

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

2.1.2 The Program provides assistance to Clients who choose to depart Australia or a Regional Processing Country (RPC) voluntarily, but require assistance to do so.

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2.2 Program Intent

2.2.1 The Program provides assistance to Non-Citizens who voluntarily choose to return to their home country or a country where they have a right of entry so that they can resolve their immigration status in Australia.

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2.5 Program Eligibility

2.5.1 Program eligibility is determined by the Department and is currently available to Non-Citizens.

Table 1. Program Eligibility

	Returns Assistance	Reintegration Assistance
Eligible	Non-Citizens in the community, including in an RPC. Detainees in held immigration detention are not eligible.	Non-Citizens in the community, any form of immigration detention, RPC or prison (based on need).

2.5.2 The Department has the discretion to review current Program settings and vary eligibility criteria.

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3.2 Returns Assistance

3.2.1 Returns Assistance is currently available to Non-Citizens living in the community (including Residence Determination) who wish to voluntarily depart Australia or an RPC.

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5.2 Application Process

- 5.2.1 Clients can be referred for a RRAP eligibility assessment by the Department, third parties, or self-referred, and the Service Provider(s) will assist the Client through the Application Process. The Department will assess and determine an individual's eligibility for the Program based on eligibility criteria.

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Regional Processing Country (RPC)	means a country designated by the Minister as a Regional Processing Country under subsection 198AB(1) of the <i>Migration Act 1958</i> (Cth).
Reintegration or Reintegration Assistance Services	means the reintegration of Clients in their Country of Return as described in the ATTACHMENT A (Statement of Requirement) and has a corresponding meaning with Reintegration Assistance package.

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RRAP Client or Client	means a person in receipt of services under the Return and Reintegration Assistance Program for either Returns Assistance, Reintegration Assistance, or both. The Department determines eligibility for Return and Reintegration Assistance Services.
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2. Scope

This PI provides information to Departmental officers to support fair, reasonable and lawful decision making of the RRAP and supports compliance with relevant laws.

3. Return and Reintegration Assistance Program

3.1. General overview

RRAP forms part of the department's wider Status Resolution Program providing assistance to eligible non-citizens to resolve their immigration status in Australia. The RRAP facilitates assisted voluntary departures from Australia or a regional processing country (RPC) enabling non-citizens to resolve their immigration status.

The RRAP provides assistance to eligible non-citizens who choose to depart Australia or an RPC voluntarily, but who require Departmental assistance to do so. The RRAP promotes the benefits of departing voluntarily, offers eligible non-citizens support at each stage of their return journey, and enables non-citizens to depart with dignity.

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3.3. RRAP intent and objectives

The RRAP provides return and reintegration supports to eligible non-citizens who want to return to their home country or a country where they have a right of entry, in turn resolving their immigration status in Australia.

The objectives of the RRAP are to:

- support status resolution outcomes by providing assistance to eligible non-citizens who choose to depart Australia or an RPC voluntarily; and
- provide eligible non-citizens departing Australia or an RPC with assistance to reintegrate into their home country or country where they have right of entry, in a safe and dignified manner and to reduce the risk of future irregular migration.

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3.6. RRAP scope

In mid-2024, RRAP eligibility was expanded to include all non-citizens, including individuals whose visas have been cancelled, or who have had a visa application refused, on character grounds and those in immigration detention. This was done to drive departure outcomes and increase RRAP uptake - in turn supporting government objectives to resolve complex and intractable immigration cases. These changes came into effect in August 2024, following Government approval and amendment of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997*.

3.6.1. Cohorts within scope

The following categories of non-citizens are eligible for RRAP consideration, subject to assessment of individual circumstances:

- holders of a temporary visa or unlawful non-citizens living in the community
- non-citizens who have had applications for visas finally determined (i.e. having exhausted all avenues to remain in Australia)
- unlawful non-citizens in immigration detention who consent to voluntary removal (reintegration assistance only)
- unlawful non-citizens or temporary visa holders in a correctional facility including people who are charged and awaiting trial.
- unauthorised maritime arrivals in an RPC.

RRAP is **not** available to permanent visa holders or Australian citizens. The only exception to this is where a permanent visa holder or Australian citizen dependent child is required to depart with an eligible RRAP applicant (parent or guardian) and this is considered to be in the best interests of the child.

3.7. RRAP legislative authority

Legislative authority for spending under the RRAP is found in item 675 of Schedule 1AB to the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* which came into effect from **16 August 2024**:

675	Return and Reintegration Assistance RRAP	To directly or indirectly fund non - citizens and their dependents to assist and support them to do either or both of the following: (a) voluntarily depart Australia or a regional processing country; (b) reintegrate in a country of return. This objective has the effect it would have if it were limited to measures: (a) with respect to aliens (within the meaning of paragraph 51(xix) of the Constitution); or (b) with respect to immigration or emigration; or (c) with respect to places, persons, matters or things external to Australia.
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5. RRAP Eligibility Assessment

While a non-citizen may meet RRAP eligibility based on their immigration status (Clause 4.1 refers), this is only one criteria for the RRAP. The following factors should be considered when assessing RRAP eligibility of non-citizens who would like to depart from community (non-detention):

- financial circumstances of the non-citizen
- whether providing RRAP services would facilitate a departure, especially in cases where a non-citizen has exhausted all avenues to remain in Australia, where removal may be protracted or complex, or where community safety risks may be present, and
- whether the non-citizen requires additional supports to facilitate departure, which may include reintegration assistance.

While the above elements are equally important, they should be considered holistically to determine whether RRAP is approved. Financial qualification is not the only factor for RRAP consideration, for example, a person may appear to have sufficient funds to meet the costs of their departure, however, if they have a criminal history and pose a community safety risk, it may be in the best interests of the Australian community to facilitate their voluntary departure under the RRAP. In these circumstances, RRAP may be considered appropriate, despite the person's financial capacity.

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5.1. Eligible non-citizens for RRAP consideration

To be eligible for RRAP services, the applicant must:

- be a non-citizen (temporary visa holder or unlawful non-citizen)
- hold a temporary visa that does not permit re-entry to Australia or consent to voluntary visa cancellation after departure
- consent to voluntary departure to their country of origin or a country to which they have a right of entry
- have no ongoing matters before any Australian court or other authorities, unless the relevant law enforcement authority agrees the non-citizen can leave Australia prior to finalisation of the matter, and
- have not previously received any RRAP services and departed Australia or an RPC under the RRAP.

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5.2. Financial assessment

Non-citizens seeking support under the RRAP generally need to demonstrate that they are unable to self-fund their departure or that financial circumstances will impact their ability to self-fund reintegration on return. However, as noted at Clause 4, financial viability is not in itself a disqualifying factor, especially where the benefits to the Australian community outweigh the RRAP costs.

As such, a financial assessment is generally not required for cohorts listed in Table 1, although it is open to SROs to seek further information regarding the financial situation of the applicant to inform their assessment.

Table 1: Non-citizen cohorts where financial assessment is not required for RRAP

Individuals whose protection visa application is finally determined	Non-citizens under the age of 18 travelling unaccompanied
Non-citizens who are Bridging (Removal Pending) visa or Bridging Visa E holders	Non-citizens who are experiencing homelessness or pose a risk to the Australian community
Non-citizens: • in immigration detention • subject to a residence determination • in custodial facilities (e.g. prisons)	Any non-citizen identified by the department where departure via RRAP will resolve outstanding immigration matters
Non-citizens from countries where involuntary removals are challenging or often protracted	RRAP applicants who are seeking non-financial RRAP assistance (such as travel document (TD) assistance)
Non-citizens who are Unlawful Maritime Arrivals (UMAs)	Unlawful Non-citizens (UNCs)

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Where an SRO determines a financial assessment is required to assist with RRAP eligibility, the following evidence and considerations should be taken into account:

- bank statements for the last three (3) months for all accounts held or any of their dependants seeking to travel with them who are over 18 years of age; and
- current financial situation, such as their current income, employment status and whether financial support can be provided from the applicant's family, both in and outside Australia.

RRAP applicants should provide their bank statements and other relevant financial information to the SRO within two weeks of initial contact. s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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5.3. Identify individual needs and RRAP support assessment

The provision of services is based on a non-citizen's individual needs and not all applicants will require all RRAP services. Some non-citizens may have sufficient funds to self-fund their departure; however, they may require some administrative assistance to obtain their travel documents. Other non-citizens may require financial assistance to purchase an air ticket to depart and/or reintegration assistance to rebuild their life on return.

To determine the level of assistance required, the following considerations should be included in the RRAP eligibility assessment:

- non-citizen's current financial situation, such as their savings, current income, their employment situation
- non-citizen's current health conditions and family situation
- financial support available from family - in and outside Australia
- length of time away from home country
- conditions in the country of return (social security/economic/education/medical)
- social and community relations (spouse/children), and
- individual attributes (age, gender, level of education).

6.1. RRAP services and service providers

RRAP services are divided into two service categories and are delivered by two service providers:

Table 2 – RRAP service providers from December 2024

RRAP Services	Service Provider	Contact Details
Returns Assistance	Serco (trading as Homeward)	Phone: 1300 094 663 Email: s. 47F(1) Website: www.assistedreturns.com.au

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Table 3 – Summary of RRAP Services

	Returns Assistance
Description of services	Returns Assistance includes (but is not limited to): • Independent departure counselling • Assistance to obtain travel documents • Flight booking and purchase of airline ticket • Travel assistance to final destination, including pre-departure accommodation and stipend for food and incidentals during travel • Reception assistance in country of return, such as arrival accommodation or ground transport to final destination
Eligible cohorts for RRAP consideration	Non-citizens residing in the Australian community (including at a place specified in a Residence Determination) or an RPC who are: • Bridging visa holders • Onshore temporary visa holders • Unlawful non-citizens (with or without criminal convictions or character/security concerns) in the community • Unlawful non-citizens who are subject to a residence determination • UMAs in an RPC. Non-eligible: • Permanent visa holders • Detainees in held immigration detention facilities • Australian citizens

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	Regional Processing Country	RPC	A country designated by the Minister as a <i>Regional Processing Country</i> under subsection 198AB(1) of the Migration Act. Nauru is currently the only regional processing country designative under subsection 198AB(1). LIN 23/017	
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