



Visa Status of New Zealanders in Australia

New Zealanders have always been able to freely travel to, and work in, Australia. Since 1994, changes to the Migration Act 1958 and Social Security Act 1991 have seen New Zealanders residency status change according to some key dates.

The table below outlines the changing residency status and citizenship pathway of New Zealanders residing in Australia.

Visa Status	Criteria	Citizenship Pathway*
Exempt non-citizen	<p>Until 31 August 1994 New Zealand citizens in Australia were exempt non-citizens and considered permanent residents whilst in Australia.</p> <p>Since 1 September 1994, all non-citizens in Australia must hold a visa. The Special Category visa (SCV) was introduced for New Zealand citizens. The SCV is a temporary visa issued automatically upon arrival in Australia, and cancelled when departing Australia.</p>	Can apply for citizenship if they are a Protected SCV, otherwise eligible for a Resident Return Visa as first entered Australia prior to 1 September 1994.
Protected Special Category Visa	<p>New Zealand citizens who arrived in Australia after 26 February 2001 are considered a Protected Special Category Visa holder if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> were in Australia on 26th February 2001 as an SCV holder; or 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; or 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. 	Can apply for citizenship subject to meeting the required residency, security and character checks.
Non-Protected Special Category Visa or Special Category Visa	New Zealand citizens who first arrived in Australia after 26th February 2001, or who do not meet the Protected Special Category Visa criteria, are considered Non-protected Special Category Visa holders.	Can apply for citizenship if eligible for a Resident Return Visa, or if eligible for the additional pathway visa announced on 19 February 2016.

* = The Citizenship Pathway information only reflects eligibility by date of arrival in Australia. Refer to Your citizenship options for more information.

Disclaimer

This information should not be relied on as an alternative to advice from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection or a professional immigration services provider.

Additional Information

The Citizenship Pathway information only reflects eligibility by date of arrival in Australia. Refer to [Applying for citizenship](#) for further options. Read [Factsheet 17](#) to find out more about the status of New Zealanders in Australia.