Partner Visa Australia: Complete Guide for 2026

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The Australian partner visa allows the spouse or de facto partner of an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or eligible New Zealand citizen to live in Australia permanently. It is one of the most popular — and most complex — visa categories.

Which Partner Visa Subclass Do You Need?

There are two main pathways depending on where you are when you apply:

Onshore: Subclass 820/801 (Partner Visa)

If you are **in Australia** when you apply, you lodge a combined application for the Subclass 820 (temporary) and Subclass 801 (permanent) partner visa. You receive the temporary visa first and, after approximately two years, are assessed for the permanent visa.

Offshore: Subclass 309/100 (Partner Visa)

If you are **outside Australia** when you apply, you lodge a combined application for the Subclass 309 (temporary) and Subclass 100 (permanent) partner visa.

Key Requirements

To be eligible for a partner visa, you must demonstrate:

1. A Genuine and Continuing Relationship The Department of Home Affairs will assess whether your relationship is genuine by examining four key areas:

- **Financial aspects** — joint bank accounts, shared expenses, financial interdependence
- **Nature of the household** — living arrangements, shared responsibilities
- **Social aspects** — recognition by family and friends, social activities together
- **Commitment** — duration of the relationship, future plans, knowledge of each other

2. Sponsorship Your Australian partner must sponsor your application. The sponsor must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or eligible New Zealand citizen.

3. Health and Character Requirements Both you and your sponsor must meet health and character requirements.

Evidence You Need to Prepare

Evidence Category	Examples
Financial	Joint bank statements, shared lease/mortgage, joint bills
Household	Photos of shared home, evidence of shared responsibilities
Social	Statutory declarations from friends/family, photos together, travel records
Commitment	Communication records, future plans, relationship timeline

Tip: Quality matters more than quantity. A well-organised application with strong, relevant evidence is far more effective than a large volume of weak evidence.

Processing Times

Current processing times vary significantly:

Visa Subclass	Approximate Processing Time
Subclass 820 (temporary, onshore)	15 – 29 months
Subclass 801 (permanent, onshore)	18 – 30 months
Subclass 309 (temporary, offshore)	18 – 33 months
Subclass 100 (permanent, offshore)	18 – 30 months

Note: These are approximate times and can vary. Priority processing may be available in certain circumstances.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

1. **Insufficient evidence of a genuine relationship** — the most common reason for refusal
2. **Inconsistencies between your statements and your partner's statements** — the Department will compare both accounts
3. **Not disclosing previous relationships or visa history** — non-disclosure can result in refusal under PIC 4020
4. **Applying with the wrong subclass** — ensure you are in the correct location when you apply
5. **Missing the two-year eligibility date for the permanent visa** — you must respond to the Department's request within the timeframe

De Facto Relationships

You do not need to be married to apply for a partner visa. De facto relationships are recognised, but you must demonstrate that you have been in a de facto relationship for at least 12 months before applying, unless:

- You have a child together, or

- Your relationship is registered with a state or territory authority

How I Can Help

Partner visa applications are complex and the stakes are high. I have helped hundreds of couples navigate this process successfully. I will review your situation, identify any risks, and help you prepare a strong application.

Book a consultation today from $97.

About the Author

Nilesh Nandan is the Head of Practice at MyVisa Lawyers Pty Ltd, a specialist immigration law firm with offices across Australia. With 33 years of legal experience and 27 years specialising in immigration law, Nilesh is admitted as a solicitor in New South Wales and holds a practising certificate issued by the Law Society of New South Wales under the Legal Profession Uniform Law (NSW).

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