



IMMIGRATION ADVICE CENTRE

BLOG

May 2017

CITIZENSHIP CHANGES

- The Government announced some significant changes to Australian citizenship requirements, which are effective immediately from 20 April 2017
- The waiting time after the grant of permanent residence has increased from 12 months to 4 years.
- More strict requirements have been introduced relating to embracing Australian values and minimum English language competency (6 in IELTS)
- Applications lodged prior to 20 April will be processed under the previous rules. Any application lodged on or after 20 April 2017 will be subject to these new rules.
- **PERMANENT RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT** - All applicants applying after 20 April must now have held permanent residence for a minimum of 4 years. Previously it was one year but with a total of 4 years lawfully resident in Australia.
- **ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS** - All applicants must now show they have the equivalent of 6 in each band of IELTS (with very few exceptions eg those over 60 years of age)
- **COMMITMENT TO AUSTRALIAN VALUES** - During the 4 years prior to citizenship application, applicants must demonstrate that they have a proven acceptance of "Australian Values". This will be determined by their demonstrated attitude to religious freedoms, violence against women, child marriages, ensuring girls have a right to education, etc.
- Applicants must demonstrate what steps they have taken "to integrate" into and contribute to the Australian community. It will be up to the applicant to provide verifiable proof of this such as having a job, have enrolled children in school, obtained membership of a sporting or community organisation
- **CONDUCT INCONSISTENT WITH AUSTRALIAN VALUES** - will result in refusal of the application. Such conduct would include criminal activity, involvement in gangs or organised crime, violence against women and children.
- **CITIZENSHIP TEST** - The citizenship test will ask "meaningful questions that assess an applicant's understanding of and commitment to Australia's shared values and

responsibilities". Applicants will have only three chances to pass the citizenship test. After that, they must wait a further two years before being able to sit again.