

Lecture 2 - Australian values, traditions and customs

If you would like to live and work in Australia, there are some things that you need to follow. They apply to anyone on Australia, regardless of their visa status.

Respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual

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.

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 are. However, religious practices must not break Australian laws. People in Australia may also choose not to follow a religion. 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. Religious intolerance is not acceptable in Australian society. All people should be provided with equal opportunity to pursue their goals and interests regardless of their ethnicity or religion as long as they are obeying Australian law.

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. 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.

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 they 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.

Equality of opportunity for all people

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. Men and women have equal rights in Australia and should be provided equality of opportunity to pursue their goals and interests. It is against the law to discriminate against a person because of their gender. 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.

A 'fair go' for all

In Australia, 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. 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.

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

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.

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 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 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.

Australian society today

One of the defining features of Australian society today is the cultural diversity. Another defining feature is the democratic nature of Australian society. This does not mean that everybody has equal wealth or property. It means that with hard work and commitment, people without high-level connections or influential patrons can succeed. Australia holds firmly to the belief that no-one should be disadvantaged on the basis of their country of birth, cultural heritage, language, gender or religious belief. In order to maintain a stable, peaceful and prosperous community, Australians of all backgrounds are expected to uphold the shared principles and values that underpin Australian society.

Laws and social customs

Community behaviour in Australia is governed by a combination of formal laws and informal social customs. All people in Australia must obey the nation's laws or face the possibility of criminal and civil prosecution. People are also expected to generally observe Australian social customs, habits and practices even though they are not normally legally binding. Australian laws are made by the Australian Commonwealth, state and territory parliaments. The police have the job of keeping peace and order in the community and to bring people they believe have broken the law before courts of law. People in their local communities and neighbourhoods also help each other in the event of trouble and report anything unusual or suspicious to the local police station. Police and the community strive to maintain good relations in Australia. You can report crimes and seek assistance from the police. If you are questioned by police, remain calm, be polite and cooperative with any lawful requests they may make.

Character requirements

The focus of the Australian Government is on keeping communities safe and ensuring the wellbeing of all Australians. Entry and stay in Australia is a privilege not a right. The Government does not tolerate behaviour which is criminal or poses a risk to the safety or good order of the Australian community. Those who choose to break the law and fail to uphold the standards expected by the Australian community should expect to lose the privilege of

remaining in Australia. Migrants may have their visa or citizenship refused or cancelled if they do not pass the character test.

Domestic and Family violence

Everyone has the right to experience positive and safe relationships with their families, friends and loved ones. Violence towards another person is illegal in Australia and is a very serious crime. This includes violence within the home and within marriage, known as domestic or family violence. Domestic and family violence includes behaviour or threats that aim to control a partner by causing fear or threatening their safety. Domestic and family violence can include hitting, isolating a family member from friends and family, or threatening children or pets.

Domestic and family violence is not accepted and is against the law.

A person who commits these crimes can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman. No one should accept being treated badly or harmed.

Discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age or disability

Commonwealth laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age and disability in a range of areas of public life.

Online safety

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.

Australian workplace rights

People working in Australia, including both sponsored and non-sponsored visa holders, have rights and protections at work. These cannot be taken away by contracts. Minimum pay rates and workplace conditions are set by Australian law. The Australian Fair Work Ombudsman's visa holders and migrants webpage provides information on what you need to know before you start work, pay rates, leave arrangements and employee entitlements.

For more information, please see: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/visa-holders-migrants>

For more information, please see "Life in Australia - Australian values and principles", that can be found on immi.homeaffairs.gov.au website:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/support-subsite/files/life-in-australia/life-in-australia.pdf>