

SUBCLASS 820/801 SUBCLASS 309/100 PARTNER VISA

Guide for Partner Visa Applicants & Sponsor

July 2026



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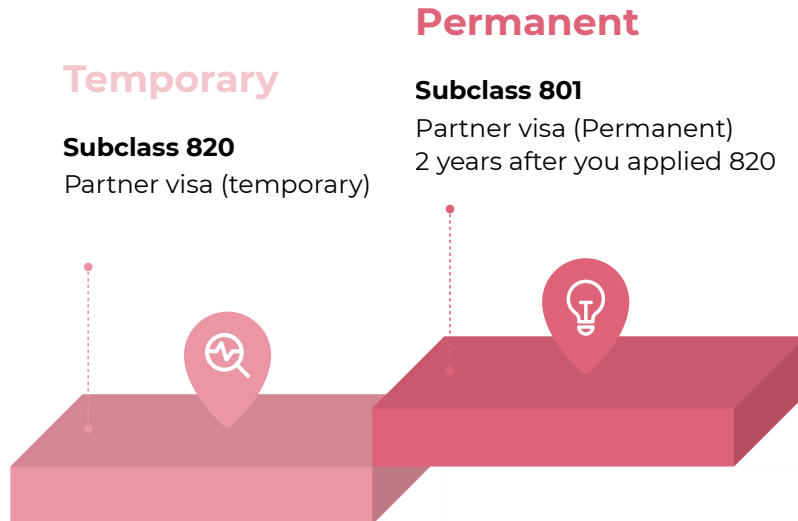


PARTNER VISA OVERVIEW

The Partner visa allows the spouse or de facto partner of an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or eligible New Zealand citizen to live in Australia. Partner visa applications are closely scrutinised. The Department must be satisfied that the relationship is genuine, ongoing, and not entered into for migration purposes.

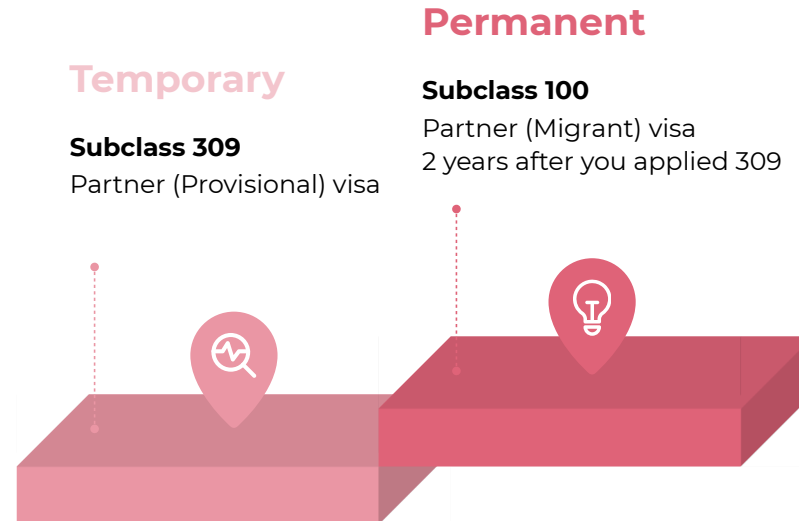
Onshore Application

For applicants already in Australia at the time of lodgement.



Offshore Application

For applicants applying from outside Australia.



APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



There are a number of factors that may impact on your ability to apply for and be granted this visa:

01

In a married or de facto relationship with, an eligible sponsor



02

In a genuine and ongoing relationship



03

Able to demonstrate your relationship across the four assessment pillars



04

Must meet Australian health and character requirements



05

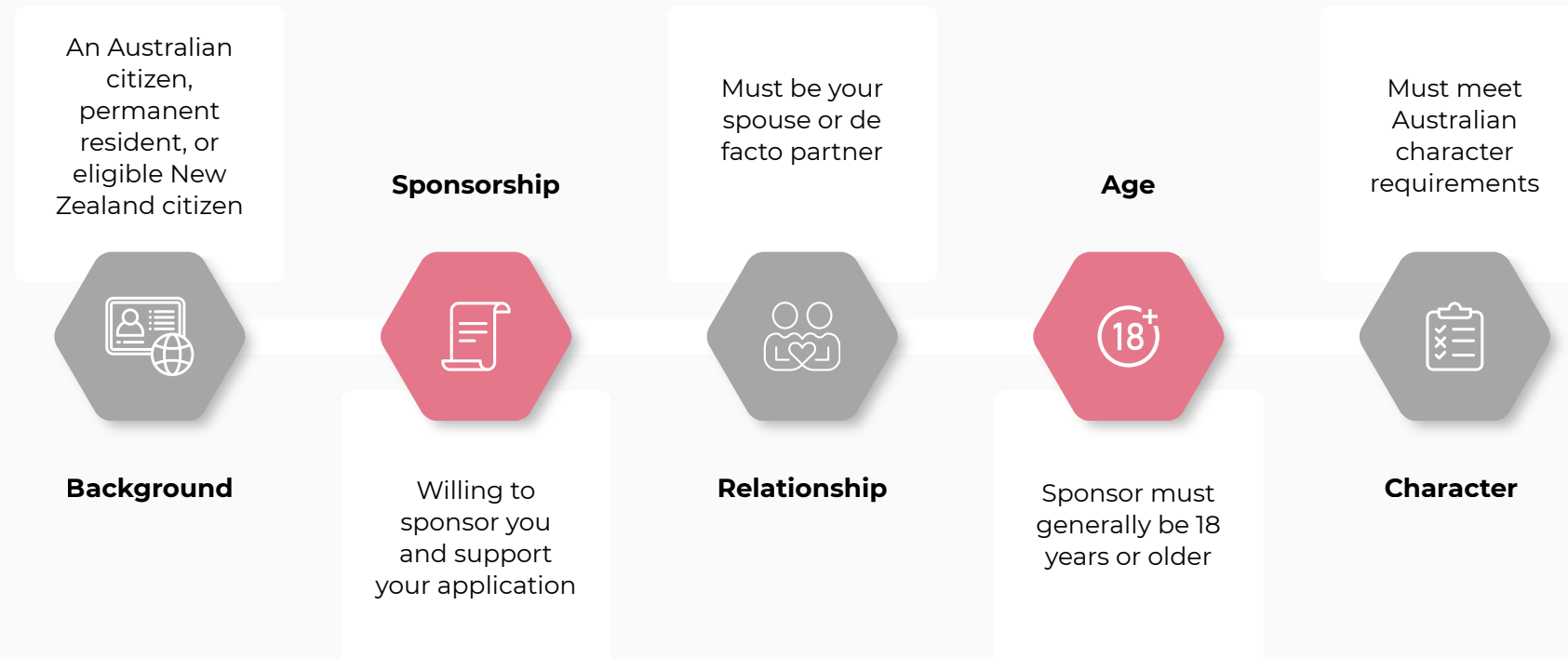
Must hold a valid visa (or meet requirements if on a Bridging visa) at time of application



SPONSOR ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



There are a number of factors that may impact on your ability to sponsor this visa:



One key restriction under Australian immigration law is the lifetime limit on sponsorships an individual can provide. A person may sponsor up to **two** applicants for Partner or Prospective Marriage Visas over their lifetime. This applies to sponsorships for a spouse, de facto partner, or fiancé. The rule aims to prevent repeated sponsorships that might undermine the integrity of the immigration system.

CORE ASSESSMENT

GENUINE RELATIONSHIP

The Department assesses the genuineness of a partner relationship using four core pillars. Each pillar must be supported by credible, consistent and verifiable evidence from both the applicant and the sponsor. These pillars form the foundation of the Department's decision-making framework and are considered collectively rather than in isolation.



FOUR CORE PILLARS

Rather than relying on a single document or event, the assessment looks at multiple dimensions of the couple's life together. These dimensions reflect how partners organise their finances, share a home, engage socially as a couple, and demonstrate commitment to a shared future.

01



Financial Aspects

The Department looks for financial interdependence and shared financial responsibility.
Examples: joint accounts, shared expenses, assets, financial support.

02



Social Aspects

The relationship must be recognised publicly.
Examples: photos, travel, social events, Form 888 statements.

03



Nature of Household

The Department assesses whether the couple shares a domestic life.
Examples: cohabitation, lease, bills, household responsibilities.

04



Commitment & Future Plans

Focus on long-term intention and emotional commitment.
Examples: relationship history, future plans, communication.

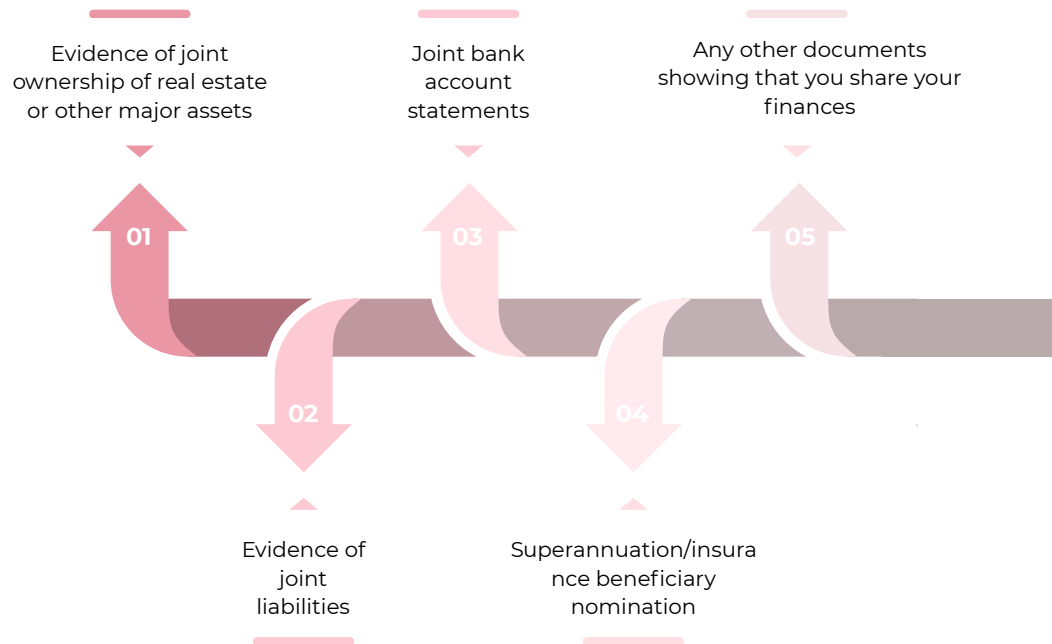


FOUR CORE PILLARS

Financial Aspect

The Department considers whether the couple has genuinely combined their financial affairs in a way that reflects a shared life together, rather than two individuals maintaining separate financial lives.

Strong Evidence Includes:



What strengthens your case:

- Long-term financial history (not just recently created accounts)
- Consistent usage of joint accounts
- Clear explanation of how finances are managed as a couple

Common pitfalls:

- Empty or inactive joint accounts
- Finances kept completely separate without explanation
- Evidence created shortly before application

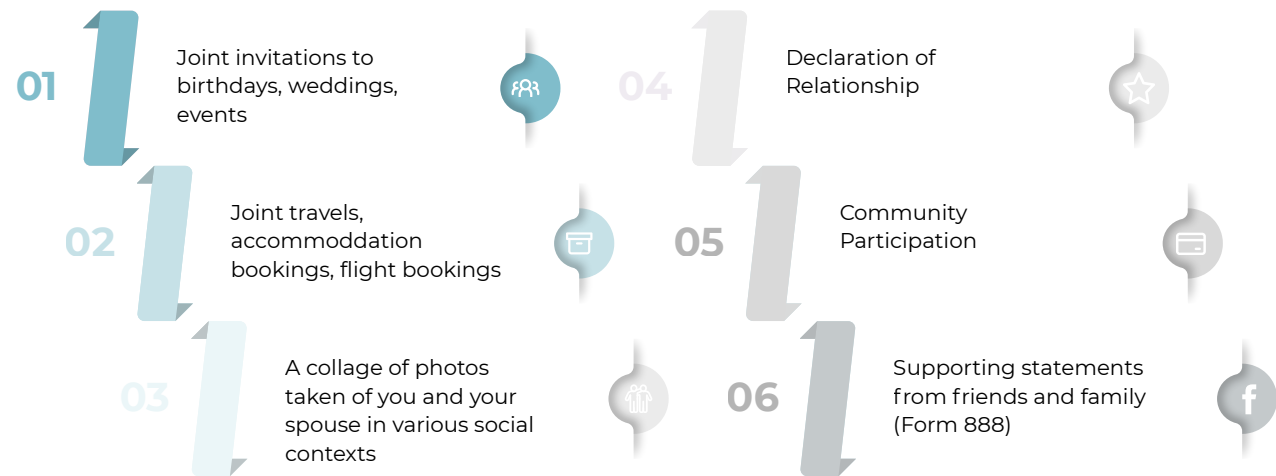


FOUR CORE PILLARS

Social Aspects

The Department considers whether the relationship is genuinely recognised by family, friends, and the wider community, reflecting a real and established social connection.

Strong Evidence Includes:



What strengthens your case:

- A timeline showing the progression of the relationship
- Evidence involving both families and close friends
- Third-party confirmation (Form 888 statements)

Common pitfalls:

- Large volume of photos but lacking context or timeline
- Limited social recognition of the relationship
- Generic or weak Form 888 statements

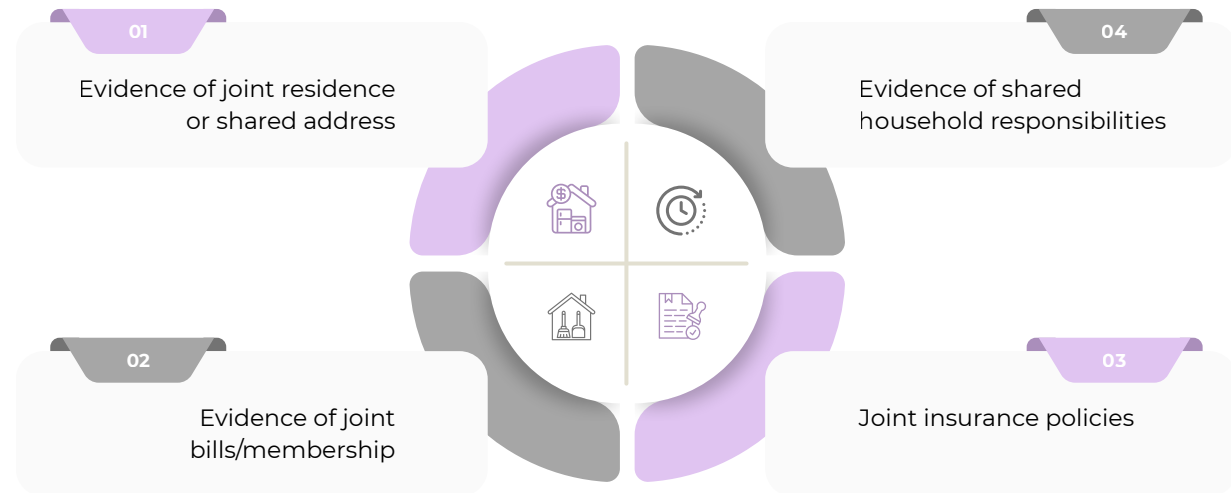


FOUR CORE PILLARS

Nature of the Household

The Department assesses whether the couple genuinely lives together and functions as a shared household, reflecting a real domestic life rather than separate living arrangements.

Strong Evidence Includes:



What strengthens your case:

- Continuous cohabitation history
- Evidence from different sources confirming the same address
- Clear explanation if there were periods of living apart (e.g. work, visa constraints)

Common pitfalls:

- Limited or no proof of living together
- Gaps in cohabitation without explanation
- Relying only on informal evidence (e.g. photos at home)

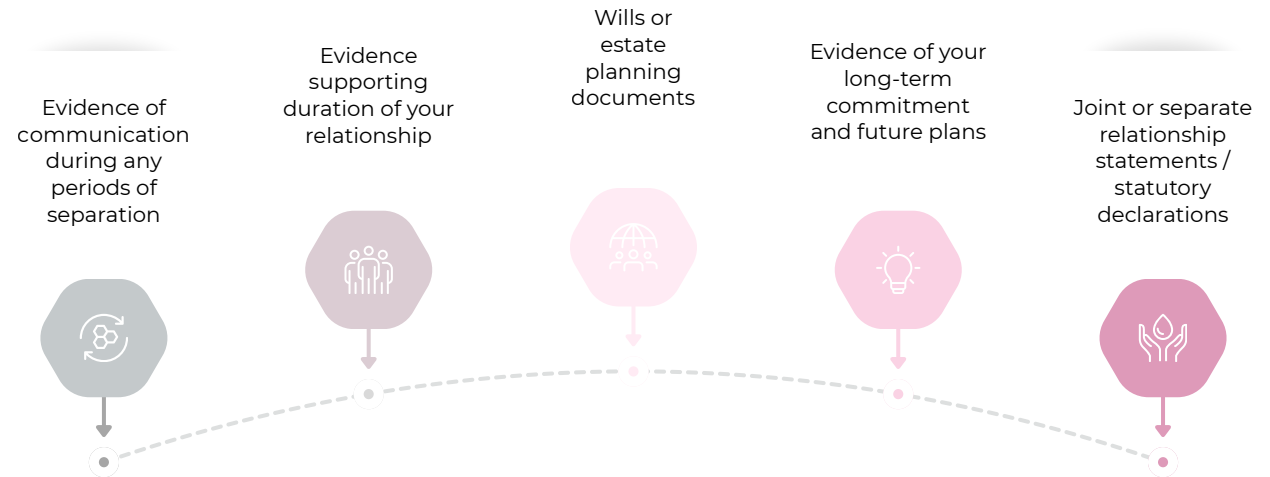


FOUR CORE PILLARS

Commitment & Future Plans

The Department considers the strength of the relationship, the level of mutual commitment, and whether there is a genuine intention to build a long-term future together.

Strong Evidence Includes:



What strengthens your case:

- Consistency between both partners' statements
- Depth and detail (not generic descriptions)
- Alignment between statements and supporting evidence

Common pitfalls:

- Inconsistent or contradictory statements
- Overly generic or template-style answers
- Lack of future plans or unclear intentions



KEY APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

WHAT YOU NEED FOR A STRONG PARTNER VISA APPLICATION

A successful Partner visa application requires more than simply providing documents. The Department of Home Affairs undertakes a detailed assessment to determine whether your relationship is genuine, ongoing, and meets legislative requirements.

This means your application must include well-organised, consistent, and credible evidence that clearly demonstrates your relationship across all required aspects.



APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Your application must include clear, consistent, and well-structured documentation that demonstrates your relationship across all required areas. Poorly prepared or inconsistent documentation is one of the most common reasons for refusal - even where the relationship itself is genuine. For this reason, it is critical to present your evidence in a way that is clear, structured, and persuasive.

Identity Documents



- Passport
- Birth certificate
- National ID (if applicable)

01

Relationship Evidence



- Joint bank account
- Shared financial commitments
- Photos
- Travel history as couple
- Communication

02

Household & Financial



- Utility bills in both names
- Evidence of living at the same address
- Shared expenses
- Joint assets

03

Relationship Statements



- How relationship developed
- Key milestones
- Future plans together

04

Character Documents



- Police clearance certificates
- Additional documents if requested

05

COMMON REASONS FOR REFUSAL

Partner visa refusals are often due to how the case is presented - not just the relationship itself.

Many partner visa applications encounter difficulties due to common weaknesses in the evidence or the way information is presented. The following issues frequently lead to delays, requests for further information, or adverse outcomes:

- 01 Insufficient or poorly organised evidence
- 02 Inconsistencies between applicant and sponsor statements
- 03 Limited or unclear cohabitation history
- 04 Generic or weak relationship statements
- 05 Lack of understanding of Department expectations

Addressing these issues early and presenting clear, well-structured evidence significantly strengthens the application and reduces the likelihood of delays or adverse findings.



COMPLEX SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 01

Sponsor
Limitation

A genuine
relationship
does not
always mean
sponsorship
eligibility

Situation



James, an Australian permanent resident, wants to sponsor his new de facto partner for a Partner visa. However, he previously sponsored an ex-partner several years ago.

Complexity



Australian migration law places strict limits on repeat partner sponsorships. A sponsor may be prevented from sponsoring again if they have previously sponsored a partner, or if insufficient time has passed since an earlier partner visa sponsorship.

Key Issue



Even where the new relationship is genuine, the sponsorship may be refused unless an exemption applies - for example, compelling circumstances such as the death of a previous partner, family violence, or other limited exceptions.

How We Help



We assess the sponsor's immigration history, determine whether the sponsorship limitation applies, and prepare exemption submissions where available to maximise the prospects of approval.



COMPLEX SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 02

Unlawful/Bridging
Visa Status

Being in a genuine
relationship does
not automatically
overcome visa
status issues

Situation



Maria entered Australia on a visitor visa and began a genuine relationship with her Australian citizen partner. Due to personal circumstances, she remained in Australia after her visa expired and became unlawful. The couple later married and wanted to lodge an onshore Partner visa.

Complexity



Because Maria is unlawful at the time of application, she does not hold a substantive visa. This means the application may be subject to Schedule 3 criteria, which impose strict additional requirements for applicants seeking to lodge onshore after becoming unlawful.

Key Issue



To satisfy Schedule 3, the applicant may need to demonstrate compelling reasons for being granted the visa despite their immigration status history. Without strong evidence and carefully prepared legal submissions, the application could be refused even where the relationship is genuine.

How We Help



We assess whether Schedule 3 applies, identify available exemptions or arguments, and prepare detailed submissions addressing compelling circumstances, immigration history, and relationship evidence to maximise approval prospects.



COMPLEX SCENARIOS SCENARIO 03

PIC4020

A genuine
relationship may
not overcome
integrity concerns

Situation



Sarah is applying for a Partner visa with her Australian spouse. During assessment, the Department raises concerns about information or documents that were provided in a previous visa application, which may be considered false, misleading, or inconsistent.

Complexity



Partner visa applications are not assessed solely on the genuineness of the relationship. Australian migration law includes strict integrity provisions, and issues arising from previous visa applications — even those lodged years earlier or through another adviser — can trigger serious complications.

Key Issue



If the Department determines that false or misleading information, or bogus documents, were provided, Public Interest Criterion 4020 may be enlivened. This can result in visa refusal and, in some cases, affect eligibility for future visa applications.

How We Help



We carefully review the applicant's immigration history, analyse the Department's concerns, prepare detailed legal submissions addressing adverse information, and present supporting evidence to reduce refusal risk and protect the strongest possible pathway forward.



OUR APPROACH

At Southern Stone Migration, we go beyond simply collecting documents.

We understand how the Department assesses Partner visa applications and strategically prepare each case to ensure the strongest possible presentation.

Evidence

Strong evidence is the backbone of every successful Partner visa application. We don't simply upload documents; we curate your evidence to ensure it clearly demonstrates the genuineness and continuity of your relationship.

Submissions

A well-prepared legal submission can be the difference between approval and refusal. We don't rely on documents alone; we advocate for you.

Consistency

The Department places enormous emphasis on internal consistency. By ensuring your information aligns across all sources, we minimise risk and strengthen the integrity of your case.

Profession

Partner visas are one of the most scrutinised visa categories in Australia. Having a professional team matters. We don't just process applications - we build cases that stand up to scrutiny.



GOVERNMENT CHARGES

*A clear understanding of the government charges associated with Partner visa applications is essential for effective planning.

All government fees and charges are subject to change.

An online payment surcharge of 1.4% applies to card payments made to the Department of Home Affairs.

Onshore Partner Visa Application	
Main Applicant Fee	\$11,710
Additional Adult / Child	\$5,860 / \$2,935
Offshore Partner Visa Application	
Main Applicant Fee	\$11,710
Additional Adult / Child	\$5,860 / \$2,935
Prospective Marriage Visa Application	
Main Applicant Fee	\$11,710
Additional Adult / Child	\$5,860 / \$2,935



BUILT ON EXPERIENCE. GROUNDED IN EXPERTISE.

Southern Stone Migration assists couples and families in navigating the Australian Partner visa process with clarity, compassion, and strategic expertise.

Partner visa applications can be emotionally significant and legally complex. Our team provides clear, structured, end-to-end support - from assessing eligibility and developing the right application strategy, through to preparing relationship evidence, drafting submissions where required, lodging the application, and managing the process through to outcome - with a focus on presenting each case in the strongest possible way.





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