice.
See a lawyer or registered migration agent for specific legal advice.