

ROLE-PLAYING AN AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

GUIDELINES

Australian Citizenship Ceremonies

Australian citizenship ceremonies are public occasions at which candidates for Australian citizenship make the Australian Citizenship Pledge and become Australian citizens.

Australian citizenship ceremonies symbolise the transition of a person to full membership of the Australian community. They are meaningful occasions - landmarks in the lives of people who have chosen to become Australian citizens. Each year over 80, 000 people are conferred Australian citizenship at citizenship ceremonies around Australia.

The great majority of citizenship ceremonies are conducted by local councils around Australia, and involve the Mayor - or the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship if present - as the Presiding Officer, conducting the ceremony and conferring Australian citizenship on citizenship candidates.

Role-playing Australian citizenship ceremonies involves students acting out different parts and playing different roles in an Australian citizenship ceremony. As well as helping students understand how people born overseas become Australian citizens, role-plays raise students' awareness and understanding of Australian citizenship and about being an Australian citizen.

Role-plays of Australian citizenship ceremonies may be conducted by schools throughout the year or as part of celebrations for special national days such as Australia Day on 26 January, Constitution Day on 9 July, or Australian Citizenship Day on 17 September.

The following guidelines are provided to assist you in your role-play and are intended as a guide only.

Conducting Role-plays

Roles for students

Before the activity starts students should be selected to play the following roles:

- Candidates to become Australian citizens (students can represent a variety of nationalities).
- Family and friends of candidates.
- The Mayor (or the Chief Minister in the Australian Capital Territory) The Presiding Officer who conducts the ceremony and confers Australian citizenship on candidates is normally the Mayor, or when present, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.
- The Master of Ceremonies who opens the ceremony and introduces guests, conferees and speakers.
- Official guests, such as representatives of Commonwealth, State, and Local governments, and representatives of community organisations in your area.

National Symbols

The following national symbols are displayed at Australian citizenship ceremonies:

- Australian National Flag.
- Commonwealth Coat of Arms.
- Official portrait or photograph of the Queen of Australia.
- You may find these national symbols at your school, or students can make them in class (e.g. a drawing or painting of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms).

Ceremony Program

An Australian citizenship ceremony is generally 20 to 30 minutes in length and involves the following steps.

1. Citizenship candidates and their guests arrive. Candidates are seated together.
2. The official party arrives.
3. The Master of Ceremonies welcomes all present.
4. An Indigenous welcome or performance is given by Indigenous representative(s) and/or the Master of Ceremonies acknowledges the Indigenous people of the region.
5. The Presiding Officer delivers the opening address.
6. A representative of the Minister delivers the Minister's message.
7. Official guests are given the opportunity to speak.
8. The Presiding Officer reads the Preamble to the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*.
9. The Presiding Officer administers the Australian Citizenship Pledge to citizenship candidates.

10. The Presiding Officer or an official guest presents certificates of Australian citizenship to new citizens. Gifts are also presented to new citizens.
11. The Presiding Officer congratulates new citizens.
12. The Presiding Officer or an official guest leads an Australian citizenship affirmation ceremony.
13. The Presiding Officer or Master of Ceremonies asks all present to stand and sing the National Anthem.

Ceremony Performances

Students might also like to perform a musical item before and/or after the ceremony.

Australian Citizenship Pledge

Words of the Australian Citizenship Pledge (see below) should be provided to all citizenship candidates. Each candidate may choose to make either Pledge No. 1 or Pledge No. 2. Pledge No. 1 includes the words 'under God' whereas Pledge No. 2 does not include the words 'under God'.

Australian Citizenship Certificates

Students may design and develop mock Australian citizenship certificates for the role-play. This might be a class activity, with students brainstorming those Australian symbols and images which might feature on the certificates.

Gifts for New Citizens

New Australian citizens are often provided with a gift at their citizenship ceremony to mark the significance of the occasion and to act as a memento. This element may be incorporated into your role-play. Some ideas for gifts that your students can make include:

- Paintings or drawings
- A copy of the National Anthem
- A card
- Flowers
- Food

Australian Citizenship Affirmation Ceremony

An affirmation ceremony is a short ceremony at which all Australians are given the opportunity to publicly affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia. Participation in affirmation ceremonies is voluntary and has no legal effect. People who are not Australian citizens may join in from the second line of the affirmation.

Affirmation ceremonies are often held at citizenship ceremonies and provide the opportunity for all present to be involved in the proceedings of the day.

Words of the affirmation (see below) should be provided to all present at the ceremony.

Step 1 – Citizenship candidates and their guests arrive

- Candidates are seated together.

Step 2 – The official party arrives

The Master of Ceremonies addresses the audience as follows:

- Please stand as the official guests enter and take their seats.
- Thank you. Please be seated.

Step 3 – The Master of Ceremonies welcomes all present

- Welcome Mayor, distinguished guests, candidates for Australian citizenship, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to today's Australian citizenship ceremony. This ceremony marks a very special moment for those of you becoming Australian citizens, and also for those sharing this occasion with you. I hope you enjoy this special day.

Step 4 – An Indigenous Welcome or Performance is given by Indigenous representative(s) and/or the MC acknowledges the Indigenous people of the region

If there is a local Indigenous representative present, they will make a brief Welcome to Country. Indigenous performers may also perform a dance or give a musical item.

The Master of Ceremonies introduces the local indigenous representative:

- I would now like to ask ... (insert name), an Elder/representative of the ... (insert name) people, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, to welcome us.

Following the welcome the Master of Ceremonies would then respond:

- Thank you ... (insert name) for your welcome here today. On behalf of all the other participants, I would like to acknowledge the ... (insert name) people, the traditional owners of the country/land on which our ceremony today is taking place. We recognise the living culture of the ... (insert name) people and the unique contribution they make to the life of the ... (insert name) region.

[OR - in the absence of a traditional Elder or Indigenous representative, replace the above steps with the following acknowledgement]

- I would like to acknowledge the ... (insert name) people, the traditional owners of the country/land on which our ceremony today is taking place. We recognise the living culture of the ... (insert name) people and the unique contribution they make to the life of the ... (insert name) region.

Step 5 – The Presiding Officer delivers the opening address

The Master of Ceremonies introduces the Mayor:

- I would now like to introduce the Presiding Officer to deliver the opening address.

The Mayor addresses the audience as follows:

- Welcome everyone to today's Australian citizenship ceremony. This citizenship ceremony is being conducted in accordance with the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* and the *Australian Citizenship Regulations 2007*. I have been authorised as a person before whom the Australian Citizenship Pledge of Commitment as a Citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia shall be made.
- I am pleased to see so many citizenship candidates here today. I would like to congratulate each of you on your decision to become an Australian citizen. Making the Australian Citizenship Pledge is the final step in your becoming an Australian citizen. I know this is a very special day for you.
- Following the citizenship ceremony I will invite everyone present to participate in a short affirmation ceremony once our new citizens have been presented with their Australian citizenship certificates. It is an opportunity for all Australians to make a statement, similar to that made by new citizens, publicly affirming their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people. Participation is voluntary and has no legal effect.

Step 6 – A representative of the Minister, delivers the Minister's message.

Students may write a Minister's message, drawing on the following text.

- Australia is one of the most diverse societies in the world. As a community we are proud of our diversity and celebrate the richness it brings to Australia.
- What brings us together as a people and a nation is our commitment to a set of core civic values. It is these civic values that underpin Australian citizenship. Australian citizenship is a strong and unifying force in our community.
- Australian citizenship is about:
 - Sharing our democratic beliefs, values and rights
 - Respecting others' rights and liberties
 - Obeying and upholding our laws
 - Loyalty to fellow Australians
- Australian citizenship is also about:
 - Participating in all aspects of community life
 - Achieving full potential, regardless of background
 - Belonging to the Australian community
 - Contributing to the community

- Choosing to become an Australian citizen demonstrates in a concrete way commitment to Australia and the desire to belong and contribute to Australia.
- When you have pledged your loyalty to Australia and its people you will become Australian citizens, and as such you will share the same privileges and responsibilities as those who were born in Australia.

Step 7 – Official guests are given the opportunity to speak

The Master of Ceremonies introduces each speaker in turn. Cultural or musical performances can be conducted between speeches.

Students playing official guests may write their own speeches, drawing on the following text.

- Citizenship is a common bond that unites all Australians, whether they are Australia's traditional inhabitants, first generation migrants or the descendants of earlier settlers. Our rich heritage stems from the contributions made by all of us.
- The decision to become an Australian citizen is a major one. It involves commitment, responsibility, celebration of the present and hope for a common future.
- Being an Australian citizen enables full participation in our inclusive society. It enables all to realise aspirations and achieve full potential, regardless of race, background, gender, religion, language or place of birth.
- Australia has a commitment to many values and institutions. These include parliamentary democracy, equality before the law, freedom of the individual, freedom of speech and religion, equality between men and women, and equality of opportunity for all.
- We all need to belong to a family or a community, to share a past and to hold common hopes and goals for the future. By becoming an Australian citizen, you are showing that you want to be a part of Australia's future.
- No one who applies for Australian citizenship is expected to renounce his or her cultural identity, customs or traditions. Australia's heritage is made richer by contributions from people from all over the world.
- While we embrace and celebrate the diversity of the Australian people, we also aim to build a cohesive and unified nation of people. Australian citizenship lies at the heart of a unified nation.

Step 8 – The Presiding Officer reads the Preamble to Schedule 1 of the Australian Citizenship Regulations 2007.

- I would now like to read the Preamble to Schedule 1 of the *Australian Citizenship Regulations*.

Preamble

“Australian citizenship represents full and formal membership of the community of the Commonwealth of Australia; and

Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, uniting all Australians, while respecting their diversity; and

Persons on whom Australian citizenship is conferred enjoy these rights and undertake to accept these obligations

- by pledging loyalty to Australia and its people, and
- by sharing their democratic beliefs, and
- by respecting their rights and liberties, and
- by upholding and obeying the laws of Australia”.

Step 9 – The Presiding Officer administers the Australian Citizenship Pledge to citizenship candidates

- I would now like to call on candidates who have indicated they wish to take Pledge 1, to stand and make this pledge. Please repeat after me (the Presiding Officer reads one line at a time):

Australian Citizenship Pledge No. 1

“From this time forward, under God,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey”.

- Thank you, please be seated.
- I would now like to call on candidates who have indicated they wish to take Pledge 2, to stand and make this pledge. Please repeat after me (the Presiding Officer reads one line at a time):

Australian Citizenship Pledge No. 2

“From this time forward,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey”.

- Thank you, please be seated.

Step 10 – The Presiding Officer or an official guest presents Certificates of Australian Citizenship and gifts to new citizens

- The Master of Ceremonies calls each candidate forward individually by name.
- The Presiding Officer or an official guest presents each new citizen with their Certificate of Australian Citizenship and gifts.
- New citizens return to their seats.

Step 11 – The Presiding Officer congratulates new citizens

- On behalf of the people of Australia, I would like to congratulate our new citizens for the commitment they have made to being part of Australia's future. This commitment is appreciated and welcomed by the whole community.
- I invite everyone here to give our newest citizens a warm welcome as full members of the Australian community. I wish you all the best for the future.

Step 12 – An official guest leads the Australian Citizenship affirmation ceremony

- I would like to invite all Australians here today who wish to publicly affirm their commitment to Australia and its people to join me in an affirmation ceremony.
- Participation is voluntary and affirmation ceremonies have no legal effect.
- Non-Australian citizens are welcome to join in at the second line of the affirmation, copies of which have been provided to everyone.
- Please stand and join me in making the affirmation. Please repeat after me:

Australian Citizenship Affirmation

“As an Australian citizen,
I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic belief I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect,
and whose laws I uphold and obey”.

- Thank you.

Step 13 – The MC asks all present to stand and sing the Australian National Anthem

- I ask you to please remain standing and join us in singing the Australian National Anthem.

Advance Australia Fair
“Australians all let us rejoice
For we are young and free
We’ve golden soil and wealth for toil
Our home is girt by sea
Our land abounds in nature’s gifts
Of beauty rich and rare
In history’s page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair
In joyful strains then let us sing
Advance Australia Fair

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross
We’ll toil with hearts and hands
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands
For those who’ve come across the seas
We’ve boundless plains to share
With courage let us all combine
To Advance Australia Fair
In joyful strains then let us sing
Advance Australia Fair”.

- Please be seated. That concludes today’s proceedings. Thank you everyone for being part of today’s celebrations.

For further information

For further information on conducting role-plays of Australian citizenship ceremonies please contact the Citizenship Information Line on 131 880.

Receive your free class set of Australian citizenship stickers!

To receive your free class set of Australian citizenship stickers, please send us photographs of your role-play of an Australian citizenship ceremony. Be sure to include your contact details and return address for postage. We may also use these details in future to ask whether you would consent to your photographs being used to promote Australian citizenship.

Please send your photos to:

Director
Citizenship Ceremonies and Promotion Section
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
PO Box 25, Belconnen, ACT 2616