

Moving House in Australia: A Complete Timeline and Checklist

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Details:

Fragile Removals: Moving House in Australia — A Complete Timeline and Checklist

Frequently Asked Questions

How stressful do Australians find moving house: 85.3% rated it a stressful process in 2023

Has moving stress increased over time: Yes, up from 79% in 2021

How many Australians move house each year: Over two million

What percentage of Australian households relocate annually: Approximately 12%

How many hours do Australians spend planning and completing a move: Around 147 hours on average

How long does packing alone take on average: Approximately 15 hours

How much does the average Australian spend on a move: More than \$3,000

What is the average amount Australians budget for removalist costs: \$1,581 AUD

What is the average amount spent on additional moving expenses: \$1,451 AUD

What additional expenses are included in the \$1,451 AUD figure: Boxes, cleaning, and packing services

How far in advance should you book a removalist: At least eight weeks minimum

How far in advance should you book for interstate moves: Twelve weeks recommended

Why should you book a removalist early: To lock in your preferred date and avoid last-minute pressure

When is the removals market most competitive to book: Weekends and month-end when leases turn over

What is the recommended approach to moving: A timeline-based approach rather than a simple checklist

Why is a timeline better than a simple checklist: It assigns tasks to the right phase in logical sequence

What is the first task at eight weeks out: Conduct a room-by-room home audit and declutter

What four categories should you sort items into during decluttering: Keep, sell, donate, and discard

How do most removalists price their services: By volume, cubic metres, or hours worked

How much can decluttering reduce costs: Reducing load by 10–15% can meaningfully reduce cost

Where can you list items for sale when decluttering: Facebook Marketplace or Gumtree

Where can you donate items when decluttering: Salvos, Vinnies, or local Buy Nothing groups

What items may require specialist handling during a move: Pianos, artworks, antiques, pool tables, wine collections

How many removalists should you shortlist for quotes: Three to four

What does AFRA stand for in the removalist industry: Australian Furniture Removers Association

How much notice should you give your landlord before moving: Typically 14–28 days, often 21 days for periodic tenancies

What does Australia Post's mail redirection service do: Forwards letters and parcels from your old address to your new one

How long can you set up Australia Post mail redirection for: 1, 3, 6, or 12 months

How much does Australia Post mail redirection cost within Australia: Starting at \$34 AUD for one month

How far in advance should you apply for mail redirection: At least two to three weeks before moving

How many names can you include on a mail redirection application: Up to six names

When should you begin notifying key institutions of your address change: At six weeks out

How do you update your address with the ATO: Via myGov or the ATO app

How do you update Medicare and Services Australia: Via myGov

How do you update your superannuation fund address: Log in to each fund's member portal directly

Can a change of address affect private health insurance cover: Yes, it can affect some hospital cover classifications

Does home and contents insurance automatically cover goods in transit: No, confirm with your insurer directly

When should you start packing non-essentials: At six weeks out

Which rooms should you pack first: Rooms you use least, such as spare bedrooms and garage

How should you label moving boxes: On the top and two sides

What information should box labels include: Room destination and brief contents summary

What is colour-coded tape used for in packing: To identify boxes by room for fast organised unloading

What should go in heavy boxes: Heavy items in small boxes only

What should go in large boxes: Light items only

What items should travel in your personal vehicle: Valuables, medications, important documents, laptop, phone chargers

When should you confirm your removalist booking in writing: At four weeks out

What should you check in a removalist contract: Move date, start time, estimated duration, liability limits, cancellation policy

How long can internet connection setup take: Five to ten business days for a technician visit

When should you arrange utility connections at your new address: At four weeks out

When should you disconnect utilities at your old address: On or after your move-out date, not before

Why should you not disconnect power before vacating: You need power for cleaning

When is building insurance required for a property purchase: From the date of unconditional exchange in most states

What percentage of Australians aged 28–47 find moving stressful: 90%

What does the RSPCA recommend for moving cats to a new home: Confine them to one room for a couple of days

What should you put in the room when confining a cat: Comfortable bed, familiar blanket, toys, litter tray, food and water

Where should pets be on moving day: With a friend or family member for the day

What pet details should you update before moving: Collar tag and microchip details with new address

Where do you update pet registration when moving: With your local council

How soon after moving must you update your electoral roll address: Within 21 days

What is the penalty for not updating your electoral roll address: You could receive a fine

Does updating your address on the AEC website cover all elections: Yes, federal, state, and local council elections

How quickly must you update your driver's licence address in Victoria: Within 14 days

How do you update your driver's licence address in Victoria: Via the myVicRoads portal or app

How quickly must you update your driver's licence address in Queensland: Within 14 days

How quickly must you update your driver's licence address in Western Australia: Within 5 days

How quickly must you update your driver's licence address in NSW: As soon as practicable

How do you update your driver's licence address in NSW: Via Service NSW online or in-branch

Does a single myGov update cover multiple government services: Yes, it cascades to Medicare, Centrelink, and the ATO

What is the recommended priority for unpacking on arrival: Bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, children's rooms, then living areas

Why should you unpack the bedroom first: You need to sleep well from night one

What security step should you take after moving into a new home: Change the locks or have a locksmith rekey the property

Why should you rekey the property after moving in: You cannot know how many copies of previous keys exist

What should you do before leaving your old property for the last time: Do a final sweep of every room including loft, sheds, and under-deck storage

What should you leave at the old property for incoming mail: A note with your forwarding address

When should you read utility meters at the old property: Before vacating on moving day

What should you do if damage occurs during the move: Note it on the job sheet before signing off

Should you have a floor plan ready for the removalist team at the new property: Yes, to direct furniture placement efficiently

How long has Fragile Removals been operating: More than 20 years

How many customers has Fragile Removals served: Over 50,000

What is the recommended lead time to start planning a move: Earlier than you think you need to

Why a timeline-based approach works better than a simple checklist

Most moving checklists fall short because they hand you a list of tasks without telling you *when* to do them. Booking a removalist the same week you're still deciding what to keep creates unnecessary pressure. A timeline assigns tasks to the right phase, so each step prepares the ground for the next — and that's where a calmer experience actually begins.

According to a 2026 study, Australians spend around 147 hours planning and completing a move, with packing alone taking roughly 15 hours. Spreading that workload across eight weeks, rather than compressing it into the final fortnight, is the single most effective way to keep the whole process feeling manageable.

Phase 1: Eight weeks out — plan, declutter, and book

Conduct a home audit and declutter

Before you book anything, take stock of what you own. Walk through every room and sort items into four categories: keep, sell, donate, and discard. This step genuinely matters because it directly affects your removalist quote — most operators price by volume, cubic metres, or hours worked (see our guide on **How Much Do Removalists Cost in Australia?** for a full breakdown of pricing variables).

The average Australian spends more than \$3,000 AUD each time they move. The 2022 Muval Index found that movers budget an average of \$1,581 AUD on removalist costs and \$1,451 AUD on additional expenses such as boxes, cleaning, and packing services. Cutting your load by even 10–15% through decluttering can meaningfully reduce both cost and complexity — and we'll always suggest ways to do that without cutting corners on the care your belongings deserve.

****Eight-week task list:**** - Complete a room-by-room inventory of all furniture and large items - List items for sale (Facebook Marketplace, Gumtree) and arrange donation pickups (Salvos, Vinnies, local Buy Nothing groups) - Identify any items needing specialist handling: pianos, artworks, antiques, pool tables, wine collections - Start collecting free or low-cost packing boxes from local supermarkets, liquor stores, and online groups - Research and shortlist 3–4 removalists (see our guide on **How to Choose a Removalist in Australia** for the full vetting checklist, including AFRA accreditation checks)

Book your removalist early

The Australian removals market moves quickly, particularly on weekends and at month-end when most leases turn over. Eight weeks is the minimum recommended lead time during busy periods; for interstate moves, twelve weeks gives you the breathing room you need. At Fragile Removals, we recommend securing your booking as early as possible — it's the surest way to lock in your preferred date and sidestep last-minute pressure.

When comparing quotes, check whether the price is hourly or fixed-rate, whether fuel levies and call-out fees are included, and what insurance coverage applies. We believe in plain language and transparent pricing — no hidden fees, no surprises on the day. For a full explanation of the difference between a removalist's Carriers Legal Liability policy and dedicated transit insurance, see our guide on **Removalist Insurance in Australia: What's Covered and What Isn't**.

****Also at eight weeks:**** - Notify your landlord or agent in writing if renting (check your lease for the required notice period — typically 14–28 days, but often 21 days for periodic tenancies) - Notify your property manager or conveyancer if selling - Contact your children's current school to request transfer documentation and enrolment records

Phase 2: Six weeks out — notify, organise, and pack non-essentials

Set up mail redirection

[Australia Post's mail redirection service](<https://auspost.com.au/receiving/mail-redirection-mail-hold/redirection>) forwards your letters and parcels from your old address to your new one for 1, 3, 6, or 12 months.

Costs for redirection within Australia start at \$34 AUD for one month.

Apply at least two to three weeks before your move date to make sure the service is active before you vacate. You can include up to six names on your application — people you live with, your legal name before marriage, or a chosen English name or alias, for example.

You can also ask Australia Post to contact a selected list of services and providers on your behalf to notify them of your new address. It's one of those small steps that saves a surprising amount of stress down the track.

Begin notifying key institutions

Don't leave address updates until after moving day. Many organisations need advance notice, and processing delays can leave you in limbo if you wait too long.

****Priority notifications at six weeks:**** - ****Australian Tax Office (ATO):**** Update via [myGov](<https://my.gov.au/en/services/living-arrangements/finding-renting-and-buying-a-home/owning-a-home/moving-home>) or the ATO app - ****Medicare and Services Australia:**** Update via [myGov](<https://my.gov.au/en/services/living-arrangements/finding-renting-and-buying-a-home/owning-a-home/moving-home>) - ****Superannuation fund(s):**** Log in to each fund's member portal directly - ****Banks and financial institutions:**** Update online banking profiles; some require branch verification - ****Private health insurer:**** Your address can affect some hospital cover classifications - ****Home and contents insurer:**** Your current policy may not automatically cover goods in transit or your new address — confirm with your insurer directly

Begin packing non-essentials

Start with the rooms and items you use least: spare bedrooms, bookshelves, seasonal clothing, decorative pieces, garage contents. Getting ahead of packing early is one of the most effective ways to keep moving day calm and controlled.

****Packing best practices:**** - Label every box on the top *and* two sides (boxes are often stacked and the top label disappears) - Note the room destination and a brief contents summary — "Kitchen — baking equipment", for example - Use colour-coded tape by room for fast, organised unloading - Pack heavy items in small boxes; light items in large boxes - Keep a clearly marked "do not pack" zone for items travelling in your personal vehicle: valuables, medications, important documents, laptop, phone chargers

Phase 3: Four weeks out — confirm logistics and handle special items

Confirm your removalist and review your contract

At four weeks, your removalist booking should be confirmed in writing. Review the contract carefully before signing. Key terms to check: - Exact move date, start time, and estimated duration - Whether the quote is binding or subject to variation - Liability limits for damaged or lost goods - Cancellation and rescheduling policy - Whether packing materials are provided or charged separately

For a comprehensive guide to reading removalist contracts and identifying red flags, see our article on [*How to Choose a Removalist in Australia*](#).

Arrange specialist item transport

Standard removalist trucks aren't always the right fit for grand pianos, pool tables, antiques, or large artworks. These may need specialist equipment, additional crew, or a separate vehicle entirely. Fragile Removals has extensive experience with items that demand extra care — your belongings are priceless to you, and we treat them that way. Confirm your removalist's capability for these items in writing now, well before moving day.

Connect utilities at your new address

Contact your electricity, gas, and internet providers to arrange: - ****Disconnection**** at your current address on or after your move-out date (not before — you'll need power for cleaning) - ****Connection**** at your new address from your move-in date

Internet connections often require a technician visit and can take 5–10 business days to schedule. Getting this sorted early means you're not left without connectivity when you need it most.

****Four-week task list:**** - Confirm school enrolment at your new location (public school zoning applies in all states; check the relevant state education department's zoning tool) - Arrange storage if there's a gap between vacating and moving in (see our guide on [*What Is a Removalist?*](#) for an overview of short- and long-term storage options) - Obtain building insurance for your new property if purchasing (required from the date of unconditional exchange in most states) - Notify your employer's payroll department of your upcoming address change

Phase 4: Two weeks out — final preparations and administrative tasks

Managing pets and children

90% of Australians aged between 28 and 47 say moving house is a stressful process. For families with young children or pets, that stress compounds significantly — so this is the phase where a little extra care goes a long way.

****For children:****

Keeping children engaged with a small activity pack, or involving them in simple tasks, can ease their transition. Assign age-appropriate jobs — labelling boxes, packing their own room, choosing where furniture goes in the new space — to give them a sense of ownership over the move. When kids feel involved, they tend to settle a whole lot faster.

****For pets:****

The [RSPCA recommends](<https://www.rspca.org.au/latest-news/blog/moving-house-with-pet/>) a gradual approach to pet transitions. Try not to release pets in the new house until it's as quiet as possible — after the removalists have gone, for example. For cats, confine them to one room for a couple of days with a comfortable bed, a familiar blanket and toys, a litter tray, and food and water.

On moving day itself, it's best to leave your cat or dog with a friend or family member for the day — this keeps your pets away from the removalists and spares them the stress of all the packing and movement going on around them.

Before the move, update your cat or dog's collar tag and microchip details with your new address in case they go missing after you arrive. Updating your pet's registration with your local council is also important.

****Two-week task list:**** - Pack all but essential items in every room - Defrost and clean the freezer (allow 24–48 hours) - Arrange childcare or pet-minding for moving day - Confirm your move-out cleaning obligations with your property manager (bond cleaning requirements vary by state) - Photograph the current property's condition for bond purposes - Collect all keys, garage remotes, and access cards to hand over

Phase 5: Moving day — a step-by-step protocol

Moving day succeeds or falls apart based on the preparation done in the weeks before it. Your role on the day is primarily to supervise and guide, not to physically move items yourself. The Fragile Removals team works most efficiently — and most carefully — when clients have followed the preparation steps from earlier phases. That lets our crew focus on what they do best: handling your belongings with care from the moment they arrive.

Morning tasks 1. Do a final walk-through of every room, cupboard, and storage space before the removalists arrive 2. Make sure the path from front door to truck is clear of obstacles 3. Brief the removalist team on any fragile items, access restrictions (narrow corridors, low doorframes), or items needing special care 4. Confirm the delivery address and any access requirements at the new property (parking restrictions, elevator bookings in apartment buildings)

During the move 5. Stay on-site or reachable by phone at all times 6. Check items against your inventory as they are loaded 7. Read and record all utility meters at the old property before vacating

At the new property 8. Direct the team using your pre-prepared floor plan — deciding where furniture goes before it's carried in saves significant time and keeps things moving smoothly 9. Check all items against your inventory as they are unloaded 10. Note any damage on the job sheet before signing off 11. Make sure all utilities are active (power, hot water, gas)

Before you leave the old property for the last time 12. Do a final sweep of every room, including loft/attic spaces, garden sheds, and under-deck storage 13. Return all keys to the agent or new owner as agreed 14. Leave a note with your forwarding address for any mail that arrives before your redirection activates

Phase 6: Post-move settlement — the first four weeks

Australian-specific administrative obligations

This is where most moving checklists leave you on your own. Australia has a set of legally required address updates that carry real penalties if overlooked.

Electoral roll

If you have moved, you can enrol at your new address once you've lived there for at least one month. Failing to update your address within 21 days of moving can be considered an offence, meaning you could receive a fine. When you change your address on the [AEC website](<https://www.aec.gov.au/enrol/change-address.htm>), the change applies to all federal, state, and local council elections.

Driver's licence and vehicle registration

You need to update your address for your vehicle registration and driver's licence when you move. Requirements vary by state:

| State/Territory | Timeframe | How to update | |---|---|---| | NSW | As soon as practicable | [Service NSW](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/) online or in-branch | | VIC | Within 14 days | [myVicRoads](https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/) portal or app | | QLD | Within 14 days | [TMR online](https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/) or Queensland Transport | | WA | Within 5 days | [DoT online](https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/) or in-person | | SA | As soon as practicable | Service SA | | TAS | Within 14 days | Service Tasmania | | ACT | Within 14 days | Access Canberra | | NT | As soon as practicable | MVR online or in-person |

VicRoads requires notification within 14 days, updated through the [myVicRoads app](https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/). Queensland's TMR also requires notification within 14 days, as changing your address can affect both your licence and vehicle registration.

Additional post-move notifications

- **myGov-linked services:** A single update via [myGov](https://my.gov.au/en/services/living-arrangements/finding-renting-and-buying-a-home/owning-a-home/moving-home) cascades to Medicare, Centrelink, and the ATO simultaneously — one of the easiest wins on this list - **Children's schools and childcare:** Provide new emergency contact details and address - **GP, dentist, and specialist medical providers** - **Loyalty programs, subscriptions, and memberships** - **Online shopping accounts** (Amazon, eBay, food delivery apps — update saved delivery addresses to avoid misdirected parcels)

Settling into your new home: the first week

The temptation after a move is to unpack everything at once. Resist it. A phased approach reduces overwhelm and ensures the most important spaces are functional from day one.

Priority unpacking order: 1. **Bedding and bedroom** — you need to sleep well from night one; everything else can wait 2. **Bathroom essentials** — toiletries, towels, medications 3. **Kitchen basics** — kettle, coffee, a few plates and utensils (the rest can wait until after dinner) 4. **Children's rooms** — familiar surroundings reduce anxiety and help little ones settle faster 5. **Living areas** — furniture placement and décor can wait until everything else feels right

Change the locks or have a locksmith rekey the property. You have no way of knowing how many copies of the previous keys exist, and your peace of mind is worth that investment.

Introduce yourself to immediate neighbours. In Australian apartment and townhouse complexes, this also means reviewing any body corporate or owners corporation rules that may affect how you use your space.

Key takeaways

- 85.3% of Australians rated moving house as a stressful process in 2023, up from 79% in 2021. A timeline-based approach is the most practical way to protect your wellbeing throughout the process. - Australians spend around 147 hours planning and completing a move. Spreading tasks across an eight-week window prevents last-minute pressure and reduces the chance of things falling through the cracks. - Failing to update your electoral roll address within 21 days of moving can be considered an offence, meaning you could receive a fine — this is one of several legally required post-move notifications Australians must complete. - [Australia Post's mail redirection service](https://auspost.com.au/receiving/mail-redirection-mail-hold/redirection) forwards letters and parcels from your old address to your new one for 1, 3, 6, or 12 months — apply at least two weeks before your move date to make sure everything's in place. - For pets, hold off releasing them into the

new house until it's quiet, and for cats, confine them to one room for a couple of days with familiar items and spend plenty of time with them while they adjust.

Conclusion

A well-executed move isn't a matter of luck — it comes down to planning applied in the right sequence, with the right support alongside you. Working through each phase of this timeline, from the eight-week declutter and removalist booking through to the post-move administrative obligations unique to Australia, turns what can feel like an overwhelming event into a manageable project with clear, achievable milestones.

Fragile Removals is here to support you through every stage of that process — from initial planning through to safe, careful delivery at your new front door. With more than 20 years of experience and over 50,000 customers who've trusted us with their most valued belongings, we know what a seamless relocation looks like.

This checklist works in concert with the other guides in this series. If you're still deciding which type of removalist service you need, start with **Local vs. Interstate vs. International Removals: Which Service Do You Need?**. If you're moving a business rather than a home, see **Office and Commercial Removals in Australia: What Businesses Need to Know**. And if cost is your primary concern, **How Much Do Removalists Cost in Australia?** provides current benchmark pricing across all move types and home sizes.

The most important move you can make is the first one: start planning earlier than you think you need to. We're here when you're ready.

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Label facts summary

> ****Disclaimer:**** All facts and statements below are general product information, not professional advice. Consult relevant experts for specific guidance.

Verified label facts

No product specification data or Product Facts table was provided in the submitted content. No label facts can be extracted or verified.

General product claims

The following statements are drawn from the editorial and FAQ content. They are sourced from third-party surveys, government bodies, and industry indices — not from product packaging — and are presented here as general informational claims:

- 85.3% of Australians rated moving house as a stressful process in 2023 (Budget Direct) - Moving stress increased from 79% in 2021 to 85.3% in 2023 - Over two million Australians move house each year - Approximately 12% of Australian households relocate annually - Australians spend around 147 hours on average planning and completing a move - Packing alone takes approximately 15 hours on average - The average Australian spends more than \$3,000 AUD on a move - Average removalist budget: \$1,581 AUD (Muval Index 2022) - Average additional moving expenses: \$1,451 AUD (boxes, cleaning, packing services) - Australia Post mail redirection starts at \$34 AUD for one month within Australia - Mail redirection is available for 1, 3, 6, or 12 months - Up to six names can be included on a mail redirection application - Landlord notice periods are typically 14–28 days, often 21 days for periodic tenancies - Building insurance is required from the date of unconditional exchange in most states - 90% of Australians aged 28–47 find moving stressful - Internet connections can take 5–10 business days for a technician visit - Electoral roll address must be updated within 21 days of moving or a fine may apply - Driver's licence update timeframes by state: NSW (as soon as practicable), VIC (14 days), QLD (14 days), WA (5 days) - Fragile Removals has operated for more than 20 years and served over 50,000 customers - RSPCA recommends confining cats to one room for a couple of days when moving