HINTS FOR AUSTRALIAN TRAVELLERS

travel smart

smartraveller.gov.au

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Each year millions of Australians travel overseas – and each year the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade provides consular assistance to thousands of Australians in difficulty. Travel Smart provides useful travel information to help you prepare for your trip, and advice on what you should do if you run into problems overseas. We suggest that you keep this booklet with you on your journey.
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Our top travel tips

1. Check the latest travel advice at smartraveller.gov.au and subscribe to receive free email notifications each time the advice for your destination is updated.

2. Take out comprehensive travel insurance and ensure it covers you for the places you plan to visit and the things you plan to do.

3. Register your travel and contact details online at smartraveller.gov.au to make it easier to contact you in an emergency.

4. Make sure your passport has at least six months’ validity from your planned date of return to Australia. Carry extra passport photos in case your passport is lost or stolen and you need to replace it while you’re away.

5. Check with health professionals for information on recommended vaccinations and other health precautions. Remember that vaccinations can be an entry requirement for some countries. Also find out about taking medication overseas – certain medicines aren’t allowed in some countries.
Make sure you have the right visas for the countries you are visiting or transiting and check any other entry or exit requirements.

Check to see if you’re regarded as a national of the country you plan to visit, and whether dual nationality will have any implications for your travel plans.

Make copies of your passport details, insurance policy, travellers cheques, visas and credit card numbers. Carry one copy in a separate place to the originals and leave a copy with someone at home. Ensure you appoint a power of attorney and have an up-to-date will.

Obey the laws of the country you’re visiting even if these appear harsh or unfair by Australian standards. Don’t expect to be treated differently from the locals just because you’re Australian.

Keep in contact with friends and family back home and give them a copy of your itinerary so they know where you are.
Before you go

The better prepared you are, the safer and more enjoyable your travel will be.
Before you go
Research your destination

Access our full range of travel information to help you prepare for overseas travel at smartraveller.gov.au. We have useful advice on local laws, entry and exit requirements and health issues, and an indicative rating of the security situation in particular countries. Our aim is to help you determine the level of risk you may face, so that you can make informed decisions about where and when to travel overseas.

Our travel advice is regularly updated. Subscribe to Smartraveller to receive free email notifications when the information for your destinations changes. You can:

• Choose which destinations, issues and events you’d like to receive notifications for
• Set an expiry date for receiving notifications, for example, the date you return to Australia
• Unsubscribe any time.

Following Smartraveller on Twitter and Facebook is another easy way to stay up to date while you’re travelling. You can also download the free Smartraveller app.

You can access more travel information through guide books or travel websites. Talk with family or friends who are familiar with the countries you’ll be visiting.

Register before you travel

Make sure you register your travel and contact details online at smartraveller.gov.au before you travel to make it easier to contact you in an emergency, whether it’s a natural disaster, civil disturbance or family issue. The registration information you provide is protected by Australia’s privacy laws.
Cover yourself with travel insurance

Organising travel insurance is an essential part of preparing for your overseas trip. If you are uninsured, you (or your family) are personally liable for covering any medical or other costs resulting from unexpected incidents or accidents. If you can’t afford travel insurance, you can’t afford to travel.

You should make sure your travel insurance covers where you plan to go and what you plan to do. It should cover medical expenses for injury or illness, as well as theft of valuables, damage to baggage and cancellations or interruptions to flight plans. You should also check you’re covered for your pre-existing medical conditions and any additional activities you plan to undertake, such as skiing or hiring a motorcycle.

Accidents can happen to anyone, including on short trips to familiar locations. Medical costs overseas can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Australian Government won’t pay for your medical treatment overseas or medical evacuation to Australia or a third country. Travellers without travel insurance are personally liable for covering any medical and associated costs they incur. Australians have faced financial hardship to cover costs when things go wrong.

Each year more than 1,000 Australians die overseas. It can cost over $20,000 to bring the remains of loved ones home – so make sure your travel insurance covers this before you go.

If you plan to rely on the travel insurance provided by your credit card, before travelling you should obtain written confirmation that you’re covered for your personal circumstances, including for all of your destinations, activities and pre-existing conditions.
If you are travelling with family, you may be able to obtain travel insurance for your family under the one policy. However, cover varies from policy to policy so check the fine print. Make sure you confirm all details with your insurance provider and receive written confirmation of your policy.

Be aware that some policies do not offer refunds when the safety and security environment overseas changes. The terms and conditions of your policy will determine whether you are entitled to a refund if DFAT changes the level of the travel advice. It varies from policy to policy, so shop around.

DFAT has teamed up with independent consumer advocate CHOICE to provide a simple travel insurance guide to help you choose the right insurance for your trip: visit the Travel Insurance page on smartraveller.gov.au.
Before you go
Organise your passport and visas

Your passport is your most important travel document. All Australian citizens must have a valid passport before leaving Australia and maintain a valid passport while overseas. All children travelling overseas, including newborn infants, must have their own passport. Safeguard your passport at all times.

Be aware that countries have different passport validity requirements. Make sure your passport has at least six months validity from your planned date of return. Carry extra passport photos just in case your passport is lost or stolen and you need to replace it while you’re away.

Aside from the inconvenience and time taken to replace a lost, stolen or damaged passport, an additional fee will apply to get a replacement. A replacement passport may also have limited validity. By law, you are required to report the loss or theft of your passport to the nearest Australian embassy, high commission or consulate, or online at passports.gov.au, without delay.

Apart from writing your contact details on the ‘Contact details’ page in your passport, it is illegal to alter or tamper with your passport in any way.

If your passport has been damaged in any way (including any problems with the electronic chip), before your next trip phone the Australian Passport Information Service on 131 232 or visit your nearest passport office or Australian overseas mission to check whether your passport is usable for international travel. More information on Australian passports can be found at passports.gov.au.

Find out early what visas you need by contacting the relevant foreign mission (embassy, high commission or consulate) of the countries you intend to visit. Some countries have specific entry and exit requirements, including compulsory vaccinations.
Remember to check the visa requirements of countries you might be transiting. Contact details for foreign missions can be found at dfat.gov.au.

Remember:

- A visa does not guarantee entry to a foreign country
- In most cases, a tourist visa does not allow you to work in a foreign country, including voluntary or unpaid work
- The conditions and expiry dates of visas and entry permits must be strictly adhered to. In some countries, visa overstay can lead to arrest
- Visa scams are common. Check the travel advice on Smartraveller for the correct links, or contact the embassy, consulate or high commission of the country you plan to visit
- DFAT in Australia and Australian missions overseas cannot help you arrange visas or work and residency permits for other countries.

**Check if you’re a dual national**

If you or your parents were born in another country, you may be considered a citizen or national of that country, even though you are also an Australian citizen. Before you leave, it’s important to know about the implications of local laws for dual nationals – for example, you may be liable for military service in the country of your other nationality.

Some countries may not permit Australian consular assistance to be provided to Australian citizens who, according to its laws, are considered to be its own nationals. Some countries may not recognise your Australian citizenship unless you are travelling on an Australian passport.
You must use your Australian passport to leave and return to Australia.

If you hold another country’s passport, seek advice about using it from the country’s embassy before you leave. To find out more about what dual nationality and Australian citizenship mean, visit the Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s website at border.gov.au or call 131 880. For further information see the Dual Nationals page on smartraveller.gov.au.

Consult your airlines

If you’re concerned the airline may question your fitness to fly, we recommend you obtain a letter from your doctor confirming that you’re fit for air travel.

If you have a disability, contact your airline to find out about services such as shuttle services, seating arrangements and special meals.

If you need to carry needles and syringes with you, obtain a letter from your doctor explaining why you need them and seek early advice from your airline on how to comply with airport and air travel security regulations.

Plan your accommodation

If you’re travelling independently, it’s recommended that you book your accommodation prior to arrival, especially if you’re due to arrive at your destination late at night. It is also useful to research how you will travel safely from the airport to your hotel.

Think about your packing

Protect yourself against loss and theft by carrying minimal
pieces of luggage. Overloaded, you make yourself more vulnerable to bag snatchers and pickpockets. Secure credit cards and passports in a money belt or under your clothes. Information about what you can and cannot carry in your luggage is available from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority at casa.gov.au and the Australian Government’s travel security website at travelsecure.infrastructure.gov.au.

If you’re travelling to the USA, make sure you familiarise yourself with their specific airline baggage lock requirements. Information is available from tsa.gov.

When travelling, always remember:

• Obey the law – don’t purchase, use or travel with illegal drugs
• Pack your luggage yourself – tales of tourists having drugs planted are not uncommon
• Never carry anything into or out of another country for someone else
• Secure your luggage as a sensible precaution against tampering or theft
• Don’t leave your bags unattended in public areas or with a stranger
• Be wary of offers of new luggage or when using bags that do not belong to you. Illegal drugs have been found in suitcases won as ‘prizes’ in online competitions. You may not be able to see the drugs at first glance, however security detection systems are likely to find them.

Organise your travel money

There is no limit to the amount of currency you can bring in or
take out of Australia. However, you must declare amounts of $10,000 or more in Australian currency or foreign equivalent.

If requested by a customs officer or police officer, you must also disclose any promissory notes, traveller’s cheques, personal cheques, money orders, postal orders or other bearer negotiable instruments, regardless of value.

For more information, visit austrac.gov.au.

Before you go:

• Find out the currency in common use at your destination and whether ATMs are widely available
• Organise a variety of ways of accessing your money overseas, such as debit and credit cards, travel money cards, traveller’s cheques and cash
• Register with your bank the period you expect to be travelling
• Check with your bank whether your ATM card will work overseas.

Centrelink payments

There are rules about how Centrelink payments or concession cards may be affected if you leave Australia. You should visit humanservices.gov.au to find out how any absence from Australia could affect your payment.
Copy your documents

It’s always good to have a spare copy of your important documents. For the following documents, either scan them and email them to yourself, or make two photocopies, leaving one copy with someone at home and keeping the other with you, separate from the originals:

• Passport
• Travel insurance policy
• Itinerary and tickets
• Visas
• Credit card numbers and travellers cheques
• Driver’s licence or international driving permit.

Appoint a power of attorney

Make sure you have considered what may happen in the event you are unable to make important decisions, and whom you may trust to do so on your behalf.

Consider who will pay your bills or look after your finances when you are out of the country, and appoint a trusted person to make decisions for you in the event you become unable to.

Make or update your will

A will allows you to nominate who will benefit from your estate. If you don’t have a will, or it is out of date, it can mean that your property and possessions might not be distributed as you intended. A will also provides the opportunity for you to nominate a guardian for your children. It is always recommended to have an up-to-date will in place to ensure
your wishes are known.

**Plan to stay healthy**

Read up on the health issues affecting the countries you are travelling to on smartraveller.gov.au before you go.

**Vaccinations**

Make an appointment with your doctor or travel clinic at least six weeks before you depart and find out if any vaccinations or health checks are required for your destination. Remember that some vaccines require a long period to take effect and more than one dose may be needed.

It is strongly recommended that before you leave you check the vaccination entry and exit requirements of all countries on your itinerary. You can get this information from the relevant foreign mission. Contact details are available at dfat.gov.au.

**Travelling with medications**

Before you leave, check that the medications you plan to take are legal in the country you are visiting. You can get this information by contacting the foreign mission of that country. Make sure you do this in plenty of time to receive a response.

It’s an offence to carry or send Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicine overseas unless it is for your own personal use, or for the use of someone travelling with you. You could be fined $5,000 and spend two years in prison if you break this law. For more information on travelling with PBS medicines, visit humanservices.gov.au or call 1800 500 147 within Australia.

If you are taking medicines overseas, you should:

- Meet any legal requirements imposed by the foreign
country

• Take enough medicine to cover at least the planned length of your trip

• Carry or enclose a letter from your doctor detailing what the medicine is, how much you will be taking, and stating that the medicine is for your personal use

• Always leave the medicine in its original packaging so that it is clearly labelled with your name and dosage instructions

• Separate quantities between your luggage in case a bag goes missing.

If you have to inject your medication, it may be preferable to carry your own needles and syringes, if it is allowed in the countries you are visiting. If you have to buy needles or syringes overseas, make sure they are sealed and sterile.

**Reciprocal health care agreements**

Australia has reciprocal health care agreements with several countries, including New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Under these agreements, Australians can be provided with urgent or emergency medical treatment overseas. Be aware that you can only access general medical services when the need for treatment arises during the visit and it would be unreasonable to delay treatment until you return to Australia.

These agreements are not a substitute for travel insurance. They won’t cover you if a doctor recommends you should be evacuated back to Australia or to another location. You would need to cover these costs yourself if you don’t have adequate travel insurance.

For more information, and for a full list of countries, visit
humanservices.gov.au or call 1800 500 147.
Travel smart – hints for Australian travellers
Additional health tips

• Do not use or get involved with drugs

• Be aware of the risk of hepatitis and HIV – practise safe sex and avoid ear-piercing, acupuncture, tattooing or dental work while travelling in countries with lower health or hygiene standards

• Medical tourism, including cosmetic surgery and gender reassignment surgery, is increasing. Be aware that while the range of medical and dental services available may be impressive at first sight, standards can be low, resulting in serious and possibly life-threatening complications

• Avoid temporary ‘black henna’ tattoos as they often contain a dye which can cause serious skin reactions

• If you wear glasses, take along a spare pair and/or a copy of the prescription so that they can be replaced more easily if lost or broken.

To find out more about healthy travel and vaccinations you can visit:

• World Health Organization – who.int/en

• Australian Immunisation Handbook – immunise.health.gov.au

• Department of Health – health.gov.au

• Smartraveller Health page – smartraveller.gov.au
While you’re away

Australians love to travel, and as a nation we’re doing it more and more. Nothing beats the excitement of jumping on a plane to explore a new place or to rediscover an old one. Taking some sensible precautions while you’re away will help to make your journey safe and worry-free.
While you’re away
Be conscious of your safety and security

Read and subscribe to the travel advice for your destinations for country-specific risks to your safety and security. Always be aware of ‘Do not travel’ areas listed in the advice.

Crime

Violent and petty crime occurs in many countries. The majority of crime is minor or opportunistic such as pickpockets or bag snatching. Some countries have a high crime rate, including violent crime such as armed robbery, sexual assaults, muggings, carjacking and kidnapping, including ‘express kidnappings’ where victims are abducted and forced to withdraw funds from ATMs before being released.

Be vigilant about your personal security and possessions in public places and take sensible precautions, like keeping money and valuables out of sight and avoiding unnecessary displays of wealth.

ATM and credit card fraud, including skimming, can also occur. Try to keep your credit card in sight to ensure your details are not copied. Avoid using ATMs that open onto the street and instead use ATMs in controlled areas such as banks, shops and shopping centres.

Use only officially licensed and reputable taxis. Be wary if you are approached at the airport by private drivers. In some countries, extortion and robbery can occur in unauthorised taxis. Where possible, travellers are advised to only use official taxi companies that can be booked by phone or at major hotels and from inside airports. It is recommended that you do not share taxis with strangers.

Never leave your drink or food unattended or in the care of a
stranger. Drink and food spiking is common around the world.

**Civil unrest**

You should avoid all demonstrations and protests, as even peaceful protests may turn violent. In periods surrounding elections, unrest and violent protests can occur. Events in one country can also become the catalyst for unrest in another. Demonstrations and strikes may disrupt your travel plans, so monitor local and international media for information about possible new safety or security risks.

**Terrorism**

Terrorism is an ongoing threat in many countries around the world. The threat in some destinations is very high. The country specific travel advisories detail terrorist threats to specific locations and types of venues.

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### Research local transport and tours

When organising how to get around overseas, check out the local travel section in the travel advisories and access the relevant pages on smartraveller.gov.au, such as *Road safety and driving* and *Air travel*.

Be aware that the safety standards you might expect of transport and tour operators, including adventure activities, are not always met. Sufficient safety equipment may not be provided and recommended maintenance standards and safety precautions may not be observed. Research the company you plan to use and make sure your travel insurance covers you.

Learn about road conditions and traffic culture of the places you plan to visit. If you’re renting a car or motorcycle, make
sure it’s roadworthy and that you have a licence, otherwise your insurance may not cover you for injury or damage arising from accidents. Wear appropriate protective clothing on motorcycles and bicycles.

Before driving overseas, Australians should contact the appropriate foreign mission in Australia for information on licence requirements. Many countries require Australians to have an International Driving Permit (IDP) in addition to a valid Australian driving licence to legally drive a car, or ride a motorcycle. You can apply for an IDP through the automobile club or association (such as the NRMA or RACV) in the state or territory where your licence is current.

Aviation safety and security standards in some countries may not be equal to standards in Australia or meet those set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). When staff at Australia’s overseas missions are advised not to use particular airlines due to safety concerns, this will be clearly stated in the travel advice for that destination, at smartraveller.gov.au.

Obey the law

When it comes to the law, pleading ignorance is no defence. Always obey the laws of the country you are visiting, even if they are different from those in Australia. In some cases you may be bound by Australian laws as well. Check the Laws section in the country-specific travel advisories at smartraveller.gov.au before you go.

Consular services and the law

Whichever country you are visiting, be aware that local laws and penalties do apply to you. If you are arrested or jailed, the Australian Government cannot get you out of trouble or
out of jail. The Consular Services Charter explains what the Australian Government can and can’t do to assist Australians overseas, and can be accessed at smartraveller.gov.au.

Drugs

Do not use, carry or get involved with drugs overseas. Consular assistance cannot override local law, even where local laws appear harsh by Australian standards. Some countries, such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, can impose the death penalty or life imprisonment for drug offences.

Extraterritorial laws

Some Australian criminal laws, such as those relating to money laundering, bribery of foreign public officials, terrorism, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and child sex tourism, apply to Australians when they are overseas. The provision of consular assistance to Australians does not extend to protecting you from the consequences of actions that are prohibited under Australian law or the laws of the country you are visiting. Consular officials have to report serious criminal misconduct of this kind to the Australian Federal Police.

Australians risk prosecution under Australian law if they engage in hostile activity overseas, or if they travel with the intention of engaging in hostile activity overseas. For more information, visit nationalsecurity.gov.au.

Australian authorities are committed to combating sexual exploitation of children by Australians overseas. Australians may be prosecuted at home under Australian child sex tourism and child pornography laws. These laws provide severe penalties of up to 25 years’ imprisonment for
Australians who engage in child sexual exploitation while outside of Australia. For more information, see the Child Sex Offences page on smartraveller.gov.au.

Violations of Australia’s child sex laws should be reported to the Australian Federal Police by calling 131AFP (131 237) within Australia, or +61 2 6131 5926 outside Australia. You can call the AFP anonymously on 1800 333 000.

You can also complete the CST report available at afp.gov.au or by writing to:

Child Protection Operations Team
Australian Federal Police
GPO Box 401
Canberra ACT 2602
Australia

Respect local customs

It’s important to respect local cultures and customs when travelling. Here are a few tips to assist you:

• Research the local customs of the country you’re travelling to, and if in doubt, seek local advice

• Dress appropriately. Look at what the locals are wearing and be sensitive to local standards

• Show respect when visiting cultural, historical and sacred sites. In some countries, inappropriate or indecent behaviour can lead to arrest

• Always ask permission before taking photos of people and respect their wishes if they decline. In some countries, it’s illegal to take photos of certain places, such as government buildings, airports and ports or anything that may be police or military property
Travel smart – hints for Australian travellers
• In some countries it’s not acceptable for couples to be very affectionate in public

• Laws and attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) travellers around the world can be very different from those in Australia, which can create risks for LGBTI travellers. Check the LGBTI travellers page on smartraveller.gov.au and the country-specific advisories for more information.

Family and relationship matters

Birth

If you want a child born to you overseas to be recognised as an Australian citizen and travel on an Australian passport you must register them as a citizen by descent. For information on registering a child by descent visit border.gov.au.

Information about overseas adoption and surrogacy is available on smartraveller.gov.au.

Relationships

Some countries have legal systems that impose strict limits on women’s rights, and while these may be harsh by Australian standards, they will apply to you when you’re in the country. Check the country-specific travel advice at smartraveller.gov.au.

Be wary of relationships initiated over the internet – cyber-dating scams are common and Australians have lost large amounts of money on prospective marriage partners. In some instances, people who have travelled overseas to meet their partner have been kidnapped and held to ransom.

Marriage
If you’re planning on getting married overseas, be aware that laws regarding marriage vary from country to country and legal complications can arise. Make sure you check the legal, cultural and religious implications for yourself, your partner and any current or future children. Australians intending to marry overseas should contact either a legal practitioner or the embassy or consulate of the country they would like to marry in for details on the requirements they must meet.

Keep in touch

Every year, DFAT receives thousands of calls from worried family members and friends who haven’t heard from someone who is travelling. Keeping in touch not only saves your friends and family a lot of worry, it can also make it easier to find you in an emergency.

You should:

• Leave a copy of your itinerary with your family or a friend, and let them know if it changes

• Arrange options for staying in touch with family and friends while overseas (mobile phone, prepaid or postpaid international calling card, SMS, social media, email, etc.)

• Give your family and friends an indication of how often they will hear from you, and stick to your word.

• Register your travel plans at smartraveller.gov.au

More information

The Smartraveller website has useful travel hints for specific travel groups, including:

• Business travellers
• Children
• Dual nationals
• LGBTI travellers
• Schoolies
• Seniors
• Students
• Volunteers
• Women
• Australians with mental health concerns
• Australians living and working overseas.

It also contains pages about how to cope with unexpected events including:
• Being arrested or jailed
• Death
• Scams
• Sexual assault
• When someone is missing overseas.
When you return to Australia, there are a few basic things you can do to make the process quicker and easier:

- Have the correct documents completed and ready
- Make sure you declare any items that may be restricted, prohibited or carry diseases
- Know your duty-free allowances.
Returning to Australia

All travellers returning to Australia must have a valid passport and a completed Incoming Passenger Card. If you hold an Australian or New Zealand ePassport and are aged 16 years or over, you are eligible to use SmartGate when arriving at Australian international airports. SmartGate allows you to self-process through passport control using ePassport data and facial recognition technology.

Biosecurity requirements

Australia has strict biosecurity requirements in place to help minimise the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering the country. All travellers must ensure that they comply with biosecurity requirements before entering Australia. Luggage is screened using detector dogs, x-ray machines and baggage inspection. If you are caught carrying undeclared prohibited items you could be fined or prosecuted.

You must declare certain food, plant material and animal products to a Department of Agriculture officer. If you have items you don’t wish to declare, you can dispose of them in bins in the airport terminal. In many cases the goods you declare will be returned to you after inspection. Some items may require treatment to make them safe. Items that are prohibited because of the risk of pests and disease will be seized and destroyed.

Other items that are restricted and must be declared on arrival include:

- Firearms, weapons and ammunition
- Performance and image enhancing drugs
• Medicines including prescription medications, alternative and herbal medicines, vitamins and mineral preparation formulas
• Currency - $10,000 or more in Australian currency or foreign equivalent
• Protected wildlife such as coral, orchids, caviar, ivory and hunting trophies
• Agricultural and veterinary chemical products
• Illegal pornography
• Heritage-listed goods - such as works of art, stamps, coins, archaeological objects and specimens
• Defence and strategic goods

Wildlife products

In addition to approval from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Department of Agriculture, many wildlife products require permits from the Department of the Environment to allow entry into Australia. ‘Wildlife’ includes (but is not limited to) any whole, part or derivative of a plant or animal, either living or non-living.

More information:
• Department of Immigration and Border Protection – border.gov.au
• Department of Agriculture – agriculture.gov.au
• Department of the Environment – environment.gov.au
Getting help overseas

Most Australians travel safely overseas, but some experience serious difficulties or emergencies.
Where to start

Depending on the nature of your emergency, your best option may be to contact your family, friends, airline, travel agent, bank, tour operator, employer or travel insurance provider in the first instance.

The Smartraveller travel advisories also list emergency contact numbers for your destination. Be aware that enforcement and ethical standards for police and security authorities vary greatly between countries. Always remember to get a police report if you report a crime.

Travel insurance companies often have 24-hour call centres that you can contact from anywhere in the world. If you get sick overseas, are a victim of crime or are involved in an emergency, you should contact your travel insurance provider as soon as possible. Make sure you take your travel insurance policy information and contact numbers with you so you can easily contact your insurer from overseas.

Consular services

If you have exhausted these options and are still facing serious difficulties, the Australian Government may be able to assist you.

Providing efficient and cost effective consular services to Australians facing serious difficulties overseas is part of the work of DFAT. We carry out a range of functions, including:

- Assisting Australian citizens in difficulty overseas, including in situations involving serious injury, illness or death, and arrest and detention
- Providing support during crisis situations and international emergencies
• Delivering information and advice to help Australians help themselves and avoid difficulties overseas
• Issuing passports and travel documents to Australian citizens
• Offering a limited range of notarial services, such as witnessing and legalising documents and administering oaths and affirmations (fees apply).

The Consular Services Charter outlines the consular assistance that can be provided to Australians overseas, and a range of tasks that are outside the consular role. The Consular Services Charter is available at smartraveller.gov.au.

Consular officers are present in Australian diplomatic and consular posts overseas. In some countries, Canadian missions provide assistance to Australians. Up-to-date contact information for Australian overseas missions and relevant Canadian missions is listed on the DFAT website at dfat.gov.au.

Your privacy

Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988. Personal information may be used by us to provide consular assistance. Information about how we collect, use, disclose and store personal information related to consular cases is contained in our Consular Privacy Collection Statement.

Copies of the Statement are available at dfat.gov.au or by requesting a copy from the Department.
Fees
By law the consular service must charge fees for notarial and certain other services. These fees are determined by an Act of Parliament and do not reflect the full cost of providing these services.

Consular Emergency Centre
DFAT’s Consular Emergency Centre provides urgent consular assistance around the clock to Australians in distress overseas. The centre’s staff are highly experienced officers who can be contacted on 1300 555 135 from within Australia or on +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas.

This service is provided where the problem is serious and requires emergency assistance, and you can’t contact the closest Australian embassy, high commission or consulate.

Counselling services
Australians in need of counselling services overseas can contact our Consular Emergency Centre on +61 2 6261 3305 to be transferred to a Lifeline telephone crisis supporter.
Quick reference guide

If you or a family member is seriously sick and in need of medical care overseas:

• In the first instance, seek medical assistance from local doctors or hospitals or via your hotel or tour manager
• Call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas
• Call the nearest Australian embassy or consulate and follow the telephone prompts.

If you or a family member has been sexually assaulted or the victim of a serious crime overseas:

• Call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas. The CEC will make contact with the nearest Australian embassy or consulate to provide direct assistance.

If you or a family member has been robbed or need money overseas:

• In the first instance you should contact family and friends and look to use a commercial money transfer service or a bank to transfer funds. If it is outside normal working hours, call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas.

If you or a family member is arrested overseas:

• Call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas. There are limits to what consular staff can do. They cannot get you out of prison/detention or provide legal advice, but they will be able to provide you with a range of information
including contact details for local lawyers. We will do what we can to see you are treated in accordance with local laws and process. We will raise any welfare concerns with prison authorities.

If someone is missing overseas:

- Call their phone, email them and seek to make contact via social media. Call family members and friends and check with their last address, banks travel agents, airlines/tour companies or employers. If this is not successful, and there are reasons for concern, call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas or call your local police to report a missing person.
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Travellers must take responsibility for their own travel arrangements by getting necessary visas, documents and permissions, obtaining medical and legal advice, insuring themselves and informing themselves of the current situation in countries they visit.

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### Key emergency contacts

**Local Emergency Services**
See the country specific travel advice on smartraveller.gov.au

**Australian Consular Services**
1300 555 135 from within Australia
or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas
smartraveller.gov.au

**Australian Passport Information Service**
131 232 from within Australia
or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas
passports.gov.au