



WHAT ARE THE NEW DEPORTATION LAWS?

In November 2024, the Australian Parliament passed new laws impacting refugees and migrants. Here is an explanation of the new laws and how they might impact you.

THESE LAWS ARE MOST LIKELY TO IMPACT:



People in immigration detention



People on Bridging R visas



**People on Bridging E visas
granted on ‘departure grounds’.**

These laws are unfair. They punish people based on visa status and they will separate families and harm our communities. It is important to find out how they work, and to make sure you get advice and help right away if you think you might be impacted.

1. REMOVAL DIRECTIONS

What are removal directions?

A 'removal direction' is a written instruction asking a person to do something that will help the Department of Home Affairs to remove them from Australia. The new laws allow the Minister (or his delegates) to issue removal directions to certain people in the community.

A removal direction must be given in writing. A removal direction could be an instruction to do something like apply for a passport, complete and submit a form, provide information, attend an appointment or interview, or communicate with an embassy.

Who might receive a removal direction?

A removal direction can be given to anyone who:

- is in detention;
- holds a Bridging R visa; or
- holds a Bridging E visa on 'departure grounds'

(i.e. that was granted because the person is making arrangements to depart Australia). These are usually granted to people who have sought Ministerial Intervention more than once, or people who do not have any other migration cases or applications ongoing.

A removal direction can still be given even if it is very difficult or impossible for someone to comply. It does not matter whether someone has lived in Australia for a long time, or if they have family or other connections to Australia.

A removal direction cannot be given to children, but it can be given to parents or guardians.

What happens if I do not comply?



It is a criminal offence not to comply with a removal direction. There is a mandatory minimum sentence of 12 months imprisonment, and a maximum sentence of 5 years imprisonment.

It is a defence if the person has a reasonable excuse for not complying with the direction. But a reasonable excuse does not include fear of persecution or other negative consequences if removed from Australia.

What should I do?



Make sure your contact details are always up to date with the Department of Home Affairs. It is important you do not miss any letters or emails.



If you receive a removal direction, contact a migration lawyer immediately.

2. REVISITING PROTECTION FINDINGS

The new laws expand the Minister's (and his delegates) power to revisit protection findings for some people in the community.

What is a protection finding?

A 'protection finding' is a conclusion made during the assessment of a Protection visa application, that a person is owed protection under the Migration Act.

It means the government accepts that person would face a risk of harm in their country of origin.

If a person has a protection finding, they cannot be deported to the country to which the protection finding relates, even if they do not have a visa.

A person may have a protection finding even if they don't have a Protection visa. For example, their visa might have been refused or cancelled on 'character' grounds'.

Who might have their protection finding reviewed?

The Minister already has the power to reverse the protection findings of people in the community who do not hold a visa, and people in immigration detention, if the Minister no longer thinks the person faces a risk of harm.

Now, the Minister will have the power to reverse the protection findings made for people in the community who:

- hold a Bridging R visa; or
- hold a Bridging E visa that has been granted on removal grounds.

What should I do?

There is a chance that your protection finding could be reviewed without any notice to you.

If your protection finding is reversed, you will be notified in writing of the outcome. It is possible to seek review of this decision. If you are notified about this, you should contact a migration lawyer immediately.



3. THIRD COUNTRY ARRANGEMENTS

The new laws allow the Australian Government to deport people to third countries that are not their country of origin. It means the Government can pay other countries to accept people being deported from Australia.

Who could be deported to a third country?

This power only applies to people who the Department is already seeking to deport. It does not create any new deportation power – it just gives the Department more options for where to send people.

Anyone who is in detention and due for removal from Australia could be sent to a third country. People on Bridging R visas can also be sent to a third country.

If a person is accepted by a third country, their Bridging R visa will automatically cease and they will be taken back into detention.

These powers will most likely be used against people who are owed protection or are stateless, and so cannot be returned to their country of origin.

What are the third countries?

The Australian Government could make an agreement with any other country in the world. So far, they have made an agreement with Nauru.

The Australian Government has already tried to deport three people to Nauru. Those deportations are on hold while legal cases continue.

What should I do?

If you are notified that your Bridging R Visa has ceased, or you are notified that you are being removed from Australia, you should contact a migration lawyer and any other advocates or support networks immediately. You may have very little time to take legal action.



4. TRAVEL BANS



The new laws allow the Minister to impose travel bans on particular countries, to prevent almost anyone from those countries from getting a visa to travel to Australia.

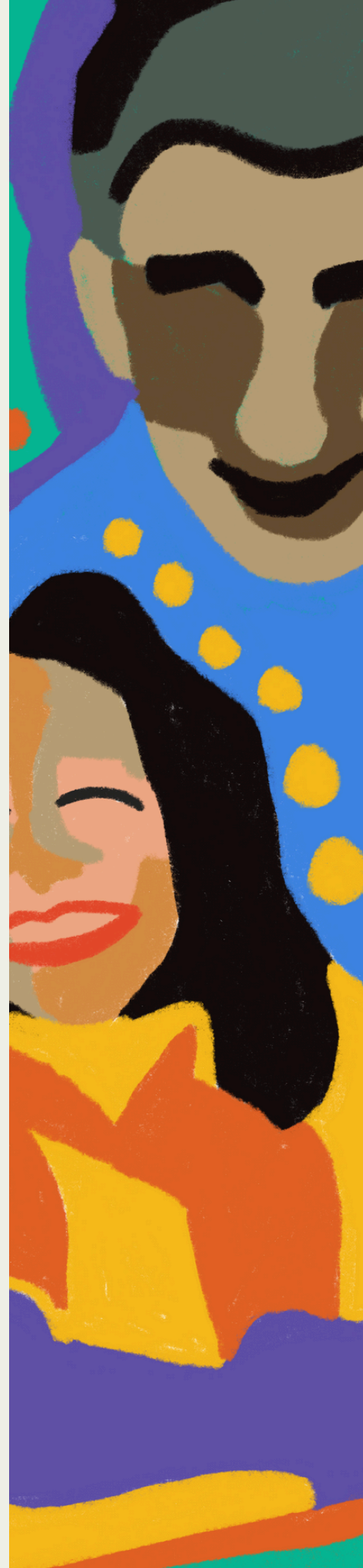
There are some limited exceptions for immediate family members of Australian citizens and permanent residents.

No travel bans have been introduced yet, but this could happen in the future.

5. BANNING ITEMS IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION



The new laws will give the Minister broad powers to ban everyday items in immigration detention, including mobile phones, and allow detention officers to search for and confiscate banned items. But items cannot be taken from a person in immigration detention if it would interfere with their right to political communication. These powers have not been used to ban any items yet.



WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE MYSELF FOR ALL OF THESE NEW LAWS?

You can take steps to find out if you might be impacted by these laws, and get help if you are.


You can either take the steps on the following pages, or if you don't feel comfortable doing that, then contact one of the free legal services.



1. CHECK YOUR LAST VISA GRANT

If you have your last visa grant, check it to see if you hold a **Bridging R visa** or a **Bridging E visa on 'departure grounds.'**

If your visa was granted on 'departure grounds,' then the visa grant should look like the one below – and have the highlighted form of words (*'A Bridging E (Class WE) visa has been granted to the applicant listed in the table below as you satisfied the criteria for the grant of the visa because you are making, or are the subject of, acceptable arrangements to depart Australia'*)



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

BRIDGING VISA GRANT NOTICE

Application details

Date of visa application
Transaction reference number
Application ID
File number

A Bridging E (class WE) Bridging E (General) (subclass 050) visa has been granted to the applicant listed in the table below as you satisfied the criteria for the grant of the visa because you are making, or are the subject of, acceptable arrangements to depart Australia.

Bridging visa grant details

Client name	
Bridging visa class	Bridging E (class WE)
Bridging visa subclass	Bridging E (General) (subclass 050)
Date of birth	
Client ID	
Visa grant number	
Visa grant date	
Visa cease date	
Passport Number	
Travel Facility	No Travel
Visa Conditions	8207 - No study 8401 - Report as directed 8506 - Notify change of address 8564 - Must not engage in criminal conduct 8566 - Must not breach the code of behaviour

About your bridging visa

This bridging visa allows you to remain lawfully in Australia until it ceases.

Travel overseas

This bridging visa only allows you to remain in Australia. When you leave Australia, your bridging visa will cease.

Status Resolution (VIC/TAS)

OFFICE: Our office is currently closed. All interviews will be conducted by telephone appointment.
POSTAL: GPO Box 241 Melbourne VIC 3001
EMAIL: vsrt@homeaffairs.gov.au WEBSITE: www.homeaffairs.gov.au

2. CHECK YOUR VISA STATUS ONLINE

If you are not sure of your visa status, you can check it online by logging into the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) service:

tinyurl.com/checkvisa1



To check your status, you will need:

- Your passport or ImmiCard number; and
- A previous Visa Evidence/Grant Number (or TRN Number).

Your visa status will be shown as follows, with information about the visa class/subclass and visa type:

The screenshot shows the 'VEVO for Visa Holders' interface. The 'Visa details' section is expanded, showing the following information:

Field	Value
Current date and time	Wednesday May 14, 2025 00:42:49 (AEST) Canberra, Australia (GMT +1000)
Family name	[REDACTED]
Given name(s)	[REDACTED]
Visa description	BRIDGING
ImmiCard number	[REDACTED]
Visa class / subclass	WE / 050
Visa applicant	Primary
Visa grant date	24 February 2025
Visa expiry date	25 August 2025
Location	Onshore
Visa status	In Effect
Visa grant number	[REDACTED]
Entries allowed	No travel
Initial stay date	25 August 2025
Period of stay	Until 25 August 2025
Visa type	Bridging visa
Work entitlements	The Visa Holder has unlimited Work Entitlements
Workplace rights	All employees in Australia are protected by workplace laws, including visa holders, for further information see: https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/working-in-australia/work-rights-and-exploitation

VEVO will not be able to tell you whether your Bridging E visa was granted on 'departure grounds.'

If you currently hold a Bridging E visa, but do not have a visa application, Court case or Ministerial request pending, then you should seek advice from a lawyer – as your Bridging E visa may have been granted on 'departure grounds.'

3. KEEP YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS UP TO DATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT

You should ensure that your email address is up to date with the Department, and check your email (including junk folder) every day, in case you receive any updates.

You can use this form to update your email address with the Department of Home Affairs:

tinyurl.com/updatecontact1



To update your email address, you will need:

- Your last visa grant (with an Application ID or Client ID);
- Your passport number; and
- A copy of your photo ID, such as:
 - Current passport;
 - Current drivers license; or
 - Other valid government ID card (such as ImmiCard)

Once you have updated your address, take a screen shot of the acknowledgment page.



4. CONTACT A MIGRATION LAWYER

If you need help with any of the above steps, or you are worried that you are affected by the laws, you can make an appointment to speak with a lawyer at one of the following free services:

In Victoria, contact



ASRC Footscray

(Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,
Friday – 10am-4pm)
214-218 Nicholson Street
FOOTSCRAY
(03) 9326 6066

ASRC Dandenong

Monday to Friday –
10am-5pm
205 Thomas Street
DANDENONG
(03) 8772 1380

In Victoria, South Australia or the Northern Territory, contact

Refugee Legal:

Level 5, 333 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE
Monday-Friday – 9am-5pm
(03) 9413 0101

In New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, contact



Monday-Friday –
10am-1pm and 2pm-4pm
(02) 8355 7227