

**AUSFILM**

Connecting film & TV makers  
worldwide to Australia

Australian Entertainment

# WORK VISAS

Factsheet





# ENTERTAINMENT WORK VISAS QUICK FACTS

## Ausfilm - connecting film and TV makers worldwide to Australia

Ausfilm promotes Australia's screen incentive production program, locations and capabilities worldwide to assist international screen producers to make their productions in Australia.

Ausfilm is an Australian industry-government partnership. It comprises Australia's federal, state, and territory governments, major studios, leading post and VFX facilities and production service providers.

## Introduction

All persons working in Australia's entertainment industry (including film, TV or live performance), who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents, need a temporary work visa for the duration of their stay. The appropriate visa is usually the Temporary Activity Visa (subclass 408), entertainment activities stream.

In some circumstances, one of these visas may be more suitable:

- Visitor (subclass 600)
- Electronic Travel Authority (subclass 601)
- eVisitor (subclass 651)

## PLEASE NOTE:

- visa fees may apply;
- visa applications may take up to 3 months to process;
- health and character requirements apply;
- you may need to demonstrate you have adequate means to support yourself while in Australia; and
- you may need to demonstrate that you have incentive to return to your usual place of residence when your Australian visa expires.

## DISCLAIMER

This factsheet provides a brief overview of the Australian visa requirements for media and entertainment industry personnel. You should engage a local production services company to assist with your Australian production including immigration processes. You may also need to seek advice from a qualified entertainment industry immigration specialist. Immigration requirements may vary depending on the nature of the work to be performed in Australia.

For more detailed information contact:  
The Department of Home Affairs (DOHA).

| [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au)

# TEMPORARY ACTIVITY VISA (SUBCLASS 408) ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES STREAM

**This visa is the most common visa for international productions filming in Australia.**

## Introduction

The subclass 408 visa is the most common visa for international productions that film in Australia. The Entertainment Activities stream within the 408 visa is specifically designed for temporary work in Australia on film, television or live productions.

This factsheet sets out the basic requirements for the visa, and also provides contacts for further information. More detailed information about this visa can be found on DOHA's website [here](#).

## What does this visa allow you to do?

With this visa an individual or a group can come to Australia on a temporary basis to:

- Work in the entertainment industry as a performer, production or support staff;
- Travel to and from Australia during your visa period; and
- Bring family members (eligible additional applicants) to Australia. (Note: additional applicants attract an increased fee)

The maximum stay for this visa is two years.

## What steps are involved in applying for a temporary activity visa?

The typical steps are:

- if the stay will be for more than three months: an Australian business applies to become an approved sponsor;

- consultation with, in most cases, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, or the Australian Directors Guild;
- for the importation of foreign performers: an application to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (an Australian Government agency);
- if the stay is more than three months: the approved sponsor nominates the entertainment personnel; and
- the entertainment personnel lodges a visa application.

## Australian sponsors and supporters

If the applicant will stay in Australia for more than 3 months, they must be 'sponsored' by an eligible company. To become a sponsor, companies must meet certain eligibility requirements (such as actively operating in Australia) and fulfill sponsorship obligations (such as ensuring the visa holder undertakes the work described in their application). Companies approved as sponsors can sponsor multiple visa applicants, and remain sponsors for five years.

If the stay is less than three months, the individual or organisation in Australia who is responsible for the events or activities, must meet the 'support' test (which is less complex than the sponsorship process).

You may get a registered migration agent, a legal practitioner or your nominator or sponsor to assist with applications.

## Consultation with the union

Sponsors and supporters must consult with the relevant Australian union in relation to the employment or engagement of overseas personnel.

For most applications, the relevant Australian unions are the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) for actors and crew; the Australian Directors Guild (ADG) for directors; and the Musician's Union of Australia for musicians & conductors.

## Certificate to import foreign performers (actors)

To import a foreign actor, you must apply to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts for a Foreign Actors Certificate. This process ensures that Australian sector workers have been given fair opportunity to work in productions, and that Australian voices are heard in Australian productions.

Sponsors or supporters should familiarise themselves with this process, and then apply for the Foreign Actors Certificate after receiving a written opinion from MEAA, the union for actors.

The Foreign Actors Certificate process does not replace a visa application: it is an additional step that is required when importing foreign performers to Australia.

Application forms and guidelines are available from the Department [here](#).

## What will it cost?

Most stages of the visa process attract a fee. The cost of visas and sponsorship services will vary depending on the size of the production, the number of people you are importing, and the complexity of the requirements for each person.

Advice on current rates can be found [here](#).

## How long will it take?

The following is a rough guide to the time required to process each stage of the visa application process (assuming that applications include all necessary documents and information):

### MEAA consultation

14 days for performers and five working days for other personnel such as crew.

### Office for the Arts Foreign Actors Certification

Five working days.

### Department of Home Affairs 408 visa application

The Department of Home Affairs provides a time guide [here](#).

## Lodging an application

Visa applications must be made online.

Documents may be required to prove claims made in the application. Details are available [here](#).





# BUSINESS TRAVEL

There are three visas that you can apply for online to visit Australia for tourism or business visitor activities.

- Electronic Travel Authority (subclass 601)
- eVisitor (subclass 651)
- Visitor visa (subclass 600)

Tourism includes holidays, recreation and seeing family and/or friends.

Business visitor activities may include attending a conference, negotiation or an exploratory business visit.

## Electronic Travel Authority-601

To apply for this visa, you must be outside Australia, and hold a passport from an authorised country such as the United States of America.

Visit Home Affairs [here](#).

## eVisitor-651

This visa is for passport holders of certain European countries. Applicants must be outside Australia.

Visit Home Affairs [here](#).

## Visitor Visa-600

This visa lets you visit Australia for visitor, family visit or business visitor purposes for periods ranging from three to 12 months.

Applications within Australia can only be made under certain circumstances.

Visit Home Affairs [here](#).

A further visa is available for short-stay promotional activities.

## Temporary Work (Short Stay Specialist)-400

This visa lets people visit Australia for short-term work in a highly-specialised job, such as a performer returning to Australia for promotional work such as media interviews. It is not available for performance work such as acting in a production.

Visit Home Affairs [here](#).

# USEFUL CONTACTS

## GOVERNMENT

### Department of Home Affairs

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us/offices-and-locations>

### Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

[www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/screen](http://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/screen)

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## INDUSTRY GUILDS & UNIONS

### Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA)

+61 7 3846 0044  
[www.meaa.org/imports](http://www.meaa.org/imports)

### Screen Producers Australia (SPA)

+61 2 9360 8988  
[www.screenproducers.org.au/](http://www.screenproducers.org.au/)

### Australian Directors Guild (ADG)

+61 2 9555 7045  
[www.adg.org.au/](http://www.adg.org.au/)

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## LEGAL & ENTERTAINMENT VISA ADVICE

### Ajuria Lawyers

+61 2 9222 6100  
Navpreet Kanwar, Partner  
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### Simpsons Solicitors

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## Platinum Members


**Need help navigating  
all the options?**

### Ausfilm USA

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