



PART FOUR

Australian values



Australian values

Australian values based on freedom, respect, fairness and equality of opportunity are central to our community remaining a secure, prosperous and peaceful place to live.

Our values define and shape our country and they are a reason why so many people want to become Australian citizens.

Australian citizenship is about living out these values in your everyday life and in your local community. It is therefore very important that you understand the values that all Australian people are expected to respect, share and uphold.

Our values

Commitment to the Rule of Law

All Australians are protected by our laws and legal systems. Australians recognise the importance of laws in maintaining a peaceful and orderly society.

Under the Rule of Law, all Australians are equal in relation to the law and no person or group is above the law. In Australia, everybody should obey the law and not break it at any time, otherwise you will face penalties. You should follow the law even if no one is watching.

Australian laws apply to all people in Australia. This means regardless of your background or culture, you must follow Australian laws.

Parliamentary democracy

Australia's system of government is a parliamentary democracy. Our laws are determined by parliaments elected by the people. This means that Australian citizens are involved in how the country is governed. The power of the government comes from the Australian people because Australian citizens vote for people to represent them in parliament.

Voting is compulsory in Australia. This shows the importance of participating in elections.

Freedom of speech

People in Australia should be able to express their ideas freely, so long as it is within the law. In Australia, people are free to meet in public or private places for social or political discussion. People are also free to say and write what they think about any topic and to discuss their ideas with others. Newspapers, television and radio outlets have the same freedom.

Australians are allowed to peacefully protest against the actions of the government, because tolerance of peaceful public protest is an essential part of democracy.

It is never acceptable to promote violence against another person or group of people (such as because of their culture, ethnicity, religion or background) because it is against Australian values and law. It is also illegal to make false allegations or encourage others to break the law. Other people's freedom of speech and freedom of expression must be respected, as long as such expression is lawful.

Freedom of association

In Australia, people are free to join or leave any group voluntarily as long as it is within the law. People are free to join any legal organisation, such as a political party, trade union, religious, cultural or social group. Individuals cannot be compelled to join an organisation or forced to leave it.

Australians can gather freely with others, including to protest against a government action or an organisation. However, all protests must be within the law. This means they must be peaceful, and must not injure any person or damage property.

Freedom of religion

Australia has no official national religion and people in Australia are free to follow any religion they choose. The government treats all citizens equally, whatever their religion or beliefs. However, religious practices must not break Australian laws.

Religious laws have no legal status in Australia. Australian law must be followed by everyone in Australia, including where it is different from religious laws. Some religious or cultural practices, such as polygamy (being married to more than one person at the same time) and forced marriage, are against the law in Australia and can result in severe legal penalties, including imprisonment.

Religious intolerance is not acceptable in Australian society. All people should be provided equal opportunity to pursue their goals and interests regardless of their ethnicity or religion as long as they are obeying Australian law.



Equality of all people under the law

Australian society values the equal rights of all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, race, or national or ethnic origin. There are a number of laws in Australia that protect a person from being treated differently from others.

The law is applied in Australia so that people from different backgrounds are not given preferential treatment, nor discriminated against. For example, Buddhists and people of all other faiths receive the same treatment as Christians. Under our laws, two people can marry each other, including marriage between two men or two women.

Men and women have equal rights in Australia and should be provided equality of opportunity to pursue their goals and interests. Both men and women have equal access to education and employment, can vote at elections, stand for parliament, join the Australian Defence Force and the police force, and are treated equally in courts of law.

It is against the law to discriminate against a person because of their gender. In Australia, it is a right for a woman to get a job ahead of a man, if she has better qualifications and skills.

Both men and women have the right to make their own independent choices about personal matters, such as marriage and religion, and are protected by the law from intimidation or violence. Physical violence against a spouse or partner is never acceptable and it is a criminal offence in Australia.

Divorce is acceptable in Australia. Either a husband or a wife may apply for a divorce to the courts, even if the other spouse wishes to continue the marriage.

Equality of opportunity and a 'fair go'

We believe that everyone deserves a 'fair go' and people should not be limited by any kind of class distinction. Everyone, regardless of their background, is given an equal opportunity to achieve success in life, and ensuring that everyone has the same legal rights is an important aspect of fairness in Australian society.

What someone achieves in life should be a result of their hard work and talents. This means a person should get a job based on their skills and experience, not because of their gender, wealth or ethnicity.

When an organisation needs to fill a job, the law supports that they select the person with the best skills and experience for the job.

Many new migrants in Australia have become leaders in business, their profession, the arts, public service and sport through their hard work and enterprise.



Mutual respect and tolerance for others

In Australia, individuals must respect the freedom and dignity of others, and their opinions and choices.

It is against the law to be violent towards another person. Violence of any kind, including verbal and physical abuse, is illegal. Australians believe in peaceful disagreement and above all the right to be safe and free from violence and intimidation.

In Australia, there are very strict laws concerning the age of sexual consent, which is 16 or 17 depending on which state or territory you reside in. For example, in Australia, a 20 year old man cannot have sexual relations with a 15 year old girl, because that is against the law in all Australian states and territories.

In Australia, the lawful actions of the police should be supported. You should obey a lawful request from the police, because all Australians commit to following the law.

Australia values the principles of mutual respect and tolerance. This means listening to others and respecting their views and opinions, even when they are different from your own. People should be tolerant of each other where they find that they disagree.

Racism has no place in Australia. This includes creating or sharing racially offensive material on the internet or other publications and making racially abusive comments in a public place or at a sporting event.

Our community

Making a contribution

Citizenship gives you the opportunity to fully participate in our nation's life and community. It means that you are ready to fulfil your responsibilities as an Australian citizen. Australians expect everyone living in Australia to participate in our society and make a contribution to our community. Everyone has a responsibility to try and support themselves and their families when they are able to do so.

Compassion for those in need

Australians value 'mateship'. We help each other in times of need. For example, this might mean taking a meal to an elderly neighbour, driving a friend to a medical appointment, or visiting someone who is sick, frail or lonely.

In this spirit of mateship, Australia has a strong tradition of community service and volunteering – to look out for each other and strengthen the community. Volunteering is a great opportunity to share knowledge, learn new skills, and increase your integration into and sense of belonging to the Australian community. There are many opportunities for you to volunteer in Australia.

English as the national language

Australian society values the English language as the national language of Australia, and as an important unifying element of society. People living in Australia should make an effort to learn English.

It is important to learn to speak English because it helps to get an education, a job, and better integrate into the community. It is essential for economic participation and social cohesion. Applicants for Australian citizenship must undertake to make reasonable efforts to learn the English language, if it is not their native language.

Helping to keep our society safe

In Australia, we each have responsibilities to help protect Australian society. For example, if people in Australia suspect their friend or neighbour may be planning to commit a serious crime, they should report this to Australian government authorities as soon as possible. In this way, we can help to protect the safety of our community.

Similarly, if a person in Australia sees or has knowledge of a child being abused, they should report this to the police to investigate.

Online abuse is not accepted in Australia. This is sometimes called cyber abuse. Examples include sharing sexual photos or videos online without consent, stalking a person online, or making racially abusive comments about a person online. Many forms of cyber abuse are illegal in Australia.

Loyalty to Australia

In the citizenship pledge, Australian citizens pledge their loyalty to Australia and its people. Australian citizens may also hold the citizenship of another country or countries if the laws of those countries allow. This is known as dual, or multiple, citizenship. However, even if a person is also a citizen of another country, an Australian citizen within Australia must follow all Australian laws at all times. Some Australian laws must also be followed by Australian citizens even when they are overseas. For example, it's illegal for Australians to be involved in any sexual activity, here or overseas, with a child under 16 years of age.

Australian society is based on our shared obligations not to undermine Australia's interests and security. For example, using social media to share official government secrets would be undermining Australia's interests. Similarly, promoting distrust in and fear of an ethnic community would damage Australian community relations.

In Australia, we come together in times of crisis and take care of each other in good times and bad. During Australia's devastating bushfire season of 2019-20, which resulted in the loss of life, property and wildlife, and environmental destruction, many multicultural communities worked to collect money, clothes and food donations to help people affected by the bushfires. For example, members of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian communities in Victoria collected donations at shopping centres and fundraised through local community group events, and members of the Sikh community donated thousands of bottles of water to communities and firefighters in Queensland.



In conclusion

Our democratic institutions and shared Australian values have created our peaceful and stable society.

We have a rich and unique culture to share. As an Australian citizen, you will become part of our nation's story and will contribute to our future. Australia welcomes you. Citizenship is our common bond.

In preparation for the citizenship test, try the practice test questions on pages 44–46.

Glossary of testable section

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original inhabitants of the land in Australia
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia make up approximately three per cent of the Australian population.

Australian Human Rights Commission

an independent Commission which investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches
Incidents of racism can be reported to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Australian Public Service

government departments and people employed by them
Paul got a job in the Australian Public Service as an employee of Services Australia.

civil unrest

demonstrations and riots by large numbers of people, usually protesting against a government decision or policy
There was civil unrest when the government passed the unpopular laws.

coalition

the joining of two or more political parties, usually to form a government or opposition
After the election, there was no party with a majority in the House of Representatives, so two parties with similar ideas joined to form a coalition.

commission

a group of people with an official responsibility
An independent commission organises the elections.

Constitution

the supreme law of Australia by which the government must abide
The Constitution sets out the legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

constitutional monarchy

a country in which a king or queen is the head of state, whose powers are limited by the Constitution
Our Constitution established the Commonwealth of Australia as a constitutional monarchy, with the King or Queen of the United Kingdom as our Head of State.

court

a place where legal cases are heard by a judge or magistrate
When people break the law, they may go to court.

criminal trial

a hearing of facts by a court to decide if a person is guilty or not guilty of a crime
After the criminal trial, the bank robber was sent to jail.

cyber abuse

behaviour that uses technology to threaten, intimidate, harass or humiliate someone with the intent to hurt them
Many types of cyber abuse are against the law in Australia and should be reported to the police and the online service, such as social media platform, that it occurred on.

democracy

government by the people through elected representatives
Grace was happy to live in a democracy where she could vote for her representative in parliament.

domestic and family violence

Behaviour or threats that aim to control a partner by causing fear or threatening their safety. Domestic and family violence is not accepted and is against the law.

Domestic and family violence is against the law in Australia and should be reported to the police.

drug trafficking

carrying or buying drugs to sell illegally

Jess was sent to jail for drug trafficking.

election

a process through which citizens choose people to represent them in Parliament

Australian citizens aged 18 years or over must vote in an election.

electoral roll

the list of people registered to vote in an election or referendum

When Jan arrived at the voting centre, the official looked for her name on the electoral roll.

electorate

districts made up of voters who vote to elect politicians in the House of Representatives

Electoral districts are called electoral districts, divisions, or seats.

enforce the law

to make sure that people follow the law

Police enforce the law and keep the peace.

equality

the same in status

Australians believe in the equality of all people.

executive power

the power and authority to administer the laws, one of the three powers under the Australian Constitution

Australian Government ministers and the Governor-General have executive power to administer the laws made by the Australian Parliament.

fair go

everyone, regardless of their background, is given an equal opportunity to achieve success in life

In Australia, we believe everyone deserves a 'fair go'.

federation

the union of colonies into one nation with the colonies retaining certain powers

In 1901, the colonies were united into a federation called the Commonwealth of Australia.

First Fleet

the group of 11 ships that set out from Britain under Captain Arthur Phillip to establish a convict settlement in New South Wales

The First Fleet landed at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788.

floral emblem

national flower

Australia's floral emblem is the golden wattle.

forced marriage

a marriage where one or both of the couple did not have a free choice

She was never happy about her forced marriage and always wanted to leave it.

from this time forward

from now and in the future

At the citizenship ceremony, you promise to be loyal to Australia from this time forward.

icon

a well-known image

The Opera House is a famous Sydney icon.

Indigenous

The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia

Indigenous Australians are the First Peoples of this country.

integration

the process of adaptation by migrants so that they can participate in and contribute to their new, evolving society

Over time, migrants benefit from their integration into Australia and the local community.

judicial power

the power and authority to interpret and apply the laws, one of the three powers under the Australian Constitution

The courts in Australia have judicial power.

legislative power

the power and authority to make and change the laws, one of the three powers under the Australian Constitution

Under the Constitution, Parliament has legislative power.

liberties (liberty)

personal freedom and independence

In our democratic society, people have freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of association. We value these liberties.

magistrate

a judge of a lower court

The magistrate found the thief guilty and sent him to jail.

mateship

helping and receiving help from others, especially in difficult times

When my car broke down, the other drivers helped to push it in the spirit of mateship.

national anthem

national song

Australia's national anthem is 'Advance Australia Fair'.

parliamentary democracy

a system of government based on the regular election of representatives to parliament by the citizens

In a parliamentary democracy, the people vote for their representatives.

political party

a group of people who share similar ideas about how a country should be governed and usually seek to be elected

Members of a political party meet regularly, for example, to discuss improvements to public transport.

racism

prejudice, discrimination, harassment or hatred directed at someone because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin

Racism is against the law in Australia and should be reported to the police. Complaints can also be made to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

referendum

a vote by all voters on a proposed change to the Australian Constitution

In a 1967 referendum, the people voted to count Aboriginal peoples in the census.

representative

a person who acts or speaks for others

My local council representative liked my idea and presented it at the council meeting.

respect

show consideration for someone as a person, or a decision they have made

Emily was glad her family were able to respect her decision to become a Buddhist.

Rule of Law

all people, including citizens and the government, are bound by the law

Everyone in Australia, including the Prime Minister, are bound by all Australian laws under the Rule of Law.

Services Australia

an Australian Government agency that delivers a range of health, social and welfare payments and services through Medicare, Centrelink, and Child Support

Services Australia delivers support payments through Centrelink and other services.

secret ballot

a system of voting where people vote privately, so no one can influence or pressure them to vote in a certain way

In a secret ballot, no one watches while you write your vote.

secular

separate from religion

In a secular society, there is no official religion.

self-sufficient

able to provide for your own needs, without the help of other people

Having a job meant that he was able to buy his own food and pay his own rent. He was self-sufficient.

set up

to build, establish, start

Governor Phillip set up the first colony in New South Wales.

shire

a local government area

The roads in my shire are very safe.

social security

government pensions or benefits to help unemployed people, disabled people, elderly people and others in need

When Trang lost her job, she applied for social security benefits.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

an Australian Government agency that manages the tax and superannuation systems that support and fund services for Australians

Every year most Australians submit a tax return to the Australian Taxation Office.

values

the principles that help a person decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations

Australia has a shared set of values, which we call Australian values.

volunteer

a person who gives their time to a person or organisation without expecting payment

Raza is a volunteer who teaches people English in their homes.

Practice test questions

Australia and its people

1. What do we commemorate on Anzac Day?
 - a. The landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli, Türkiye during World War I
 - b. The arrival of the first free settlers from Great Britain
 - c. The landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove
2. What are the colours of the Australian Aboriginal Flag?
 - a. Black, red and yellow
 - b. Green, white and black
 - c. Blue, white and green
3. What is the Commonwealth Coat of Arms?
 - a. The national anthem
 - b. Australia's national flower
 - c. The official symbol of Australia, which identifies Commonwealth property
4. What happened in Australia on 1 January 1901?
 - a. The Australian Constitution was changed by a referendum
 - b. The separate colonies were united into a federation of states called the Commonwealth of Australia
 - c. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was formed
5. What is the capital city of Australia?
 - a. Brisbane
 - b. Canberra
 - c. Perth

Australia's democratic beliefs, rights and liberties

6. Which of these is an example of freedom of speech?
 - a. People can peacefully protest against a government action
 - b. Men and women are treated equally in a court of law
 - c. Australians are free to not follow a religion
7. Which of these statements about government in Australia is correct?
 - a. The government does not allow some religions
 - b. The government in Australia is secular
 - c. Religious laws are passed by Parliament

8. Which of these is an example of equality in Australia?
- a. Everyone follows the same religion
 - b. Men and women have equal rights
 - c. Everyone belongs to the same political party
9. Which of these is a responsibility of Australian citizens aged 18 years or over?
- a. To attend local council meetings
 - b. To vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum
 - c. To have a current Australian passport
10. Which of these statements about passports is correct?
- a. Australian citizens can apply for an Australian passport
 - b. Permanent residents can hold an Australian passport
 - c. Australian citizens need a passport and visa to return to Australia

Government and the law in Australia

11. Which of these statements about voting in Australian elections is correct?
- a. People are free and safe to vote for any candidate
 - b. Voting is by a show of hands
 - c. People must write their name on their vote
12. What is the name of the legal document that sets out the basic rules for the government of Australia?
- a. The Australian Federation
 - b. The Australian Commonwealth
 - c. The Australian Constitution
13. What is a referendum?
- a. A vote to change the government
 - b. A vote to change the Australian Constitution
 - c. A vote to change the Prime Minister
14. Which arm of government has the power to interpret and apply laws?
- a. Legislative
 - b. Executive
 - c. Judicial
15. Which of these is a role of the Governor-General?
- a. The appointment of state premiers
 - b. Signing all Bills passed by the Australian Parliament into law
 - c. The appointment of the Head of State

Australian values

16. Which of these statements best demonstrates Australian values about freedom of expression?

- a. Everyone can peacefully express their opinions within the law
- b. People with different views from me need to keep quiet
- c. Only approved topics can be discussed

17. Should people in Australia make an effort to learn English?

- a. People in Australia should speak whichever language is most commonly spoken in their local neighbourhood
- b. There is no expectation to learn any particular language in Australia
- c. Yes, English is the national language of Australia and it helps to get an education, a job, and to integrate into the community

18. In Australia, can you encourage violence against a person or group of people if you have been insulted?

- a. Yes, if you do not intend to carry out the violence
- b. No, it is against Australian values and the law
- c. Sometimes, if I feel very offended

19. Should people tolerate one another where they find that they disagree?

- a. It is against the law to disagree with one another
- b. No, people only need to treat each other with respect if they agree with one another
- c. Yes, peaceful disagreement reflects Australian values in relation to mutual respect

20. Which of the following is an example of contributing to the Australian community?

- a. Volunteering or fundraising for a charity is a great opportunity to strengthen our community
- b. I should not make any effort to get to know other people
- c. People in Australia should not contribute to the community because Australia is a free country

Answers

1a, 2a, 3c, 4b, 5b, 6a, 7b, 8b, 9b, 10a, 11a, 12c, 13b, 14c, 15b, 16a, 17c, 18b, 19c, 20a