

03: ePassports

What is an ePassport?

All Australian passports issued after 24 October 2005 are called ePassports. An ePassport is similar to the previous Australian passport but has a microchip embedded in the centre pages. The chip contains the same personal information that is on the colour photo page of the ePassport, including a digitised photograph. The ePassport is more secure, gives greater protection against identity fraud, tampering and misuse and enhances identity verification for border processing.

How will I know if I have an Australian ePassport?

If your passport was issued after 24 October 2005, it will be an ePassport. It will show an international ePassport symbol on the bottom centre of the cover page.



ePassport symbol

Australian ePassport

How do I get an ePassport?

Australians who apply for a new passport or renew an expired passport will be issued with an ePassport. If you have an older passport, without the ePassport symbol on the cover, you will need to wait until your passport is due for renewal, or apply for a new passport before your existing one expires. Contact the Passport Office for more information or go to: <http://www.passports.gov.au/>

Is the information contained in the ePassport secure?

Yes. Access to the information on the chip is effectively 'locked' until the ePassport is read by an authorised reader – this is known as Basic Access Control (BAC). The information on the chip is also Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) protected, guaranteeing that it was put there by an authorised entity (i.e. the Australian Government) and has not been altered since.

How do ePassports work with SmartGate?

SmartGate accesses the electronic information stored on the ePassport microchip to undertake a number of checks including that the:

- traveller is over 16
- ePassport is eligible for use with SmartGate
- microchip is valid.

It also uses the digitised ePassport photograph to match against the photo of the traveller taken by the SmartGate camera at the gate.

Is the ePassport recognised internationally?

The Australian ePassport meets international standards as set out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations which develops and maintains world standards for international travel documents. Australia is a council member of ICAO and has contributed to the development of the ePassports standards.