



Australian Government
Australian Customs Service

A composite image showing two women in the foreground, one holding a brochure titled 'TRS'. In the background, there's a hand pointing at a screen with the Australian coat of arms, and a woman in a high-visibility vest working at an airport terminal. A large airplane tail fin with a stylized bird logo is also visible.

Guide for travellers

know before you go



Important Information

Security measures are in place in Customs-controlled areas at airports and seaports. You should be prepared to respond to requests by Customs officers in these areas, which are clearly identified by signs. Passengers might be asked to terminate mobile phone calls in certain controlled areas.

Customs and Quarantine officers may question travellers at any time, selecting people and baggage for detailed examination for a number of reasons. Detector dogs might also be used to search for illegal drugs, prohibited exports and imports including food, plant or animal material.

Because Australia has strict border controls to prevent the possible introduction of exotic pests and diseases such as foot and mouth

disease, all arriving travellers are screened and, in many instances, luggage is inspected or x-rayed by Customs or Quarantine officers.

All food and other items of plant and/or animal origin need to be declared on your Incoming Passenger Card. If in doubt, declare the goods or ask a Customs or Quarantine officer for advice.

Many other items must be declared on arrival. These include items which might be prohibited or restricted (see pages 7-9) and items on which duty or tax might be payable (see page 10 for information about your duty free concession).

There are penalties for making false declarations and/or presenting fraudulent

documents. In some cases goods may be seized.

Expensive items (such as computers and cameras) that you take out and intend bringing back to Australia can be registered on the *Goods Exported in Passenger Baggage* form available from any Customs office or from the Customs website. Once registered, travellers do not need to declare these goods to Customs on return but should keep the form. To register you must have the goods inspected at the departure point.

Goods for which you intend claiming a refund under the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) and items that are difficult to identify cannot be registered. It will also help if you have receipts for items that cannot be registered, such as jewellery.

On departure, please present your passport, completed Outgoing Passenger Card and boarding pass to the Customs officer. The Customs officer can also register your *Goods Exported in Passenger Baggage* form on presentation of the goods.

Tourist Refund Scheme

Travellers might be able to claim a GST and Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) refund under the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) if they:

- Buy a minimum of \$300 worth of goods from the one retailer
- Buy the goods no more than 30 days before departing Australia
- Ask the retailer for a single tax invoice for the goods
- Wear or carry the goods as hand luggage

onto the aircraft or ship

- Present their original tax invoice, goods, passport and international boarding pass to the TRS facility when departing Australia.

If the goods are to be brought back into Australia, please be aware that they may be subject to GST. Normal passenger concessions apply and include any items for which a TRS claim has been approved (excluding most personal items such as new clothing, footwear and articles for personal hygiene and grooming). If the value of these goods together with overseas purchases and goods bought in Australia duty free or tax free exceeds the passenger concession, the goods must be declared to Customs on your return to Australia. Penalties apply to undeclared taxable goods.

Carrying prescription medication

Prescription medicines are financially subsidised by the Australian Government under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Only Australian residents and other persons eligible to receive Medicare benefits can access the PBS. A person can take overseas with them a reasonable amount of PBS drugs for personal treatment for themselves or an accompanying person, such as a child or elderly relative. It is advisable for persons intending to take personal use PBS medicines out of Australia to carry a medical or dental practitioner's letter or complete a *PBS Medicine Export Declaration* available from the Health Insurance Commission.

Warning

Drug Possession and Trafficking are serious crimes. In many countries you could face the death penalty or life behind bars. Don't carry drugs - anytime, anywhere.

Defence and strategic goods

Goods that are controlled at export include: advanced data encryption devices and software; advanced materials such as those with "stealthy" characteristics or armour or armour-defeating properties; certain chemicals; certain biological agents as well as any equipment, technology or material that might be diverted from civil use into a weapons-of-mass-destruction program.

Export controls over these goods include exports as samples, exports after or for repair, and goods exported for demonstration or loan purposes.

For more information contact:

Defence Trade Control and Compliance
+ 61 2 6266 2586 (ph)
+ 61 2 6266 2997 (fax)
dtcc@defence.gov.au
www.defence.gov.au/strategy/dtcc/default.htm

Currency

You must declare to Customs amounts of A\$10,000 or more in foreign or Australian currency (notes and coins) you take out of Australia.

For more information contact:

AUSTRAC
1800 021 037
+ 61 2 9950 0055 (ph)
+ 61 2 9950 0071 (fax)
www.austrac.gov.au

Heritage items

It is illegal to take or send out of Australia without a permit items identified as important to Australia's cultural heritage. These include works of art, stamps, coins, archaeological objects, minerals and specimens etc.

For information on requirements and permits contact:

Environment Australia
(Movable Cultural Heritage Unit)
+ 61 2 6274 1810 (ph)
+ 61 2 6274 2731 (fax)
www.deh.gov.au/heritage/awh/movable/index.html

Firearms and ammunition

You must obtain an export permit from either Customs or Defence before exporting firearms and/or ammunition (see page 8 for information about importing firearms, weapons and ammunition).

For information on Export permits contact:

Customs
1300 363 263
information@customs.gov.au
www.customs.gov.au

Defence
+ 61 2 6266 2586 (ph)
+ 61 2 6266 2997 (fax)
dtcc@defence.gov.au

Protected wildlife

Australia has strict laws controlling the export of protected wildlife and products made from protected wildlife (including some medicinal products).

For information on export restrictions and permit requirements contact:

Environment Australia
+ 61 2 6274 1900 (ph)
+ 61 2 6274 1921 (fax)
www.deh.gov.au

Air Travellers

On arrival, please present your passport and your completed Incoming Passenger Card to the Customs officer, then collect your baggage and proceed to the exit channel.

Sea travellers

At the first port of arrival for international cruises, Customs clears all incoming passengers. This includes a face-to-passport check. Passengers disembarking, including overlanders (passengers disembarking at an Australian port and rejoining the vessel at another Australian port) are fully cleared.

Unaccompanied goods

Unaccompanied goods do not receive the same duty/tax concessions as goods brought into the country with you - the goods may be subject to duty/tax unless they have been owned and used for 12 months or more. See the *Unaccompanied Goods* fact sheet on the Customs website or contact Customs for more information.

Business travellers

Commercial goods valued under \$1000 accompanying passengers are subject to duty and tax. For commercial goods over \$1000 contact Customs or refer to the brochures *Information for Importers* or the *Customs Guide for Importing and Exporting*

for information on importing commercial goods (this includes samples and temporary imports).

Warning

Drug Possession and Trafficking are serious crimes. In many countries you could face the death penalty or life behind bars. Don't carry drugs - anytime, anywhere.

Medicinal products

Declare all drugs and medicines including prescription medications, alternative, herbal and traditional medicines, vitamin and mineral preparations and performance-enhancing drugs or formulas.

Some medicinal products may require an import permit or quarantine clearance.

If you are carrying any drugs or medicines, it is advisable to have a letter or a prescription from your doctor or practitioner describing your medication and medical condition.

For more information contact:

Therapeutic Goods Administration
1800 020 653
+ 61 2 6232 8791 (ph)
+ 61 2 6232 8605 (fax)
www.tga.gov.au

Quarantine

You must declare any food, plant and animal goods and other items such as equipment used with animals, biological materials, soil and sand. You could be fined more than A\$200 on the spot or even face prosecution and imprisonment if you don't declare quarantinable goods.

Some goods may be allowed entry after inspection or treatment and some goods cannot be imported at all. A list of goods is available from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. Fees may apply for certain treatments.

For more information contact:

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
1800 020 504
+ 61 2 9364 7222 (ph)
+ 61 2 9364 7340 (fax)
pr@aqis.gov.au
www.aqis.gov.au

Steroids and performing enhancing drugs

Australia is a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code and strongly opposes doping in sport. The Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) is Australia's lead anti-doping organisation.

For more information contact:

Australian Sports Drug Agency
1800 020 506
+61 2 6206 0200 (ph)
+61 2 6206 0201 (fax)
asda@asda.org.au
www.asda.org.au

Veterinary products

All veterinary drugs and medicines, including products that contain substances prohibited without a permit (these include narcotics, amphetamines, hallucinogens, barbiturates, vaccines, anabolic and androgenic steroids for veterinary use), must be declared on arrival.

For more information contact:

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary
Medicines Authority
+ 61 2 6272 5852 (ph)
+ 61 2 6272 4753 (fax)
www.apvma.gov.au

Firearms, weapons and ammunition

You must declare all firearms, weapons and ammunition. These include real and replica firearms, BB air pistols, paintball markers, blowpipes, various knives, nunchukas, slingshots, pistol crossbows, electric shock devices and knuckle dusters.

Items may require a permit, police authorisation and safety testing before importation.

For more information contact:

Customs
1300 363 263
information@customs.gov.au
www.customs.gov.au

Currency

You must declare to Customs amounts of A\$10,000 or more in foreign or Australian currency (notes and coins) you bring into Australia.

For more information contact:

AUSTRAC
1800 021 037
+ 61 2 9950 0055 (ph)
+ 61 2 9950 0071 (fax)
www.austrac.gov.au

Protected wildlife

Australia has strict laws controlling the import of protected wildlife and products made from protected wildlife (including some medicinal products). Some examples of prohibited imports are black coral, orchids and ivory products.

For information on import restrictions and permit requirements contact:

Environment Australia
+ 61 2 6274 1900 (ph)
+ 61 2 6274 1921 (fax)
www.deh.gov.au

Quarantine (Biologicals Unit)

AQIS Biological Unit administers Australian quarantine conditions for the importation of biological products. These include animal or microbial derived products such as foods, therapeutics, laboratory materials and vaccines.

For more information contact:

AQIS Biological Unit
+ 61 2 6272 4578 (ph)
+ 61 2 6273 2097 (fax)
biologicals@aqis.gov.au
www.aqis.gov.au

Duty-free concession (accompanied goods only)

You may bring any of the following goods - duty and/or tax free - in your accompanied baggage:

General

A\$900 worth of goods (A\$450 for people under 18) including gifts, souvenirs, cameras, electronic equipment, leather goods, perfume concentrates, jewellery, watches and sporting equipment. Alcohol and tobacco products cannot be included in this category.

These goods can be:

- obtained overseas
- purchased in Australia duty or tax free before departure

- goods for which a tax refund has been approved through the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) or
- purchased from an inwards duty free shop on arrival.

Alcohol

2.25 litres of alcoholic beverages for each passenger aged 18 years or over.

Tobacco

250 cigarettes, or 250 grams of cigars or tobacco products for each passenger aged 18 years or over.

You can pool your duty free concessions if you are a family* travelling together.

Most personal items such as new clothing, footwear, and articles for personal hygiene and grooming (but not fur or perfume concentrates) may also be brought into Australia in accompanied baggage free from duty and/or tax.

Warning!

Don't be caught out. The duty free concession has been increased, but if travellers exceed the duty free limits, duty and tax will be charged on ALL items of that type (general goods, alcohol or tobacco) not just the items that exceed the new limits.

There are penalties for making false declarations and/or presenting fraudulent documents.

* Family means a husband, wife, and if any, their child who is, or children who are under the age of 18 years.

Quick information

For information on unaccompanied goods, contact Customs or an Australian Mission overseas.

Yellow fever vaccination is the only health requirement for travellers entering Australia and it is only required in some circumstances. You must tick yes on your Incoming Passenger Card if you visited Africa or South America during the six days before your arrival in Australia.

X-rays should not affect the contents of your baggage or normal photographic film.

There are severe penalties for Australian citizens or residents who engage in child prostitution. A pamphlet *Ending Child Sex Tourism* containing further information about the law is available from Customs offices.

If you are unsure what you should declare, tick yes to the question.

Fireworks, flammable liquids, corrosives and/or gas cylinders are not permitted on aircraft or in your baggage. Knives, sharp objects, cutting implements, knitting needles and sports goods may be carried in hold baggage but are not permitted in your carry-on baggage.

If you are taking medications with you, contact the consulates or embassies of countries to be visited well before departure to confirm that medicines and the quantities to be carried are permitted.

You might need vaccinations, depending on which countries you intend visiting. For further information, contact Health Services Australia on 1300 361 046 or your doctor.

Customs officers no longer routinely stamp Australian passports but, if you require evidence of travel, you may ask the officer to do so.

If you are receiving a payment through Centrelink, call 131 021 before you travel. Your payment might be stopped while you are away. You might have to pay back money if you do not contact Centrelink before departure.

If you are a temporary resident departing Australia, you might have money in Australia you don't know about. To find out more, visit the Australian Taxation Office, superannuation website www.ato.gov.au/content.asp?doc=/content/super/23357.htm

If you are travelling in the Asia Pacific region, you can keep in touch with events from an Australian perspective through the ABC's international services. ABC Asia Pacific Television and Radio Australia are available in hotels throughout the region.

Travellers should be aware that under Australian law airlines can be required to provide information the airline holds on passengers travelling to or from Australia. This may include information that is personal information as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Complaints & Compliments

To offer a comment on any aspect of Customs service, either complete a *Complaints & Compliments* brochure available from any Customs office, telephone 1800 228 227 (within Australia) or email comments@customs.gov.au

Customs Information and Support Centre

1300 363 263
information@customs.gov.au
www.customs.gov.au