

MONTHLY IMMIGRATION BULLETIN

The latest immigration news, views and announcements

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

Our team at Sanji Caldera Associates wishes you the merriest and happiest year with the most amazing Christmas!

MIGRATION PROGRAM PLANNING

The government will extend migration planning beyond the current 12-month planning cycle to fill critical skills shortages and ensure better collaboration with the states and territories.

Net overseas migration numbers are expected to fall from 510,000 in the 2022-23 financial year to 375,000 next financial year and 250,000 in 2024-25.

The numbers are predicted to stabilise at this lower level from that time on.

International student numbers grew to 270,000 in 2022-23 up from 170,000 in 2018-19 prior to COVID, which also saw a return to Australia of students who had been forced to study online and offshore during the pandemic.

Temporary visa holders, ie Temporary Skilled, Working Holidays Maker and COVID pandemic event visas, accounted for 180,000 places in 2022-23, up from 100,000 in 2018-19.



PROCESSING PRIORITIES FOR SKILLED VISA APPLICATIONS



Skilled visa applications are processed in the following order of priority:

1. For employer sponsored visas, visa applications in relation to an occupation to be carried out in a designated regional area*.
2. Visa applications in relation to a healthcare or teaching occupation.
3. For employer sponsored visas (subclass 186,187,482 and 494) visa applications where the applicant is nominated by an Approved sponsor with Accredited Status.
4. For permanent and provisional visa subclasses, visa applications that count towards the migration program, excluding the Subclass 188 (Business Innovation and Investment (Provisional)) visa.
5. All other visa applications.

A MIGRATION STRATEGY FOR AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government has officially launched its new Migration Strategy, unveiling a comprehensive roadmap for reform. The strategy, released on 11 December 2023, stems from the first thorough review of the migration system in a generation, identifying critical areas for change.



The key announcements include:

SUBCLASS 485



- reducing the length of stay for these international graduates (currently they can go up to 8 years with this visa)
- preventing holders of the new graduate visas from moving back onto student visas
- preventing the stay of International graduates without skills in demand from remaining in Australia.
- reducing the age eligibility from 50 to 35 years of age
- increased English language levels from 6 to 6.5

STUDENT VISAS



- increased English language levels from 5.5 to 6
- reducing the types of courses eligible for student visas with the focus on retaining tertiary university courses
- preventing course swapping
- increased funding for visa integrity and to identify the 'genuine student test'.
- Regulation of education agents through an expansion of the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority will be investigated.

GLOBAL TALENT AND BUSINESS SKILLS



The Global Talent program will be more sharply focused on a relatively small number of migrants who can make outsized contributions to Australia. There will be consideration of a new 'talent and innovation' visa.

The Business Innovation and Investment Program has seen over 80% of company directors invest in small retail or hospitality businesses, rather than in sectors that will drive Australia's future innovation and productivity. The Significant Investor Visa program looks set to continue with some further adjustment.

SKILLING AUSTRALIANS FUND



Consideration will be given to collecting the SAF in smaller increments over time in recognition of the greater freedom of visa holders to change employers. A monthly or quarterly payment model will be explored.

SKILLED TEMPORARY VISAS



A new three-tiered system of visa pathways to replace the TSS SC 482. The '**essential skills**' visa for those earning under \$70,000, the '**core skills**' visa for the \$70-135,000 cohort and the '**specialist skills**' visa for those earning over \$135,000 per year.

- The specialist skills visa pathway will not have an occupational list and a processing turnaround of 7 days. Trades occupations, machinery operators, drivers and labourers will be excluded from this visa class. There will be 3,000 places allocated per year.
- The core skills visas pathway are expected to provide the majority of visa for the program. trades workers will be required to apply under this visa based on a revised 'skills in demand list' developed by Jobs and Skills Australia.
- The details of the essential skills visa pathway are yet to be finally determined. This visa will involve union oversight, be capped and be restricted to specific sectors. To date the aged care and disability sectors have been mentioned.

The visas will be granted for up to 4 years and visa holders will be able to change employers more easily and provide clear pathways to permanent residency. The 'TSMIT' will be indexed annually and a public register of employer sponsors to allow more ease with moving between employers.

LABOUR MARKET TESTING



LMT is to be streamlined, although the only announcement so far is that the requirement to advertise on the Workforce Australia site will be abolished. The validity of advertising period will increase from 4 to 6 months.

LMT will be gradually phased out as Jobs and Skills Australia data on skills shortages improves and a Core Skilled Occupation List created as an alternative to LMT.

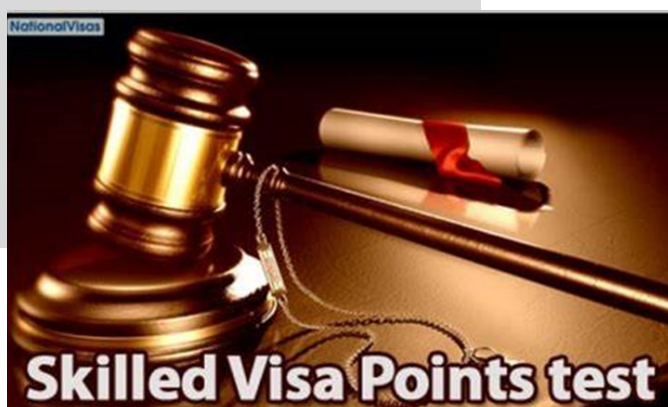
REGISTERED MIGRATION AGENTS



The Government will consult on the feasibility of limiting the involvement of unregistered overseas providers in the migration system, and severely curtail and monitor the provision of unqualified advice from influencing the visa lodgement process.

Strengthening the regulation of registered migration agents (not detailed in the strategy) and combat providers of unscrupulous immigration assistance, including increasing financial penalties.

POINTS TESTS



The points test will be reviewed. Further consultation will occur on a new points test, with the development of a new analysis-based points test to identify more effectively the independent migrants who will make the greatest contribution to the country. This pathway will have a faster pathway to permanent residence for graduates working in skilled jobs.

NORTHERN TERRITORY UPDATES

Migration NT has stopped accepting new GSM nomination applications for the 2023-24 program year as the number received now exceed the available allocation. Existing applications that have been lodged online prior to 4 December 2023 will continue to be assessed under the current eligibility criteria and nominations issues subject to availability.

Some eligible applications may need to be placed on hold until new allocations are received in the 2024-25 program year (commencing 1 July 2024). Those applicants will be contacted via our online portal if this applies to their application. Those who have visas expiring should seek professional advice on their visa options and ensure that they remain lawful during their stay in Australia.



NT DAMA - permanent residence pathways

The new NT DAMA is now providing permanent residency pathways for Subclass 494 to Subclass 191 after working with an NT endorsed employer for 3 years.

Workers initially sponsored on Subclass 482 visas and who have worked in an eligible occupation on NT may also be eligible to be sponsored under the ENS Subclass 186 pathway after 2 years.

CHANGES TO AUSTRALIAN STUDY REQUIREMENT



From 25 November 2023, online study requirements reverted to pre-COVID settings. However, online study undertaken during the COVID concession period (1 February 2020 to 25 November 2023) will continue to count towards the Australian Study Requirement.

As all students were required to return to in-person study in July 2023 by TEQSA, the tertiary education regulator, The Department anticipate that this position should not disadvantage any students, but also provide a clear end date to the announcement of the previous government made in November 2021.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

**YOU CAN
NOW WATCH
OUR PREVIOUS
VIDEOS
AND WEBINARS
FROM BELOW
LINKS,**

- ⇒ **General Skilled Migration Australia - Current Outlook**
- ⇒ **Business Visa to Australia (English Session)**
- ⇒ **Business Visa to Australia (Sinhala Session)**
- ⇒ **Business Migration pathways to Australia**
- ⇒ **Introducing the Sanji Caldera Education foundation**
- ⇒ **Get your PR in Australia with employer sponsored visa? How would an employer-sponsored visa help you achieve your Australian permanent residency?**
- ⇒ **Are you skilled and lacking in work experience? How can 407 training visa help you?**
- ⇒ **Discover much more about 482 subclass**
- ⇒ **How do you apply for permanent residency in Australia?**
- ⇒ **New Budget announcement 2021**



The information contained within this newsletter is to provide advice of a general nature only and is not to be taken as individual advice for your personal circumstances. Information provided is subject to change at any time, and before proceeding with an application you should seek professional personalized advice about your circumstances.

We cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Because Australian immigration law and regulations change regularly, it is best to contact us before making any decisions. Alternatively, up to date information can be checked on the website of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

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