

# Australia Relocation Guide



By Appointment To  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Removals and Storage Contractor Abels

# ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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| <b>TELEPHONE:</b>                   | Country code (0061) + Area code.   |
| <b>STANDARD TIME:</b>               | Australia spans 3 time zones: GMT +10, Central GMT +9.5, West: GMT +8.   |
| <b>WEIGHTS &amp; MEASURES:</b>      | Metric.  |
| <b>ELECTRICITY:</b>                 | 240/250v AC, 50Hz.   |
| <b>INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:</b>   | No special requirements.   |
| <b>PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:</b>             | New Year's Day, Australia Day January 26th, Good Friday and Easter Monday, ANZAC Day 25th April, Christmas Day, plus other public holidays different for each State. |
| <b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>                | Traditionally 9.00 to 5.00 but flexi working hours and overtime are now common.  |
| <b>BANK HOURS:</b>                  | 0930-1600 Mon-Thurs. 0930-1700 Fri. Hours do vary across the nation.   |
| <b>EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:</b> | 000-Police/Ambulance/Fire  |
| <b>UK EMBASSY IN AUSTRALIA:</b>     | British High Commission<br>Commonwealth Avenue<br>2600 ACT<br>Tel: +61 2 6 270 666<br>Email: Australia.enquiries@fco.gov.uk  |
| <b>AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION:</b>  | Australia House<br>Strand<br>London WC2B 4ZA<br>Tel: 0207 379 4334<br>Fax: 0207 465 8218<br>Web: <a href="http://uk.embassy.gov.au/">http://uk.embassy.gov.au/</a>   |

## **Part 1 – Background Information on the Commonwealth of Australia**

### **Background**

Prehistoric settlers arrived on the continent from Southeast Asia at least 40,000 years before the first Europeans began exploration in the 17th century. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770, when Capt. James COOK took possession of the east coast in the name of Great Britain (all of Australia was claimed as British territory in 1829 with the creation of the colony of Western Australia). Six colonies were created in the late 18th and 19th centuries; they federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The new country took advantage of its natural resources to rapidly develop agricultural and manufacturing industries and to make a major contribution to the Allied effort in World Wars I and II.

In recent decades, Australia has become an internationally competitive, advanced market economy due in large part to economic reforms adopted in the 1980s and its location in one of the fastest growing regions of the world economy. Long-term concerns include an aging population, pressure on infrastructure, and environmental issues such as floods, droughts, and bushfires. Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth, making it particularly vulnerable to the challenges of climate change. Australia is home to 10 per cent of the world's biodiversity, and a great number of its flora and fauna exist nowhere else in the world.

### **Geography**

Australia, the world's sixth largest country, occupies the smallest, flattest and driest continent. The capital is Canberra. The western half of the continent is mostly arid plateaus, ridges and vast deserts. The central-eastern area comprises the lowlands of river systems draining into Lake Eyre, while to the East are the Great Dividing Range, a belt of ridges and plateaus running from Queensland to Tasmania.

It has a vast mineral deposit and various sources of energy. It is among the world's leading producers of iron ore, bauxite, nickel, copper and uranium and other minerals include lead, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tungsten and gems. A major producer of coal; oil and natural gas are being exploited. Agriculture and food, raw materials make up one third of export value, fuel, ores and metals and manufacturers make up the remainder of exports. Japan and USA are their main trading partners.

### **Population**

The population is estimated at more than 20.4 million. It is one of the World's most urbanized countries, with about 70% of the population living in the 10 largest cities. Most of the population is concentrated along the eastern seaboard and the south-eastern corner of the continent.

### **Climate**

Australia's climate is mainly continental and ranges from tropical to temperate. Slightly more than half of Queensland, 40% of Western Australia and 80% of the northern territory are in the tropics. The remainder of the continent including New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, are in the temperate zone.

Australia's climate is less subject to extremes than regions of comparable size in other parts of the world because of the moderating influences of the surrounding oceans. The mainly low altitude of the land does little to obstruct the atmospheric systems, which control the climate.

Clear skies and low rainfall characterise much of the country's weather pattern. Extreme minimum temperatures are above those recorded in other continents, although extreme maximum temperatures are comparatively high.

Climatic discomfort, particularly from heat is a significant feature over most of Australia. Prolonged high temperatures and humidity around the northern coasts are recorded during the summer. For relatively short periods during the winter, low temperatures and cold winds over the interior and southern areas can be severe.

Natural hazards are cyclones along the coast; severe droughts and forest fires.

## **Environmental Issues**

Soil erosion from overgrazing, industrial development, urbanization, and poor farming practices; soil salinity rising due to the use of poor quality water; desertification; clearing for agricultural purposes threatens the natural habitat, many unique animals and plant species; the Great Barrier Reef off the northeast coast, the largest coral reef in the world, is threatened by increased shipping and its popularity as a tourist site; limited natural fresh water resources.

## **Currency**

The currency is Australian Dollars and comprises of:

- Coins: 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, 1 and 2 dollars.
- Notes: 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollars.

Most major Credit Cards are widely accepted.

## **Economy**

Following two decades of continuous growth, low unemployment, contained inflation, very low public debt, and a strong and stable financial system, Australia enters 2017 facing a range of growth constraints, principally driven by the sharp fall in global prices of key export commodities. Demand for resources and energy from Asia and especially China has stalled and sharp drops in current prices have impacted growth.

The services sector is the largest part of the Australian economy, accounting for about 70% of GDP and 75% of jobs. Australia was comparatively unaffected by the global financial crisis as the banking system has remained strong and inflation is under control.

Australia benefited from a dramatic surge in its terms of trade in recent years, although this trend has reversed due to falling global commodity prices. Australia is a significant exporter of natural resources, energy, and food. Australia's abundant and diverse natural resources attract high levels of foreign investment and include extensive reserves of coal, iron, copper, gold, natural gas, uranium, and renewable energy sources. A series of major investments, such as the US\$40 billion Gorgon Liquid Natural Gas Project, will significantly expand the resources sector.

Australia is an open market with minimal restrictions on imports of goods and services. The process of opening up has increased productivity, stimulated growth, and made the economy more flexible and dynamic. Australia plays an active role in the WTO, APEC, the G20, and other trade forums. Australia's free trade agreement (FTA) with China entered into force in 2015, adding to existing FTAs with the Republic of Korea, Japan, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, and the US, and a regional FTA with ASEAN and New Zealand. Australia continues to negotiate bilateral agreements with India and Indonesia, as well as larger agreements with its Pacific neighbors and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and an Asia-wide Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership that includes the 10 ASEAN countries and China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and India.

## **Education**

Education in Australia is compulsory between the ages of four and fifteen, sixteen or seventeen, depending on the State or territory and date of birth. For primary and secondary education, government schools educate approximately 60% of Australian students, with approximately 40% in private or independent schools.

## **Religion**

Australia has a vast multi national culture and all religions are represented.

## **Electricity**

Mains electricity in Australia is the same voltage and frequency as the UK.

## Health

Funding of the health system in Australia is a combination of government funding and private health insurance. Government funding is through the Medicare scheme, which subsidises out-of-hospital medical treatment and funds free universal access to hospital treatment.

*Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Abels Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date Abels cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.*

## Part 2 – Australian Import Customs Regulations

**To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household and personal effects into Australia.**

### Household Goods

Documents required:

You will be required to supply the following, prior the departure of your effects from our warehouse, which should be submitted either prior to, or upon completion of packing at residence:

- Fully completed Customs form B534, which we will send to you. Scanned copies are OK.
- Signature on your Passport and your Customs Form B534 must match. Any changes must be initialed.
- Inventory of goods in English, provided by us.
- Owner-packed goods require list of contents (in English) from owner.
- We will need a good clear copy of the identification page from your Passport. Please note it is the Passport photo page of owner of goods who is completing B534 which is required. Passport photo page of other persons travelling with owner are not required. There may be isolated cases where Customs require copies of all pages.
- If you do not hold an Australian Passport we will need a copy of your Visa.
- Full name and Australian residential address of Owner must be provided to obtain clearance. Please note a Post Office Box Number or Business address is not acceptable.

Duty and Tax free entry will only be given to Returning Australian citizens or non-citizens with long-stay / permanent residence visa who are entering Australia to take up residence after a period of residence of more than twelve months outside Australia. Unless the shipment qualifies to be considered as Unaccompanied Personal Effects, then it will be subject to formal entry, tax and duty.

This does not apply to personal clothing, footwear and grooming items, (excludes fur apparel and perfume concentrates).

All household and personal effects entering Australia are subject to a physical examination by the Department of Agriculture (DOA). This examination is conducted at a DOA approved premises and will cause delays of up to 14 working days after the arrival of the consignment into Australia. The Quarantine examination also means that full containers cannot be delivered direct to the importers residence in Australia.

Items of interest to Department of Agriculture include all items that may have come into contact with soil and vegetation such as gardening equipment, bicycles, scooters etc, sporting and camping equipment golf clubs and buggies, cleaning equipment, brooms, mops, vacuum cleaner waste bags and the like. These items should be thoroughly cleaned before dispatch.

Please note however, prior cleaning and other treatment (Fumigation, steam cleaning etc.) does not ensure automatic clearance. DOA will order further treatment if in their opinion the items being imported present a quarantine risk. Please also be conscious of festive decorations and wreaths containing dried vegetable matter, including pine cones and the like. Dried flowers are not allowed. If imported these items will be subject to further treatment or destruction. Timber / wooden furniture – please check for small holes or frass/shavings under the items as this may mean wood borers are present. If live timber pests are found, the furniture will require treatment on arrival, or will be destroyed at additional cost.

Further information is available at: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/travelling/moving-immigrating>

**There is a charge for the Quarantine Inspection** which is assessed on arrival initially calculated on volume shipped, and additional costs will be incurred for any items needing fumigation.

The owners' goods may be cleared through Customs in advance of the owner's arrival.

Further information can be obtained from the Customs fact sheet at: [www.border.gov.au/busi/impo/send](http://www.border.gov.au/busi/impo/send)

#### **Diplomats' Removals / documents:**

Documents Required:

- Customs form B615 completed by Embassy / Consulate in Australia.
- Inventory of goods.
- Copy of ID page of passport.

Duty free entry.

**Important:** Import of alcohol is allowed for diplomats but limited to annual quota agreed by the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the respective embassies in the country.

Subject to Quarantine examination and inspection fee.

Some Australian Ports of Arrival will require letter of authority on Diplomatic Letterhead to allow Quarantine examination.

#### **Inheritance, deceased estates**

Documents required:

- Copy of will or certified relevant extract of will.
- Copy of death certificate.

Duty free entry provided legatee is permanently domiciled in Australia and will not use the goods for trade or business purposes.

Bequeathed goods are required to be formally entered through Customs (additional charges may apply) if they have a value over AUD1000. If the goods are valued under AUD1000 an SAC entry is required (additional entry charges may apply).

**Customs impediments:** If value is under \$1000, Customs will accept the shipment under the self-assessed clearance (SAC) criteria which means client may not be subject to further charges for clearance.

If the value exceeds \$1000, Customs will require a formal entry to be lodged. Customs brokers fees and associated charges will probably be incurred and billed to client. Note: Bequeath goods do not normally attract any duty or tax.

#### **New Furniture and Household Goods**

Documents required:

- Customs form B534.
- Purchase Invoices.

Items are subject to Customs duties and Goods Services Tax (GST). Items must be declared if not owned and used for 12 months by importer. Owner may be required to produce original purchase receipts or other evidence of purchase price.

**Complete shipment of new goods or complete shipment of gifted items to consignee.**



Documents required for clearance:

- Customs form B534 to be completed by consignee.
- Packing list.
- Invoices (for new purchases) & letter from sender (if gifted items) including value/s.
- Copy of consignee's photo page of passport and Australian visa where applicable.

#### **Customs impediments**

If value is under \$1000, Customs will accept the shipment under the self-assessed clearance (SAC) criteria which means client will not be subject to any further charges for clearance.

If the value exceeds \$1000, Customs will require a formal entry to be lodged. Customs brokers fees and associated duties and taxes will be incurred and bill to client at this end.

#### **Pre charged refrigeration equipment included in Personal and/or Household effects consignments.**

The Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989 prohibits the importation of pre-charged refrigeration and air conditioning equipment containing CFC's, HFC or HCFC gases however one off personal imports can be exempt from this Act and the import may meet the requirements for a low volume import exemption or other exemption.

Further details can be sourced from the Australian Customs website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone/licences/importing-cars-boats-caravans>

#### **Wedding Trousseaux**

Documents required:

- Customs form B53.
- Statutory Declaration.
- Copy of marriage certificate (optional).

#### **Antiques not being imported as part of general removal of household effects**

Documents required:

- Customs form B534.
- Lapada certificate of authenticity.

Duty free entry for Bona Fide antiques (i.e 100 years old or over).

If documentary evidence is insufficient Australian Customs Service may direct verification via an approved antiquity expert. Verification fees apply and will be directed to the importer.

If owned and used by the importer for 12 months or longer overseas and the goods are not intended for sale, antiques can be imported without restriction as personal and household effects.

#### **Precious Metal Objects**

Duty free entry as household and personal effects.

#### **Pets (dogs, cats, etc.)**

Please see further information for relocating your pets to Australia:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs>

## Endangered Species

Importation of products from endangered species is prohibited.

Certain feathers, furs, skins, tusks etc and items/products manufactured of / from animals coming under the protected species regulations.

Other products are subject to inspection and treatment if necessary.

Full details on restricted and prohibited imports are available from the Wildlife Protection Authority website:

<http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/index.html> and  
<http://www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/cites/index.html>

Please note old pianos usually have ivory keys and a CITES certificate will be required.

For information on obtaining a CITES certificate then please visit:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-import-and-export-permit>

## Motor Vehicles

**Almost all motor vehicles are subject to Customs Duty and / or GST and high value vehicles are subject to a Luxury Car Tax.**

All motorised vehicles (on and off road including kids scooters, quad bikes and similar) including Australian return vehicle require import approval. **WE CANNOT SHIP YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL APPROVAL IS GRANTED.**

**Please contact us for further information and assistance.**

## Firearms

Documents required:

- Most firearms require Police authorisation from the State in which the person intends to reside or visit.
- Certain firearms i.e. pump action shotguns, self loading rim fire rifles and automatic firearms may only be imported with the PRIOR written approval of the Federal Attorney-General.

Duty free entry provided the relative firearm licence is issued and firearm passes ballistics / safety inspection.

The Australia Border Force will forward all firearms to the Commonwealth Police for ballistics / safety inspection. As State regulations vary in Australia, it is strongly recommended that the client writes to the Police department in the intended State / Territory of residence, for approval prior to shipping the firearm.

Firearms will be released to the owner upon presentation of the appropriate licence/s.

## Foodstuffs, meat, plants & vegetable products

Meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products, seeds, herbs and spices and many other food products containing these, are prohibited items, or have special import conditions.

They should **NOT** be included in personal and household effects shipments.

Timber items containing bark will be ordered for treatment or destruction at the importer's expense.

They should **NOT** be included in personal and household effects shipments. Timber items containing bark will be ordered for treatment or destruction at the importer's expense.

**DO NOT** use fruit boxes for packing.

## Alcoholic Beverages

A complete list of all bottles, depicting the following:

- Alcohol type and style.
- Size of bottle (oz's or mls).
- % of bottle content if bottle not full.



- Alcoholic content of liquor as a % of volume.
- Country of production.
- Value.

All alcoholic beverages will be subject to customs duty and GST. Beer, wine and spirits all attract extremely high levels of duty and GST.

Actual duty rates will be based on the nature of the liquor, and the alcoholic strength. If liquor is included in a consignment, ensure it is clearly labelled and accessible so as to facilitate customs examination.

If a fully documented list describing alcohol is provided (as shown under documents required section) then physical inspection of the liquor may be avoided.

**Important:** Import of alcohol is allowed for diplomats but limited to annual quota agreed by the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the respective embassies in the country.

### **Narcotic drugs & drugs of dependence**

Import prohibited.

### **Solid Wood Packaging and Dunnage**

Australia applies the ISPM 15 standard related to the treatment of solid wood packaging and Dunnage. All arriving solid wood packaging and Dunnage must carry the ISPM15 mark indicating that all the timber has received appropriate treatment.

Failure to include the ISPM 15 mark will result in either the timber being ordered for examination or mandatory treatment.

Any solid wood packaging and dunnage that is directed for inspection and found to have live insects, bark or other quarantine risk material will be subject to on-shore treatment, re-export or destruction at the importer's expense.

### **Wood**

Plywood crates and other packaging materials

It is important that any crates, lift vans, packaging materials for shipments entering Australia are properly documented as any costs for the destruction of materials will be charged to either origin agents or to clients in Australia. **Any** extra treatment for packing material as described below is also likely to be added to current charges for Quarantine Seizures and Treatments.

**Plywood and Veneer used as packaging material will require to be treated with an AQIS approved treatment prior to import or release from Quarantine. It will no longer be acceptable to use a Newly Manufactured Plywood Products Certificate.**