

Iscah Migration Newsletter

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Hey everyone

A short but sweet newsletter this week

We look forward to the Federal Budget on the 11th May when we will likely hear about the migration program numbers for 2021/22

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On to this month's news ...



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1) Recent Articles about migration

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/morrison-s-forthcoming-u-turn-on-migration,14918>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/australia-wants-temporary-visa-holders-back-as-soon-as-possible-says-immigration-minister-alex-hawke>

<https://johnmenadue.com/abul-rizvi-an-immigration-agenda-for-new-home-affairs-minister-andrews>

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/more-online-courses-and-migration-incentives-tudge-calls-for-major-rethink-of-international-education-strategy-20210330-p57fac.html>

<https://johnmenadue.com/proposed-english-language-testing-of-australian-sponsors-and-partners>

<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/travel/visa-changes-from-july-2021>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/advocates-slam-partner-visa-english-test-as-a-paternalistic-measure-that-will-keep-families-apart>

<https://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/covid19-vaccine-wont-guarantee-the-return-of-international-travel/news-story>

<https://ministers.dese.gov.au/tudge/challenges-and-opportunities-international-education>

2) 190 Visa processing

Up to 31/03/2021 DHA had the following 190s Lodged but not yet granted

- Onshore 7,356
- Offshore 5,586

Visa grants for this financial year up to 31/03/2021 are

- Onshore 6,430
- Offshore 1,232

Visas are not always granted in date lodged order even within the same occupations. This is usually because applications are processed by different case officers in different processing centres around Australia.

This is frustrating , but with DHA having other priorities with COVID related visa issues, there is little applicants can do but wait until your case officer is able to finalise your application.

(Source: FOI and Iscah)

3) Selected State updates

<https://liveinmelbourne.vic.gov.au/migrate/program-review>

<http://www.canberrayourfuture.com.au/portal/migrating/article/canberra-matrix-invitation-round>

Change to ACT requirements -

From 1 April 2021, an employer Statutory Declaration, confirming your employment in Canberra is genuine, MUST be attached to your application for ACT nomination.

https://www.migration.tas.gov.au/news/2020-2021_program_year_update

<https://migration.wa.gov.au/services/skilled-migration-western-australia/invitation-rounds/current-invitation-round>

4) NSW 491 update

Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491)

The NSW Skilled Occupation List for the Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491) will be expanded from 1 April 2021 to include a broader range of occupations.

You will be able to find the updated list on our NSW Skilled Occupation List website from 1 April 2021.

From 1 April 2021, NSW will no longer accept applications under Stream 3: Living and working outside of regional NSW.

Candidates can continue to apply under:

- Stream 1: Living and working in regional NSW and
- Stream 2: Recently completed study in regional NSW

For further information on these streams and their requirements, please visit our Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491) website.

Information on how to apply for is available on each NSW Regional Development Australia Committee (RDA) website.

Links to each RDA website are available on our Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491) website.

NSW reduce 491 to two streams ...

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/topics/visas-and-migration/skilled-visas/subclass-491>

NSW 491 occupation lists updated
(half way down page)

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/topics/visas-and-migration/skilled-visas/nsw-skilled-occupation-lists>

(Source: NSW State government)

5) QLD State updates

BSMQ State Nomination Program

The Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491) is now OPEN from 19 April 2021 – 25 April 2021.

If you submitted an EOI from 1–7 February 2021, a new EOI will not be required. Please do not submit multiple EOIs. The first EOI picked up will be processed.

Queensland 491-SBO (Small Business Owners) Pathway is OPEN.

Please note: amended requirements for 491-SBO commenced 1 April 2021.

The Skilled Nominated (Permanent) visa (subclass 190) remains CLOSED and will not re-open in April 2021 as quota will be filled with the current pipeline.

The subclass 190 will re-open in the next financial year once new nomination allocation has been received by the Department of Home Affairs.

Subclass 190 EOIs submitted from 1–7 February 2021 will be continued to be processed.

The Business Program is CLOSED.

Business EOIs submitted up until 24 February 2021 will continue to be assessed up until the below deadlines.

The Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) Subclass 491 visa (from 65 points and above)

Only onshore applicants working in Queensland will be considered.

The Subclass 491 visa is open to COVID critical skill or sectors as previously outlined:

Air Ambulance, Critical Medical, Medical Technology,
Engineering, Critical Infrastructure, Supply Chain
Telecommunications, Film & Television Production,
Maritime Industry, Agricultural Technology Food Technology,
Mining, Emerging Technology, Financial Technology, and
Large Scale Manufacturing.

We are also nominating the following selected hospitality occupations, however, you must meet all the work experience requirements and caveats detailed in the above link.

While we are accepting new EOIs, there is a significant backlog of 491 EOIs yet to be processed, therefore it could be a number of weeks before you receive an invitation.

Please note: not all applicants will receive an invitation due to limited quota available.

If you submitted an EOI from 1 – 7 February, and did not meet minimum criteria (such as work experience requirements) at this date, your application was closed.

Please refrain from contacting BSMQ regarding your place in the queue as this significantly impacts our processing times and ability to provide you with a nomination.

Bridging Visa holders: s48 bar

20 April 2021

By Official BSMQ

If an applicant is currently on a bridging visa and has been invited to lodge documents with BSMQ for a subclass 190 or 491 visa, they must notify Business and Skilled Migration Queensland of any past visa refusals or cancellations.

If an applicant has received a visa refusal or cancellation whilst on a bridging visa they are likely to be subject to a section 48 bar – which means they are unable to lodge a state nominated visa (and most other visas) onshore.

For the remainder of FY20-21 BSMQ is not processing applicants who are s48 barred. This will be reviewed in FY21-22.

If you or your client is section 48 barred, BSMQ is unable to nominate for a subclass 190 or 491 visa and we request that the application be withdrawn.

Please do not contact BSMQ regarding the Australia – New Zealand travel bubble, to request a s48 barred application to be considered – as per above, we are not processing these applications in FY20-21.

(Source: QLD State government)

6) Unofficial update on WA 190/491 State invites – 13th April

WA ran their April invite round today and we have seen for the graduate stream ..

All masters graduates get invited down to the minimum of 65 points. So some Bachelor degree people likely got an invite but not sure how low the score

For the Vocational stream we have seen Diploma (chef) students down to 95 points invited this round

if you have a lower score invite please email details to invite@iscah.com so we can update this info for our followers.

(Source: Iscah)

7) New Home Affairs Minister

The Department of Home Affairs (which oversees the department of immigration) has a new main Minister Peter Dutton has gone and the new minister is Karen Andrews

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Andrews

https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian?MPID=230886

Good news.

The new Home Affairs minister does seem pro skilled migration from recent media coverage -

Karen Andrews MP

The Gold Coast is home to world class universities, including Bond University

& Southern Cross University

in my electorate of McPherson. They attract students from around the globe, pouring millions into the local economy!

That's why I'm so thrilled Immigration Minister David Coleman - Member for Banks

has agreed to redefine our city as regional for migration purposes, meaning we can keep attracting these students, which will grow our universities and our local economy!

Great to work with my colleagues Angie Bell & Stuart Robert to achieve this great outcome!

(Source; DHA and Iscah)

8) Vetassess skills assessment FAQs

<https://www.vetassess.com.au/Portals/0/Downloads/Answers%20by%20Experts%20-%20Formatted%20V2.pdf>

9) Government comment on International students

We are open to considering a pilot of international students coming into Oz but only if (A) the quarantine beds are in addition to those used for returning Aussies; & (B) the state's CMO gives all clear. To date, we have received no such proposals.

(Source: Minister Alan Tudge)

10) Media article about student work hours

From the Australian newspaper –

International students should be able to work unlimited hours and foreign backpackers continue with the same boss for more than six months under a temporary easing of visa restrictions being sought by employers to address COVID-driven labour shortages until overseas travel resumes.

National business groups urged the Morrison government to temporarily remove the cap on international students working more than 40 hours a fortnight and allow unrestricted hours in targeted regions and industries including hospitality, accommodation, cafes and restaurants that are facing shortages.

Employers also called on the government to expand the priority migration skilled occupation list to include chefs, veterinarians, cafe and restaurant managers and seafarers.

While supporting prioritisation of Australians returning home, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said action was needed to facilitate the arrival of more international students and working holiday-makers from low-COVID-risk countries who have been fully vaccinated.

Acting ACCI chief executive Jenny Lambert said skills and labour shortages across Australia were severely impacting business recovery from the pandemic.

“It is a matter of survival for businesses in the accommodation, hospitality, cafes and restaurants sectors to access skilled migration,” she said. “But there is also a critical need for more professionals such as structural and civil engineers, surveyors and veterinarians in order for businesses to grow.

“Regional communities are intensively feeling the loss of migrants, not just for skilled workers, but for people to fill seasonal jobs in agriculture and hospitality where working holiday-makers traditionally filled the gaps.

“Farmers are letting fresh produce rot, and local businesses are either not opening some days, or closing off rooms as they simply do not have the staff to service customers.”

Australian Industry Group chief executive Innes Willox said he would “strongly urge the government to take a fresh look at the working rights of all current on-shore visa holders” to help the many businesses struggling to find labour. “Given that we are unlikely to see significant migration — either permanent or temporary — for the next year at least, it is important that Australia makes best use of all our assets we already have here,” he told The Australian.

“Visa holders are more flexible in where they are willing to travel for work and pockets of shortages persist across the country, despite current unemployment levels.

“Visa holders are a large pool of COVID-safe workers but many have restrictions ... Given many businesses are crying out for workers, visa holders should not be limited by visa work conditions.”

Employers want the government to expand the Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List, which currently identifies 18 occupations that fill critical skills needs to support Australia’s economic recovery from COVID-19.

Ms Lambert backed a Senate inquiry recommendation that the Department of Home Affairs consider adding a range of occupations, including civil engineers, electrical engineers, motor mechanics, cooks, carpenters, electricians and other roles in the hospitality, health, trades, agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

The Electrical Trades Union has slammed the inquiry proposals, accusing the government of wanting to destroy Australian jobs by using COVID-19 as a cover to open the floodgates on skilled migration.

ETU national secretary Allen Hicks said thousands of Australians were still stranded overseas, but the government was “considering putting them at the end of the queue behind foreign workers who can be easily exploited.” “This is an attack on Australian values. It is a disgrace,” he said.

A student visa currently allows the holder to work up to 40 hours per fortnight once their program is in session, and unrestricted hours when the program is not in session. Under the ACCI proposal, the cap would be removed temporarily, allowing the visa holder to work unrestricted hours when in session, targeted to specific regions/industries such as cafes, restaurants, hospitality and accommodation that are currently facing shortages. In its Senate submission, the ACCI identified skills shortages across a number of sectors including an extreme shortage of skilled motor mechanics.

Reasons cited included the growing number of vehicles on the road; a sharp decline in the supply of local apprentice motor mechanics; rapidly emerging new technologies in electric and hybrid vehicles leaving a major skills gap for suitably trained motor mechanics, and a massive uptake of second-hand vehicles by consumers during the pandemic that required repairs and maintenance.

(Source: The Australian newspaper)

Ok folks, that's all for this month.
See you all on Monday 17th May 2021.




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