



Australian law



Australia is a multicultural society.



This means people who live in Australia come from many different:

- cultures
- religions



In Australia you have the right to live by your own:

- culture
- beliefs



Australians have common:

- values – the things all Australians believe are important



- principles – how Australians think people should act and behave



They live by the same laws.



Everyone should do what they can to support Australia's way of life.



The values Australian people share include:

- freedom of speech – you can say what you think, feel or believe



- freedom of association – you can choose who you spend your time with



- freedom of assembly – people can get together for their own reasons



- freedom of religion



- freedom of movement – you can go where you want to within Australia



- respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual – people have the right to be free and independent



- commitment to the rule of law – follow what the law says



- parliamentary democracy – people vote for the Government they want



- equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of
 - gender
 - the country you came from
 - religion
 - ethnic background



- acceptance of cultural diversity – people from all cultures are accepted



- a spirit of equality that embraces
 - mutual respect – people treat each other the way they want to be treated
 - fair play
 - compassion for those in need – caring for and helping others

Dealing with government officials



When you arrive in Australia you will deal with people who work for different government services.



People who work for government services follow strict rules about how they do their job.



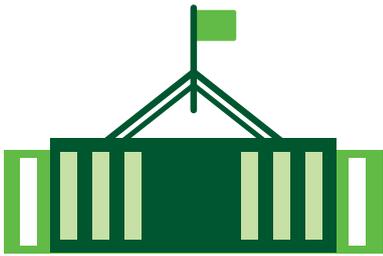
They need to be:

- fair
- professional



It is against the law to offer people who work for government services money or gifts so you get better service.

Australian police



Police in Australia work for the Government.



Their job is to:

- keep the peace



- promote safety in the community



- stop crime from happening



- work out what happened when a crime has taken place



- protect people's lives



- make sure people follow what the law says



The Australian Federal Police are the national police.



Each state and territory has its own police force.



Police in Australia are not part of the military or defence forces.



You should not be afraid of the police in Australia.



You need to:

- respect the police



- listen to what they tell you



- do what they say

Australian laws



The laws in Australia are for:

- citizens – Australia is their home
- residents – people who live in Australia but are not Australian citizens



The justice system in Australia is separate from the Government.



Australian laws help keep you and your family safe.



You need to understand how the laws apply to you and your family.



Knowing some basic laws will help you settle in to your new life in Australia.



If you have any questions about Australian laws, ask your caseworker or proposer.

Equality and the law



In Australia all people are equal under the law.



All Australians have the right to be:

- respected



- treated
 - fairly
 - equally



You cannot be treated differently because of:

- gender



- race or ethnicity



- the country you came from



- age



- marital status



- pregnancy



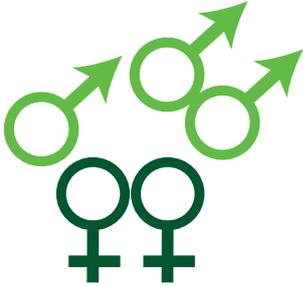
- political beliefs



- religious beliefs



- disability



- sexual preference



This applies to:

- employment – work and jobs



- education



- accommodation – housing and places to live



- religion



- buying goods



- using services such as doctors, banks and hotels



- being arrested or held by federal or state police officers

Religion and the law



Australia does not have an official or state religion.



Australians are free to practice any religion they choose.



Some of these religions include:

- Christianity
- Buddhism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Hinduism



You can practice religious customs or rituals as long as they do not break the law.

Religious laws are not recognised by Australian law.

They have no legal status.

Violence and the law



It is against the law to be violent towards:

- men



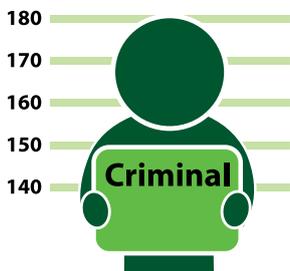
- women



- children



- family members



It is called assault.

Assault is a crime.



You can be punished if you assault someone.

Domestic and family violence

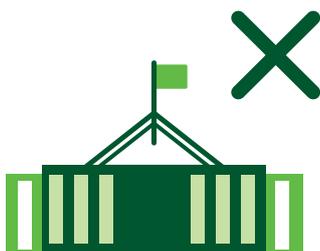


Domestic or family violence is when violence happens between:

- members of a family



- people who are married or in a close relationship

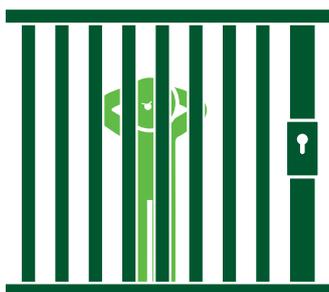


The Australian Government does not permit domestic or family violence.



Whether you are a man or a woman, domestic and family violence are crimes.

They are against the law.



You can go to jail for domestic or family violence.



Domestic and family violence can be towards:

- a partner



- children



- property



It can include:

- making threats
- trying to control someone
- making someone afraid



- putting someone's safety and wellbeing at risk



- not letting someone have money they need



- saying bad or mean things about someone



- keeping someone away from their friends or family



- hurting someone physically



There are services in Australia that can help you if you are in trouble.



They understand what things can be like in your culture.



You can find more information on the 1800RESPECT website.

www.1800respect.org.au

Sexual assault



Sexual assault is:

- hurting another person in a sexual way
- making someone do sexual things they do not want to do



Sexual assault can include:

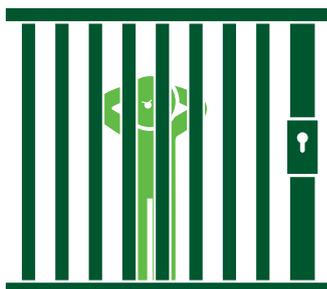
- rape – forcing someone to have sex
- forcing someone to do a sexual act they do not want to do
- forcing someone to watch or take part in pornography
- forcing children to take part in sexual acts



Sexual assault is against the law.



It is still against the law if it is your spouse or partner.



If you commit sexual assault you can go to jail.



There are services in Australia that can help.

They are sensitive to your culture.



You can find more information on the 1800Respect website.

www.1800respect.org.au

Child abuse and the law



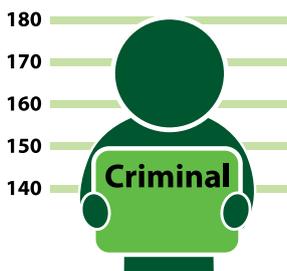
Australian law protects children from:

- violence
- abuse

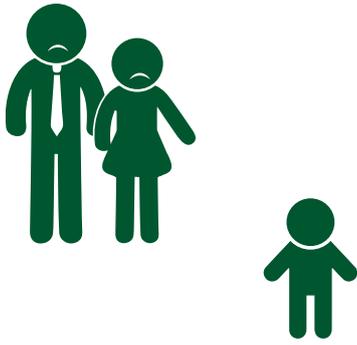


This includes:

- physical abuse
- mental or emotional abuse
- sexual abuse



These are all serious crimes in Australia.



A child can be taken away from their family if they are abused.



The government will move them to a place where they will be safe.



The law says people need to tell the police if they think a child is being abused.



In Australia you cannot hit your child.

It is important to learn how to discipline children without using violence.



There are people who can help you take care of your children:

- family



- friends



- community centres



- child care services



You can get information and advice about parenting from:

- councils



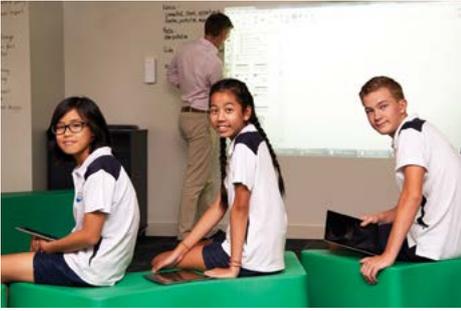
- social workers



- counsellors



- kindergartens



- schools



- the internet



You can find more information about parenting on the Australian Institute of Family Studies website.

www.aifs.gov.au



Taking care of the children in your home is something you need to do.

It is your responsibility.



There is no law that says how old a child should be before you can leave them at home on their own.



You need to make sure your children are safe.

Knives, weapons and the law



Australia has very strict rules about who can own guns or other weapons.



You need a licence if you want to own a gun.



People see knives as dangerous weapons. It is against the law to carry them in public places.



There are different laws in each state and territory.



You can find more information on the Attorney-General's Department website.

www.ag.gov.au

Marriage and the law



People in Australia are free to choose if they get married.



You need to be older than 18 to get married.



If you are younger than 18 a court will decide if you can get married.

You need to have a very good reason.



It is against the law to have more than one husband or wife at the same time.

This is called:

- bigamy
- polygamy



You can marry again if you have been:

- widowed – your husband or wife has died



- divorced – a court has said your marriage is over



A person must agree to being married.

You cannot not force them or trick them.



It is against the law in Australia to:

- force someone to get married



- take or send someone to another country for a forced marriage



Arranged marriages are legal in Australia.



In Australia giving a dowry is not something people usually do.



There are services in Australia that can help if you are in trouble.

They are sensitive to your culture.



You can find more information on the 1800Respect website.

www.1800respect.org.au

Sexuality and the law



In Australia you must have consent before you can have sex with someone – they need to say it is ok.



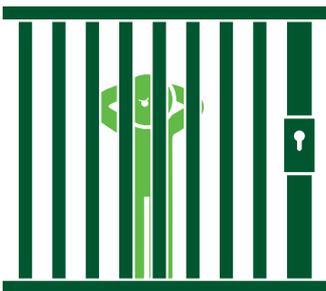
Each state has its own Legal Age of Consent – how old someone must be before they can choose to have sex.

16+

The age of consent in most states is 16 years old.



The law applies to males and females.



You can get in a lot of trouble with the law if you have sex with someone below the age of consent.

Smoking and the law



In Australia, smoking is banned in many public places, including:



- airports



- government offices



- workplaces



- shopping centres



- restaurants and cafes



- pubs, bars and nightclubs



There will be signs that show you which areas you cannot smoke in.



In some states it is against the law to smoke in a car if there are children with you.



It is against the law to sell cigarettes or tobacco products to someone younger than 18.

Giving cigarettes or tobacco products to someone younger than 18 is also against the law in most states.



You can find more information about smoking on the Quitnow website.

www.quitnow.gov.au

Drinking and the law



In Australia it is legal to drink alcohol but only:

- in certain places
- at certain times



Drinking or selling alcohol is banned in most public places.



18+

You must be over 18 to buy alcohol.



It is against the law to sell alcohol to someone younger than 18.



You can choose to give alcohol to someone younger than 18, but only in your home.



It is not healthy for someone younger than 18 to drink alcohol.



You can find more information about drinking on the Department of Health's website.

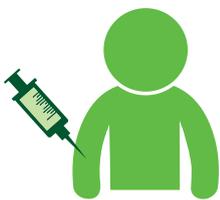
www.alcohol.gov.au

Drugs and the law



Some drugs or substances are legal but there are rules about:

- how they can be used
- if they can be sold



Some drugs or substances are illegal to:

- use



- have



- grow



- make



- sell



Bringing drugs into Australia is a serious crime.

You can go to jail.



The law says you cannot drive when you have been using drugs.



Police can ask you to stop your car so they can test if you have been using drugs.



There are different laws in each state and territory.

The penalties – what can happen to you – are different too.



You also need to be careful if you drive after you have taken medicine given to you by a doctor.



You can find more information about drugs on the Department of Health's website.

www.drugs.health.gov.au

Fraud and the law



If someone from the Government asks you to give them information about your family or how much money you earn, you need to tell the truth.

This includes:

- the Department of Human Services
- the Australian Taxation Office

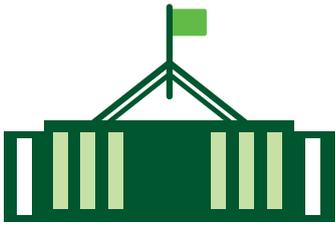


If you tell them things that are not true or correct there can be penalties.



You might:

- lose your income support



- have to pay money back to the Government



Privacy and the law



There are laws in Australia to protect your privacy.



The *Privacy Act 1988* tells government agencies how they should treat your private information.



This includes how it is:

- kept



- used



- collected

Many organisations write a statement that says what they will do with your information.



If you are not happy with the way your information has been used, you can contact the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner.



You can find more information about protecting your privacy on the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website.

www.oaic.gov.au

Legal aid



The government has a service called Legal Aid.



Legal Aid helps people with legal matters.



Legal Aid services are free.



There are offices in each state and territory.



They can offer you:

- legal advice



- assistance



- someone to represent you if you cannot afford your own lawyer



Your caseworker can help you find your nearest Legal Aid Centre.



You can find more information about Legal Aid on the Australian Government website.

www.australia.gov.au/content/legal-aid

