



# Australian Citizenship Day 17 September

What does Australian citizenship mean?

Australian citizenship plays an important part in building our nation. It gives all Australians a unique identity, is a unifying force, and formally welcomes migrants to the Australian community.

## Celebrate the day at your school!

What's it all about?

- Australian Citizenship Day is an opportunity for all Australians to reflect on the meaning and importance of Australian citizenship.
- It is a day on which all Australians can celebrate the common bond that unites us, a shared belief in the democratic process and respect for the rights and liberties of all Australians.
- Australian Citizenship Day provides an opportunity to reflect on the responsibilities, as well as privileges, of being an Australian citizen.
- We celebrate aspects of Australia and our way of life that unite us as a nation.
- We think about all the inspiring Australians who have shaped our nation.
- We think about what it means to each one of us to be an Australian citizen.

# Check out the website

## Resources for Teachers and Students

Celebrate Australian Citizenship Day 2008 with your students!

Visit the website to find two Australian Citizenship Day interactives that have been developed to engage secondary students as they explore the privileges and responsibilities of being an Australian citizen.

You will also find:

- background information on Australian citizenship and Australian Citizenship Day
- cross-curricular lesson and activity ideas
- printable student activity sheets
- an online feedback form - with an incentive for you and your students when you tell us what you think about these educational materials.



Visit: [www.citizenship.gov.au](http://www.citizenship.gov.au) (**Click on Resources**)

## Australian citizens who inspire us



### Casey Stoner - Young Australian of the Year 2008

Casey Stoner is Australia's world champion motorcycle racer. He first competed when he was four years old (*in an under-nine competition!*), and by the time he was fourteen had won 41 dirt and long track titles and 70 state titles. In a single weekend he won 32 of 35 races and all the five titles that were up for grabs. Because the legal age for road racing in Australia is 16, his family took him to compete in Europe. With his highly competitive attitude Casey has taken on the best in the world and won.

*Photo courtesy of the National Australia Day Council.*

### Jonathon Welch - Australia's Local Hero 2008

Jonathon Welch touched the heart of the nation when he demonstrated the power of singing in building and renewing promising lives that had been saddened and defeated by circumstance. His *Choir of Hard Knocks*, one of Jonathon's community choir initiatives, raised to new levels Australia's awareness of the problems of homelessness, depression and addiction. This is just one of many community projects to which Jonathon has given his time. Jonathon is also well known as a teacher of young singing students and choirs and as an adjudicator at community eisteddfods and competitions. He also continues to perform as a singer in his own right.



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**New resources for teachers and students  
can be found at: [www.citizenship.gov.au](http://www.citizenship.gov.au) (**Click on Resources**)**

# Responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship

Being a citizen of a particular country generally means that you are officially recognised as being a 'formal member' of that country. Becoming an Australian citizen is a significant expression of commitment and a bond to the Australian way of life. Being an Australian citizen provides a common purpose and a vision for a shared future for us all.

## Why is being an Australian citizen important?

Australian citizenship is important because:

- it gives all Australians a shared identity
- it helps to build our nation
- Australian citizenship unites us as people and as a nation
- it allows migrants to feel welcome and become full and formal members of the Australian community.

## What responsibilities do you have as an Australian citizen?

Australian citizenship comes with certain responsibilities. As an Australian citizen you must:

- obey Australia's laws
- enrol on federal and state/territory electoral registers
- vote in elections
- serve on a jury, if called upon to do so
- defend Australia, should the need arise.

## What privileges do you have as an Australian citizen?

Australian citizenship also comes with some privileges.

As an Australian citizen you can:

- live in Australia indefinitely
- vote to help elect Australia's governments
- nominate for election to parliament
- apply for a job in the defence forces, or work for the government
- apply for an Australian passport
- leave and re-enter Australia without a return visa
- seek assistance from Australia's diplomatic representatives while overseas
- register children born overseas as Australian citizens by descent.



# Hold an Australian citizenship affirmation ceremony on Australian Citizenship Day

An affirmation ceremony is a short ceremony where everyone present has the opportunity to publicly affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people by reciting the affirmation. The affirmation is based on the pledge of commitment made by candidates at citizenship ceremonies in order to become an Australian citizen.

Affirmation ceremonies increase awareness of Australian citizenship, promote community involvement and participation, and help people feel that they belong.

They also help build pride in Australians about their citizenship.

Holding an Australian citizenship affirmation ceremony is an ideal way to involve students in an Australian Citizenship Day activity.

## Who can participate in an affirmation ceremony?

- Everyone is welcome and participation is voluntary.
- Many Australians would not have had an opportunity to declare their commitment to Australia and its people at a citizenship ceremony because they were born in Australia.
- Some overseas-born Australian citizens have previously pledged their commitment to Australia at a citizenship ceremony. They may, however, wish to join in and re-affirm their loyalty to Australia and its people.
- There are also many people living in Australia who, although not yet Australian citizens, consider Australia their home. They too may wish to express their loyalty to Australia and show their support for the values that are part of Australian citizenship, by joining in the affirmation at the second line.
- Invite students, parents, teachers and guests to recite the affirmation at your own unique Australian citizenship affirmation ceremony.

## Here are some ideas for your own special affirmation ceremony:

- Students can design and make affirmation cards, with the words of the affirmation on them, to hand out at the event.
- Affirmation cards should be placed on seats or handed to guests as they arrive. This allows members of the audience time to become familiar with the words.
- The person leading the affirmation ceremony should invite all those who wish to publicly affirm their commitment to Australia and its people to stand and join in repeating the affirmation.
- Ask some students to speak about why Australian citizenship is important to them.
- Hold a special morning tea or lunch, celebrating the diversity of food we enjoy in Australia.

More information on holding an Australian citizenship affirmation ceremony can be found on the website: [www.citizenship.gov.au](http://www.citizenship.gov.au) (Affirmation cards are also available from the website.)

