

A guide to Citizenship Ceremonies



murray river
council

Every year, we welcome a number of Murray River Council residents as new Australian citizens. Council runs Citizenship Ceremonies on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs. Citizenship Ceremonies are held a number of times during the year at one of our administration and customer service centres to formally welcome new citizens.

How to Apply for Australian Citizenship

You will be eligible to attend a citizenship ceremony when you have:

- completed your application process with the Department of Home Affairs
- received your letter of approval from the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs.

To become an Australian citizen, you will need to attend a citizenship ceremony and make the pledge.

I have received my letter of approval. When can I attend a ceremony?

The Department of Home Affairs send an approved candidate list to Murray River Council approximately six weeks prior to a ceremony. You can usually expect to be invited to a ceremony within six months of your application approval (waiting times can vary). Council does not have information specific to your application and all enquiries are directed to the Department of Home Affairs - Telephone: 131 880

How long will I have to wait before I get an invitation to my ceremony?

Invitations are sent out by the Department of Home Affairs approximately two to four weeks prior to a ceremony. If an approved candidate does not receive an invitation it may indicate that the candidate just missed the cut off date for that ceremony. If this is the case, the recipient will most likely be sent an invitation to the next ceremony.

How long does the Citizenship Ceremony take?

Currently ceremonies are completed within 30-40 minutes usually followed by a morning/afternoon tea. However it may take a little longer if there are a number of people receiving their citizenship on the day.

What is involved?

The ceremonies consist of:

- Official welcome
- Reading of the Minister's Message
- Pledge of commitment to Australia
- Presentation of Australian Citizenship Certificates
- Affirmation Ceremony
- National Anthem

Do I need to attend a ceremony to become a citizen?

Yes. Candidates cannot become citizens unless they have attended a ceremony and verbally made the Pledge.

What is the Citizenship Pledge?

The pledge contains the words you will read out in the presence of the Mayor, or their delegate, in order to complete your Citizenship requirements.

Two versions of the pledge are available to view at the Department of Home Affairs website.

If you wish to take the pledge as an Oath - you may also like to bring a holy book with you.

Do I need to remember the pledge prior to the ceremony?

No. You will be provided with a copy of the pledge on the day of the ceremony.

Do children need to attend citizenship ceremonies?

Children under 16 years will receive an invitation to attend but do not legally have to be at a ceremony if their parent is attending. Children over 16 years will have to apply for citizenship separately and are required to attend a ceremony.

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What if I can't attend the next ceremony?

Let the Department of Home Affairs and Murray River Council know that you are unable to attend. Contact details will be included on your invitation. Your details will be transferred to the next available ceremony or a new date set.

What do I need to bring with me to the ceremony?

You must bring valid photo identification – a current Australian Drivers Licence or valid passport are ideal.

If you do not have photo identification please bring at least three documents bearing your name, address and signature. Examples include bank statements, credit cards or bills.

These documents are also required as proof of identification by the Australian Electoral Commission to allow you to vote in Australian elections.

What should I wear?

The attire of attendees at Citizenship Ceremonies should reflect the significance of the occasion. We encourage Citizenship Ceremony attendees to wear smart casual attire.

Attendees are also welcome to wear their own national/traditional/cultural dress.

The following attire is not permitted:

- Beach wear e.g swimwear, singlet or tank tops;
- Rubber thongs or Bare feet - unless part of traditional/ national / cultural dress;
- Sleep wear e.g Slippers;
- Clothing showing offensive slogans or images;
- Sports training apparel; and/or
- Fancy dress costumes.

Is it possible to arrange a private ceremony?

The Department of Home Affairs are the approving authority to bring forward a recipient to a private ceremony, each case is individually assessed by the Department of Home Affairs to determine if your case meets the requirements of a private ceremony.

Council can only arrange private ceremonies under direction of the Department of Home Affairs.

Citizenship certificate

After you have made the pledge, you should receive your citizenship certificate.

If your certificate is not ready at the ceremony, Department of Home Affairs will post it to you. You will still become a citizen when you make the pledge.

Your citizenship certificate is issued in the name you gave on your application form. This was your legal name at the time Department of Home Affairs approved your citizenship.

Your citizenship certificate is an important legal document. You will need it when you apply for an Australian passport. You may need it to apply for a job or join the Australian Defence Force.

I have lost my Citizenship Certificate. Can you provide me with another one?

Council is unable to provide you with a new certificate.

Please contact the Department of Home Affairs on 131 881 to arrange a new Citizenship Certificate.

Accessibility concerns

Please contact us on 1300 087 004 prior to the ceremony and we can assist you.

Urgent Ceremony

Council has no authority to arrange urgent or fast-tracked ceremonies please contact the Department Home Affairs to discuss your circumstances.

Furthermore, the Department of Home Affairs advises:

In order to maintain the integrity and fairness of the ceremony allocation process, ceremony allocations are performed by order of approval date only. Please note there is no option to 'fast-track' or 'expedite' your ceremony.

Urgent ceremonies are only approved in exceptional and very limited circumstances. In order to qualify for an urgent ceremony you are required to provide full details along with supporting evidence to demonstrate your exceptional circumstances.

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Can I bring guests along to the ceremony?

You are welcome to bring family and friends to this special occasion. A Council officer will be in touch with you directly to confirm ceremony details and number of guests you will be bringing

Can I take photos at the ceremony?

You and your guests may take photos during the ceremony and after the formalities.

Council may take photographs and film the ceremony. The media may attend too.

Those taking photos are asked to follow the ceremony closely and be prepared to take a photo as Citizenship certificates are presented.

Please be mindful of the formal nature of the ceremony and be respectful of those waiting to receive their certificates.

Council also asks that you are mindful when sharing photos on social media as other ceremony participants may not consent to their photo being shared publicly.

Council's official photographer may also take photos on the day and these may be used in Council's corporate documents - such as the annual report. If you would prefer that Council DOES NOT use or release your photographs to anyone other than you, please advise Council prior to the ceremony.

There will also be opportunities to take additional photos with the Mayor and your family and friends after the conclusion of the ceremony.

After the Ceremony

You are now Australian Citizens and eligible to vote in all future elections. Please ensure you complete your electoral roll form (which will be in your Citizenship pack) and send it to the Australian Electoral Commission.

When can I apply for an Australian Passport?

Please allow a minimum of 10 days before applying for your Australian Passport. Please note your original citizenship certificate will be needed when applying for an Australian passport. For more information please visit the Australian Passport Office or call them on 131 232.



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If you have further questions regarding Citizenship Ceremonies, please contact Council on 1300 087 004 and ask to speak to the Executive Assistant to the CEO.