



**Australian Government**

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

File Number: 14/45260

5 December 2014

Ms Lyn Beverley  
Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration  
References Committee  
PO Box 6100  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

**Inquiry into Domestic Violence**

Thank you for your letter dated 17 November 2014 seeking a response to the References Committee's Inquiry into Domestic Violence.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee Inquiry into Domestic Abuse. Our response addresses the particular request from the committee for *'clarification of the role of the Australian government in supporting women who are Australian citizens when these women report family violence to Australian consular officials while residing in foreign countries, including circumstances where there are children of dual nationality (namely Australian citizens by descent).'*

***The Consular Role***

DFAT offers consular support and assistance to Australians in difficulty overseas. The consular role is to assist and inform, for example in situations involving serious injury, illness and death, arrest and detention and during international crises and emergencies. There are circumstances in which our ability to provide consular support will be limited; consular assistance is delivered within the context of the legal framework in place.

***Consular Strategy 2014-16***

On 3 December, the Minister for Foreign Affairs launched the department's 'Consular Strategy 2014-16', which sets out a vision for the continued delivery of world class consular services to Australians. A key theme of the Strategy is to promote a stronger culture of self-

reliance among Australian travellers, while also prioritising assistance to those Australians in the most difficult circumstances. The Strategy envisages the prospect of a dedicated resource in the department to manage women's and children's consular issues, with the aim of further strengthening our capacity in this important area. We have increased our focus on the needs of women and children over recent years, including the introduction of an SMS facility to enable victims in difficult situations to contact our 24 hour Consular Emergency Centre discreetly. I have attached for your reference a copy of the Consular Strategy and would draw your attention to page 9.

### ***The Consular Role and Domestic Violence***

Consular officers will offer support and assistance to Australian victims of domestic violence overseas. That assistance is primarily directed at ensuring the safety and welfare of Australians in difficulty overseas. Types of assistance can include: escorting the victim to the police authorities if located in a city where there is an Australian mission; providing victims with a list of local doctors and lawyers; assisting victims to contact relatives or friends and contacting counselling services if required; providing a small traveller's emergency loan; advising on alternative and secure accommodation; and keeping the victim informed of legal proceedings if the case goes to court.

As noted above, there are limits to the scope of consular assistance. Consular staff cannot give legal advice, intervene in another country's court proceedings or legal matters, including family law matters or child custody disputes, or investigate crimes overseas. Such matters are the responsibility of local authorities and it is not the consular officer's role to investigate allegations of domestic violence or related crimes. I am attached a copy of the latest revision of the Consular Services Charter.

### ***Dual National Children***

Dual nationality may have implications for Australians if they travel to the country of their other nationality. They might, for example, be liable for military service, for prosecution for offences under the laws of that country, even if they were committed outside it. If the government of that country does not recognise dual nationality, the ability of the Australian Government to provide consular assistance will be limited quite significantly.

Because some foreign governments do not recognise dual nationality, a child whose birth is registered either in a foreign country or at a non-Australian embassy or consulate may have foreign citizenship with no recognition by that country of their Australian citizenship. This can affect decisions relating to the future custody and access arrangements of the child.

It should be noted that under international law, countries are not obliged to recognise dual nationality and a country may not permit Australian consular assistance to be given to Australian citizens who, according to its laws, it considers and treats as solely its own national.

### ***Support for international efforts to end violence against women***

In addition to the measures set out above to support Australian women experiencing domestic violence, DFAT also contributes to international efforts to end violence against women through the Australian aid program and its foreign policy work. This includes international advocacy for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women, including in the UN Security Council, the Human Rights Council and at the Commission on the Status of

Women. Through the Australian aid program, DFAT works with partner governments, multilateral organisations and civil society to provide support to women survivors of violence, to improve women's access to justice, to prevent violence against women, and to build the international evidence base. Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls is also a strong champion of international efforts to end violence against women.

Yours sincerely

Angus Mackenzie  
Acting First Assistant Secretary  
Consular and Crisis Management





**Australian Government**

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**



# **Consular Strategy**

## 2014–16



Pic: Alan Walsh/DFAT

# Foreword



This Strategy is an important milestone in keeping the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) at the forefront of international standards in the delivery of consular services and assistance. It sets the department's consular priorities firmly in the context of the Government's vision of how best to assist Australians to plan and prepare for their safety when they travel, and to take responsibility for their welfare when travelling. It highlights the department's investment in highly trained and dedicated staff, who are committed to helping Australians in serious difficulties overseas. And it provides the framework to keep building on innovation and new technology to meet future challenges, maintaining a world class standard of consular services.

The Hon Julie Bishop MP  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

# Australian Consular Services

Australians have a reputation as travellers and adventure seekers—millions of us travel, do business, study or move overseas every year.

Most Australians avoid incidents or accidents overseas, but many experience difficulties or emergencies, some serious. Many face complex legal and other issues, for example stemming from medical tourism, child abduction across legal systems or transnational terrorism.

Providing an efficient and cost-effective service to Australian citizens in distress overseas is one of the Government's foreign policy priorities.

It is a fundamental aspect of the work of the foreign affairs and trade portfolio. Through the network of overseas posts managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Austrade, we carry out a range of functions, including:

- assisting Australian citizens in difficulty overseas, including in situations involving serious injury, illness or death, and arrest and detention;
- providing support during crisis situations and international emergencies;
- delivering information and advice to help Australians help themselves and avoid difficulties overseas;
- issuing passports and travel documents to Australian citizens; and
- offering a limited range of notarial services, such as witnessing and legalising documents and administering oaths and affirmations (fees apply).

We are not responsible for visas for overseas travel. Obtaining visas from relevant foreign embassies and consulates in Australia is the responsibility of travellers.



Anna Robens, Second Secretary and Consul, Australian High Commission, Suva. Pic: Mere Nailatikau/DFAT

## The changing consular role

Changes in society and technology have led to more Australians travelling and greater public scrutiny of the consular role. Information technology advances have put information and communication at the fingertips of travellers, generating expectations for prompt, responsive and accessible service.

The department's consular role receives positive media attention when it is perceived to 'rescue' citizens, but attracts public criticism and negative media comment when it is considered to have failed to meet unrealistic expectations regarding the assistance that can be provided to citizens in difficulty overseas.

There is a need to help Australians understand consular assistance better, while improving our systems to support high quality consular services and assistance into the future.

# Our Vision

**We are committed to providing modern, efficient and cost-effective support to Australian citizens overseas:**

| People                                                                                                     | Networks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Services                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| We will have in place professional, trained consular staff to deliver services and assistance effectively. | We will deliver our assistance and services through our network of Australian embassies, high commissions and consulates, our honorary consuls, staff in DFAT Canberra and in some circumstances through our close consular partner countries. | We will strive to capitalise on new technologies and new media so that we can respond promptly and deliver our services efficiently. |



We will continue to be responsive to all requests for assistance, but there is no right to consular assistance and there may be variations in the level of assistance provided across the network, depending on local circumstances.

We will promote a culture of self-reliance, personal responsibility and self-help among Australians travelling and living overseas.

We will strive to achieve efficiencies in our systems and change some of our practices to direct resources to those Australians who are the most vulnerable or those involved in very serious cases, and to respond better to the changing needs of travellers and crisis situations.

We will take into account the treatment of an individual by reference to universal human rights standards in making decisions on the level of consular assistance to provide.

We will expand international cooperation to extend the reach of our services and enhance best practice globally.

Images, from left to right: Marisa Howarth/DFAT; Jo Stephens/DFAT; Gemma Haines/DFAT; Putu Aryantha/DFAT; Kerin Ayyalaraju/DFAT

# Development of the Strategy

The development of this three-year Consular Strategy is the culmination of several months of work, which included:

- a public consultation process, in which we sought comment and input on an issues paper;
- canvassing views of front-line consular officers in Canberra and across our overseas network; and
- holding consultations with partners in private and non-governmental organisations and special interest groups.

Several themes emerged from this consultation process:

- Australians are generally a self-reliant lot and, with the right guidance and information, should be encouraged and supported to do more to help themselves when they run into problems overseas;
- there are some public misunderstandings about what 'consular' means, but wide recognition that consular resources are finite and acceptance that priority should be accorded to highly vulnerable persons, those in high risk situations and very serious cases;
- there is value in tapping into the expertise of other organisations and building more partnerships to deliver the most cost-effective services; and
- there is scope to modernise and streamline our services, improve our client handling processes and make our travel information and advice more user-friendly and accessible.



Pic: Nathan Fulton/DFAT

# Modernising and adapting our services

The services and standards of service that Australians can expect from the department are outlined in the 'Consular Services Charter: Assisting Australians Overseas' (the Charter). We have updated the Charter to make it easier to understand, explain why we can or cannot offer a particular service and reflect the core features of the Consular Strategy 2014–16.

## Promoting a culture of responsible travelling

- We will lift our public messaging to underscore the importance of adequate planning and preparation for overseas travel – including appropriate travel and medical insurance;
- we may limit assistance to consular clients who knowingly engage in behaviour that is illegal or to individuals who deliberately and/or repeatedly engage in reckless or negligent behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk; and
- the Government may in the future consider options to recover costs of providing consular assistance in some circumstances.

## Raising public awareness of travel issues

Australians need to make careful decisions around their own safety and wellbeing when they are overseas:

- our Smartraveller public information campaigns will continue to focus on helping Australians understand how they can minimise some of the risks involved in overseas travel;
- we will refresh our smartraveller.gov.au site to make information more concise and accessible;
- we will produce advisories targeted at the needs of vulnerable and high risk groups;
- we will expand our presence in new social media so that Australians have more ways to communicate with us;
- we will work with the private sector, parliamentarians and non-government bodies to improve public understanding of consular work; and

- our overseas diplomatic missions will continue to engage in local awareness-raising, focussing on issues specific to that country and region.

### **Providing more assistance to those who need it most**

- We will improve our capacity to assist those who are most at risk; to do this, we will develop a 'vulnerability matrix' so that consular staff are able to better assess cases and rapidly identify actions required; and
- we will dedicate resources to handle women's and children's cases, we will strengthen our capacity to assist victims of trauma and will develop our capacity to manage consular cases in which mental health is an issue.

### **Striving to improve our services**

- We will introduce modifications to our registration system to make it easier to use;
- we will make maximum use of technology to enable us to deliver services more widely and efficiently; and
- we will streamline processes to improve consistency in our processing of notaries.

### **Improving training, development and skills**

- We will support and train our staff to ensure a highly-skilled, professional cadre of consular officers; and
- we will strengthen our 24/7 Consular Emergency Centre in DFAT Canberra.



DFAT staff engaging in live online forum on consular matters, November 2014. Pic: Kerin Ayyalaraju/DFAT

# Assistance in international crises and emergencies

Over the last decade or so, Australians have been affected by an increasing number of overseas crises and emergencies, most recently the tragedy of MH17 in Ukraine.

Since the Bali bombings, we have focused on developing professionalised and whole-of-government systems to respond to crises involving Australian citizens and Australian interests overseas, including through:

- robust and dedicated crisis response structures and systems, such as a modern Crisis Centre (in the department), a trained crisis cadre and professional emergency response teams;
- better crisis-related IT tools and better use of social media;
- regularised contingency planning; and
- improvements in how we work with close consular partner governments, focussing on regions where Australia's diplomatic presence is thin.

We are committed to continuously improving our crisis management systems and procedures. We build on lessons learned from every crisis to prepare for future crises.

There are limits to the assistance we can provide in some types of crises and emergencies so we encourage all Australians to take sensible precautions, to read and follow our travel advice and take responsibility for their own safety, particularly if they are travelling to or living in a high risk area or engaged in high risk activities.

We will improve our advice to Australians on the terms and conditions of government-assisted evacuations, emphasising the need for individual responsibility and that priority will always be accorded to the most vulnerable individuals.

We will build stronger relationships with non-government groups and individuals on the ground, both to gather reliable information and to support practical responses during a crisis.



Foreign Minister Bishop with Matt Anderson, Head of the MH17 Task Force, DFAT Crisis Centre, July 2014.  
Pic: Nathan Fulton/DFAT

# Assessing progress and seeking input

The launch of our three-year strategy is the initial phase of a longer journey that will deliver modern, efficient and cost-effective consular services and assistance.

We will implement ongoing measures to track our progress, including broadening opportunities for public input into, and understanding of, Australian consular services. We will further develop our processes for obtaining regular direct feedback and use the information gathered to drive a process of continuous improvement in our systems.

To broaden public understanding of the consular role, we will publish an annual 'State of Play on Consular Services' report that will include data on recent trends and selected case studies.

We will improve our cooperation and dialogue with private sector groups to expand our messaging and to build better partnerships. We will expand the membership and mandate of the existing Smartraveller Consultative Group to equip it to perform the role as the key stakeholder outreach body on consular matters.



Consular Emergency Centre team member Matthew Holloway assisting a client. Pic: Nathan Fulton/DFAT



Consular and Crisis Management Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
RG Casey Building  
John McEwen Crescent  
BARTON ACT 0221

**[smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)**

December 2014



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

# CONSULAR SERVICES CHARTER

[smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au)

Every traveller, every trip.

## Contents

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Assisting Australians overseas ..... | 1  |
| Basic precautions .....              | 3  |
| What help we may provide .....       | 4  |
| What we cannot do .....              | 5  |
| Crisis response .....                | 7  |
| Preparing for travel .....           | 8  |
| Who to contact .....                 | 8  |
| Feedback .....                       | 9  |
| Your privacy .....                   | 10 |
| Quick reference guide .....          | 11 |
| Top travel tips .....                | 12 |

## Assisting Australians overseas

This Charter outlines the consular services and assistance that are provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. There will be circumstances in which our ability to provide consular support may be limited. These circumstances are outlined in this document.

### Our values:

- We are committed to providing efficient and cost effective support to Australians overseas.

### Who we can assist:

- all Australians
- we can also assist Canadian citizens in locations specified in the Australia-Canada Consular Sharing Agreement.

Our ability to assist permanent residents of Australia who are not Australian citizens will be limited in some locations.

Our ability to assist may also be limited if you are a dual national in your country of other nationality and the government of that country doesn't recognise dual nationality.

## We aim to:

- deal with your enquiry courteously, promptly and efficiently
- explain clearly what assistance we can give and when you should approach others for advice and assistance
- advise you if there is a charge for a service we provide
- protect any personal information you give us in accordance with Australia's privacy laws
- take any feedback on our performance seriously and deal with it promptly.

## We ask that you:

- take personal responsibility for your travel choices, your safety, finances and behaviour overseas, including obeying the laws of the country you are visiting
- take out appropriate travel and medical insurance that covers you for any unexpected costs
- follow our travel advice at **smartraveller.gov.au** and local advice
- protect your passport and report it promptly if it is lost or stolen
- treat consular staff with respect and be honest in providing us with all relevant information when seeking our assistance
- give us feedback to help us to improve our services.

## Basic precautions

- familiarise yourself with the countries you are visiting, follow closely our travel advice site at **smartraveller.gov.au** and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates
- register with Smartraveller and subscribe to our travel advice updates
- take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance, ensuring it will cover all the activities you are planning and covering any pre-existing conditions and current medical treatments (if you do not have insurance, you should expect to pay potentially very expensive costs associated with emergency treatment and medical evacuation)
- make sure you have sought medical advice for health concerns, have up to date vaccinations and, if you're carrying pharmaceutical products or medicines, make sure they are allowed in the country you are visiting
- make sure your passport is valid (with at least six months validity from your planned date of return to Australia) and will not expire when you are overseas
- leave a copy of your passport, insurance policy details and your overseas itinerary with your family or friends
- organise your finances to cover your planned travel.

## What help we may provide

Each case is unique and our assistance will depend on the circumstances and availability of consular resources.

We may be able to:

- issue replacement passports and travel documents for a fee
- provide details of local doctors and hospitals in a medical emergency
- if you are the victim of a serious assault or other crime, provide appropriate help, including details of local lawyers and details of interpreters
- if you are arrested, visit or contact you to check on your welfare, provide details of local lawyers and details of interpreters if required and do what we can to see you are treated fairly under the laws of the country in which you have been arrested
- provide advice and support in a wide range of other cases including the death of relatives overseas, missing persons and kidnappings
- if you agree, we will contact friends or family on your behalf. In some circumstances we may contact your friends or family where we have been unable to get your consent
- make special arrangements in cases of international terrorism, civil disturbances and natural disasters (fees may apply)
- enable you to vote in Australian federal and some state elections while overseas
- provide some notarial services, including witnessing and authenticating documents and administering oaths and affirmations (fees apply)
- provide small emergency loans in exceptional situations (you may be required to surrender your passport and you may not be issued with a replacement until the debt is repaid).

## What we cannot do

There are a range of tasks which are outside the consular role or which we do not provide for policy reasons. These include:

- guarantee your safety and security in another country or make your travel arrangements
- give you legal advice, interpret or translate documents, though we may provide details of local lawyers and translators
- intervene in another country's court proceedings or legal matters including employment disputes, commercial disputes, criminal cases and family law matters or child custody disputes
- carry out searches for missing people, which is the responsibility of local authorities
- investigate crimes or deaths overseas, which is the responsibility of local authorities
- get you out of prison or prevent you from being deported
- get you better treatment in prison than local prisoners, although we may raise welfare concerns with local authorities
- post bail or pay your fines or legal expenses
- enforce an Australian or any other custody agreement overseas or compel a country to decide a custody case
- pay for medical or psychiatric services or medications
- pay your pension or social security benefits
- arrange visas, licences, work or residency permits for other countries
- intervene in immigration, customs or quarantine matters in other countries, or
- store lost property.

## Our assistance may be limited in some circumstances

You do not have a legal right to consular assistance and you should not assume that assistance will be provided. We may limit the assistance we extend to you if we consider the circumstances warrant, for example, where your actions were illegal, or you have deliberately or repeatedly acted recklessly or negligently and put yourself or others at risk, or you have a pattern of behaviour that has required multiple instances of consular assistance previously.

## Crisis response

Some international crises and emergencies involving Australians overseas will require an exceptional response, such as:

- those in which large numbers of Australians may have been killed or injured or where there are dangers to Australians, for example terrorist attacks, major accidents, pandemics and natural disasters
- political unrest which leads us to advise you to leave the country and which might require the assisted departure or evacuation of Australians if there are no commercial options and
- events which cause major disruption and hardship to large numbers of Australians.

In such crises and incidents we will provide support to Australian citizens, Australian citizens who are also citizens of another country (dual nationals) and permanent residents of Australia.

The nature of our assistance will be guided by many considerations but we may:

- deploy expert teams to support affected Australians
- liaise with the families of any Australians killed or injured
- work with local authorities to support affected Australians
- support Australians trying to leave the area and put them in contact with their families and
- provide travel advice and crisis updates.

In return, we ask Australians affected by such crises or emergencies to:

- read and follow our travel advice and follow Smartraveller on social media and
- make contact with the local Australian embassy or consulate, or if there isn't one, the UK, Canadian or US embassy.

There may be limits to the assistance we can provide in a crisis or major emergency.

## Preparing for travel

- you can access our full range of travel information to help you prepare for overseas travel at **smartraveller.gov.au**
- our travel advice assesses the level of risk in a particular destination so that you can make informed decisions about where and when to travel overseas
- you can subscribe to the travel advice to receive free email notifications each time the advice is updated on **smartraveller.gov.au**

## Who to contact

- emergency consular assistance is available 24 hours a day by calling our Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or from anywhere in the world on +61 2 6261 3305 or by SMS on +61 421 269 080
- if you are overseas and it is after working hours, you can call the Australian embassy, high commission or consulate in the country you are visiting and follow the phone prompts to be connected to the CEC
- you can access addresses and telephone numbers of Australian embassies, high commissions or consulates online at **dfat.gov.au/missions** or in local telephone directories, hotels, tourist offices or police stations
- the CEC may also assist concerned family members in Australia and can be contacted on 1300 555 135.

## Follow up

In some exceptional cases consular staff may be involved in a case for a long period of time. Follow up to such cases, especially if there are local investigations or legal processes underway, can take considerable time. We will do our best to assist families with information received from local investigative and law enforcement authorities. While we do not provide counselling or psychiatric support, we can advise on where you can find this type of help.

## Feedback

We welcome your comments on our services, to help us to identify areas that need improvement or where changes would make sense. Sharing your experiences may also help other Australians avoid difficulties overseas and appreciate what level of assistance can be provided. You can comment on our services by:

- completing the feedback form at **[smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au)**
- sending an email to **[consular.feedback@dfat.gov.au](mailto:consular.feedback@dfat.gov.au)** or
- writing to us at:

First Assistant Secretary  
Consular and Crisis Management Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
RG Casey Building  
BARTON ACT 0221

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive from DFAT, you can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office in Australia.

## Your privacy

Personal information provided to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988. DFAT's privacy policy can be accessed at **[dfat.gov.au/privacy.html](https://dfat.gov.au/privacy.html)**. Personal information may be used by us to provide consular assistance. In accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 5, information about how we collect, use, disclose and store personal information related to consular cases is contained in our Consular Privacy Collection Statement. Copies of the Statement are available at **[dfat.gov.au/dept/consular/privacy.html](https://dfat.gov.au/dept/consular/privacy.html)** or by requesting a copy from the department.

The media takes a close interest in incidents involving Australians overseas, ranging from crises to individual cases. Consular clients should be aware that there may be some limited circumstances when we will confirm to the media that we are providing you with consular assistance or correct and/or clarify information about the nature of that assistance.

## Quick reference guide

If you or a family member is seriously sick and in need of medical care overseas:

- in the first instance, seek medical assistance from local doctors or hospitals or via your hotel or tour manager
- call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas; or
- call the nearest Australian embassy or consulate and follow the telephone prompts.

If you or a family member has been sexually assaulted or the victim of a serious crime overseas:

- call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas. The CEC will make contact with the nearest Australian embassy or consulate to provide direct assistance.

If you or a family member has been robbed or need money overseas:

- in the first instance you should contact family and friends and look to use a commercial money transfer service or a bank to transfer funds. If it is outside normal working hours, call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas.

## If you or a family member is arrested overseas:

- call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas. There are limits to what consular staff can do. They cannot get you out of prison/detention or provide legal advice, but they will be able to provide you with a range of information including contact details for local lawyers. We will do what we can to see you are treated in accordance with local laws and process. We will raise any welfare concerns with prison authorities.

## If someone is missing overseas:

- call their phone, email them and seek to make contact via social media. Call family members and friends and check with their last address, banks travel agents, airlines/tour companies or employers. If this is not successful, and there are reasons for concern, call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra on 1300 555 135 or +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas or call your local police to report a missing person.

## Our top travel tips

1. Check the latest **travel advice at [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au)** and **subscribe** to receive free email notifications each time the advice for your destination is updated.
2. Take out **comprehensive travel and medical insurance** and ensure it covers you for the places you plan to visit and the things you plan to do.

## Our top travel tips (continued)

3. Before travelling overseas **register your travel and contact details online at [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au)** so we can contact you in case of an emergency.
4. Make sure your **passport** has at least six months' validity from your planned date of return to Australia. Carry extra passport photos in case your passport is lost or stolen and you need to replace it while you're away.
5. Check with health professionals for information on **recommended vaccinations** and other health precautions. Remember that vaccinations can be an entry requirement for some countries. Also find out about **taking medication overseas** – certain medicines aren't allowed in some countries.
6. Make sure you have the right **visas** for the countries you are visiting or transiting and check any other entry or exit requirements.
7. Check to see if you're regarded as a national of the country you plan to visit, and whether **dual nationality** will have any implications for your travel plans.
8. **Make copies of your passport details, insurance policy, travellers cheques, visas and credit card numbers.** Carry one copy in a separate place to the originals and leave a copy with someone at home.
9. **Obey the laws** of the country you're visiting even if these appear harsh or unfair by Australian standards. Don't expect to be treated differently from the locals just because you're Australian.
10. **Keep in contact with friends and family** back home and give them a copy of your itinerary so they know where you are.

# smartraveller.gov.au

## Every traveller, every trip.

1. **Register** your travel and contact details online at **smartraveller.gov.au** before you travel overseas so we can contact you in an emergency.
2. Check the latest **travel advice** for your destination at **smartraveller.gov.au** before you go. **Subscribe** to receive free email notifications each time the advice is updated.
3. Take out comprehensive **travel insurance** to cover hospital treatment, medical evacuation and any activities you plan to undertake in the countries you intend to visit.

While every care has been taken in preparing this brochure, neither the Australian Government nor its agents or employees, including any member of Australia's diplomatic and consular staff abroad, can accept liability for any injury, loss or damage arising in respect of any statement contained herein.

Consular Policy Branch  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, RG Casey Building  
John McEwen Crescent  
BARTON ACT 0221  
Tel. (02) 6261 3305; 1300 555 135

Information for travellers and travel advisories are available from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Smartraveller website **smartraveller.gov.au**

December 2014

