

Iscah Migration Newsletter

Edition Number 223 | 16th January 2017

HNY to everyone,

Hope that 2017 has lots of highs and visa outcomes are all positive.

This newsletter is sent out on the 3rd Monday of each month and is jam packed with everything we have heard about visa changes.

If you want backcopies go to our website www.iscah.com/free-newsletter , if you want daily updates then checkout our facebook page at www.facebook.com/iscah.migration and if you have suggestions on content or want to get on the monthly mailing list, email us at newsletter@iscah.com

Also get on our Instagram feed to have a smile and make Louise in our office happy, here : www.instagram.com/iscah_migration

Here we go ...



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1) Government U-turn on 417 Working Holiday Visa fees

The Federal Government has abandoned plans to reduce the cost of working holiday visas, despite the Parliament agreeing to the measure less than a month ago.

The mid-year budget update confirmed that prospective backpackers will continue to pay a \$440 application fee for 417 and 462 visas, and not \$390 as the Government had previously promised.

The lower fee was included in the Coalition's package of backpacker tax bills, which passed the parliament on the final sitting day of 2016 and also set a new income tax rate of 15 per cent for working holiday makers.

The ABC understands the Government will have to enact new regulations in the new year, to reverse the fee change. The reduced fee was due to take effect from 1 July 2017.

Farmers and tourism operators have slammed the Government's handling of the backpacker tax debate over the past 18 months, starting with its failure to consult with industry before using the 2015 budget to announce plans to enforce higher taxes.

Tourism and Transport Forum chief executive Margy Osmund said the Government did not consult her industry this time, either.

"Once again, Government is making decisions without talking to the people who will feel the pain and understand the impact," she said.

"We were confused about many aspects of the backpacker tax package, but one thing we weren't confused about was that the Treasurer was intending to lower the rate of application for a visa."

Ms Osmund said the declining number of backpackers visiting and working in Australia is already significant, and the decision to reinstate higher visa application fees will not help.

Treasurer Scott Morrison announced the visa fee reduction in September, when he announced the Government's first compromise on the issue.

It was supposed to mitigate the damage done by Australia's 18-month long debate over backpackers' income tax rates, which had already led to a decline in the number of working holiday makers looking for jobs.

Despite already being approved by Parliament, the Government will revert to the higher fee in order to pay for a pilot program aimed at getting unemployed young Australians into fruit picking jobs.

That program was part of a deal which ensured the Nick Xenophon Team's support for the Coalition's backpacker tax plans in a chaotic final week of the parliamentary year.

A letter to Senator Xenophon from Treasurer Scott Morrison, obtained by the ABC, makes it clear that deal is the reason for the changed position on visa fees.

ABC Rural asked the Treasurer's office why the Government did not remove the visa fee change from the bills it brought to parliament, and why regulation was sufficient to reverse the change which originally required legislation.

In response, a spokeswoman for the Treasurer said the Government made a decision "not to proceed with the visa fee reduction as part of the final package agreed to by Parliament."

The statement went on to say the "decision was made during negotiations over the backpacker tax with NXT in order to fully fund the pilot program to get people on the dole to take up jobs in regional areas. Reversal of the cut was also supported by One Nation as an offset."

(Source: www.abc.net.au)

2) Iscah Visa Video Q&A Series

Welcome to Edition 19 of the Iscah Visa Video Series

This month's edition is about RSMS, Accountants, Nurses, 489s, Students, visitor visas and lots more

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMj46H0Jli4&feature=youtu.be>

3) Iscah analysis of the 4th January 2017 Skill Select Round

Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers – Only 191 places left for the rest of the program year. And with 17 places per round that keeps the invitation mark at 65 points and the wait for an invite growing at that score. An EOI lodged today at 65 points will probably take 30 weeks for an invitation for a 189 visa. 70 points will get an invite straight away.

Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers *65 points EOI dated* *1/11/2016*

Electronics Engineers – Huh ?? So all the 65 pointers were invited which was good news and they dropped into the 60 pointers. We would have expected DIBP to invite a couple of 60 pointers with an EOI date just before the occupation became pro rata on 26/10/2016. However the EOI date was 07/07/2016.

How can an EOI be that old at 60 points that would not have been invited yet ? Even if a person was invited back in July 2016, did not accept the invite in 60 days, and were re invited on 28/09/16, then did not accept a 2nd time, that closes the EOI and so should not have resulted in a 3rd invitation.

Anyhow the important thing though is that all 65 pointers got an invite and there is a chance that a few 60 pointers from October/November 2016 will shortly get an invite for the 189 visa.

Electronics Engineer *6 points EOI dated* *07/07/2016*

Accountants – A 7 day move in the last round suggests that an application lodged today at 70 points will take 8 months to get an invite. Also with 98 places per round the allocation of 2500 places should be filled by the end of May 2017.

Accountants *70points EOI dated* *12/09/2016*

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Auditors – Again this occupation moves quicker than Accountant, at 70 points an EOI lodged today may take around 6 months. With 55 places each round this should last until the first invite round in June 2017.

Auditors *7 points EOI dated* *26/10/2016*

ICT Business Analysts – Back to the normal 60 points. Those at 70 and above will get an immediate invite. Those at 65 points lodging an EOI today are looking at a 12 month or more wait unless DIBP change their Pro rata policy. The years allocation to close in the first round of May 2017.

ICT Business and System Analysts *65 points EOI dated* *05/07/2016*

Software and Applications Programmer – Moving quickly enough to maintain a 4-6 week wait at 65 points. Places to last until the last round in May 2017.

Software and Applications Programmer *65 points EOI dated* *01/12/2016*

Computer Network Professionals – Slowing down again in the movement at 65 points, I would estimate an EOI lodged today at that score would take around 16 weeks for an invite.

There only looks around 6 rounds left at 50 per round so this occupation is likely to close early April 2017

Computer Network Professionals *65 points EOI dated* *20/11/2016*

Other Engineering Professionals – An EOI lodged at 65 points today will take around 4-6 months under current policy. There are only enough places for just over 6 rounds and so this should close late April 2017.

Other Engineering Professionals *65 points EOI dated* *17/11/2016*

Overall Skilled Program – Another poor month for DIBP trying to reach their skilled migration targets. With just 955 invites (instead of the targeted 1600) and over 5,000 places behind their intended 189 invitations, and just 13 (yep 13 instead of the targeted 200) invitations for the 489 family sponsored visa this round, DIBP seem to be accepting their targets are not important anymore. Either that or there is complete disconnect between DIBP and the Department of Education (who manage the skill select process).

Either way the obvious solution is to relax the Pro rata limitations so that highly skilled young professionals can migrate and contribute to the economy with peace of mind. Or lower the passmark to 55 points, although I doubt that will make more than a small dent in the hole DIBP have dug here.

4) Chef Shortage looms

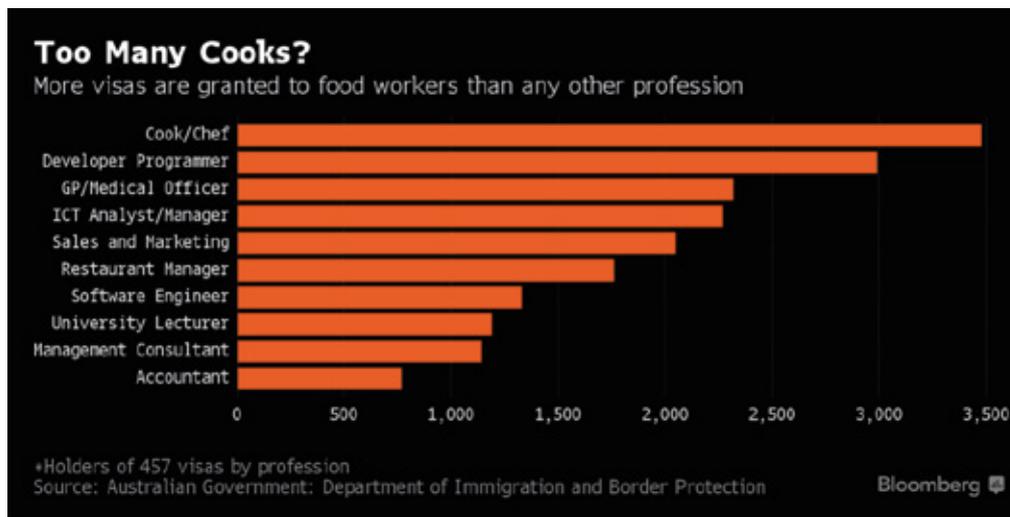
Australia's Visa Crackdown Puts Heat on Chefs

The anti-globalization virus is threatening to infect Australia's restaurants. A nationalist "jobs for Australians first" push by politicians could be bad news for the nation's food lovers, given more work visas are granted to cooks and chefs than any other profession.

The government's planned crackdown on visas, known as 457s, reflects the fallout from Donald Trump's U.S. election win and the Brexit vote, as Australian lawmakers scramble to neutralize populist rallying points. Two problems: the food industry is blossoming in an Australia increasingly enamored by culinary delights; while restaurants are also a major selling point for tourism, a pillar of the country's post-mining economy.

"I really don't think they've really thought this one through," said Andrew Hughes, a lecturer at the College of Business and Economics at Australian National University. "They're trying to resolve a political problem in response to Trump and populism without considering the economic consequences. The flow-on effects will be huge: outside staff shortages, increased wages and higher restaurant bills, it will diminish the multinational culinary experience Australia offers and its appeal abroad."

The other issue is not enough Australians want to become chefs --whether it's the anti-social hours or lack of status, there's a market shortfall. That's the main reason for the proliferation of 457 visas for overseas workers.

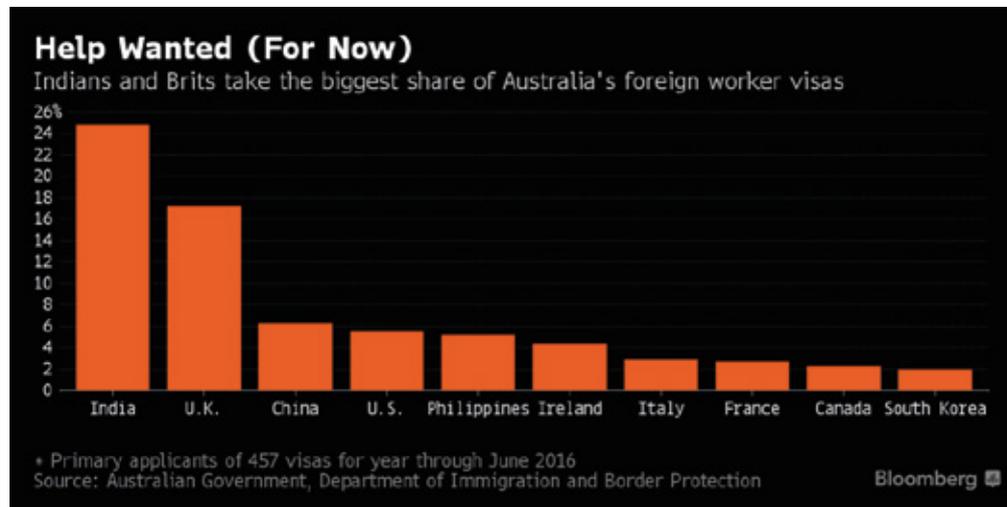


Australia's restaurant, café and catering industry is certainly significant. It employs 554,200 people across 35,900 businesses and is the biggest contributor to the visitor economy, which spans foreign and domestic visitors. The industry body says tourism has been flagged as one of Australia's five super growth areas -- second only to natural gas.

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Culturally, the rise of hugely popular television programs like Master Chef; the increasing numbers of households hiring chefs to come and cook for them as a special event; and the proliferation of restaurants and cafes in Australia highlights the nation's turn from its pre-multicultural "meat and three veg." Yet unlike the U.S., where chefs are sometimes viewed as rockstars, their status is more humble Down Under, as restaurateurs often view them as equivalent to cooks.

This might help partly explain lawmakers' oversight of the profession as they confront a potent political risk.



Trump's surprise election, months after the British electorate unexpectedly voted to quit the European Union, is part of a global wave of populism sweeping the developed world and threatening political elites. While Australia has managed to keep economic inequality relatively under control, both the opposition Labor Party, which proposed the tightening of visa rules, and the ruling coalition that responded with its own measures, fear the spread of anti-globalization.

"But in a way, the horse has already bolted here," said Hughes, referring to the July election of four Australian senators based on a platform of halting Muslim immigration. "I'm not sure cracking down on temporary work visas will stop that. The political issue will remain and they'll have created a new economic problem while they were trying to fix it."

(Source: www.bloomberg.com)

5) Time to forget 457 crackdowns and fix Australia's IT shortage

Australia is currently suffering from a skills shortage. This is a fact.

In recent weeks the Labor party has proposed a series of changes to tighten Australia's skilled immigration policy on 457 visas via a private bill, but its arrival unfortunately comes at a time when the country is desperately seeking highly skilled talent to fill positions across multiple industries, especially in technology. Proponents of the private bill argue that it is prioritising foreign workers over the country's citizens for jobs. They also believe that the prospect of foreign employment becomes more attractive to businesses since it is cheaper than hiring local talent, which is therefore making it difficult for Aussies to compete. While I agree with the sentiment in promoting the use of local talent, as well as establishing safeguards against the exploitation of cheap foreign labour, a government crack down on foreign visas will only hurt the economy rather than fix it.

The truth of the matter is that right now, Australia cannot produce the talent it demands alone — it needs help from other countries to fill the gap.

Let's face it — Australia's tech scene has never really taken off. In years past, it's been faced with many challenges; lack of funding, a brain drain of Aussies moving offshore (having done myself), dwindling participation in STEM based learning, and very little incentives in encouraging startups to set up shop here. However, we're now slowly starting to see a shift that looks much more promising.

Better funding initiatives from government and businesses and the growth of incubators coming from academia and industry are good examples of this.

With companies like Atlassian, Canva and many others leading the way, it seems faith has been restored in an industry that was once considered to be dead in this country.

So how do we continue the momentum of growth and ensure we keep investing and nurturing this ecosystem of innovation, creativity and big ideas?

Open the doors

Opening your doors, rather than closing them seems to be more appropriate.

As much as we would like to think we know it all, there's a wealth of benefit in bringing in outside talent.

Attracting highly experienced workers from abroad can help educate the local workforce on new skills and knowledge, causing a ripple effect across the industry.

As an engineer working in Silicon Valley, I've seen first hand the huge reward a diverse and multicultural workforce can bring to the area and the value it can generate for the economy.

There's a reason California is the biggest economy in the Union. Stacked against nations, it is the world's sixth largest, surpassing France.

Its diversity in both its people and industries is the reason it is such a melting pot for investment and innovation.

If we really want to utilise and grow our local talent, then perhaps we need to rethink our education and training system from the ground up.

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Training kids

Schools should begin introducing Computer Science into the curriculum. Just as Chemistry, Biology and Physics are options available to students.

Learning to code holds as much value as learning to read or write.

With the job landscape set to shift towards a more digital realm in the next decade and beyond, it's crucial that we begin making the right moves in our school system towards STEM based learning.

Like schools, Universities and vocational training institutes have a role to play too.

Exposure to the latest technologies, project based learning, compulsory industry experience and exposure to entrepreneurship are key factors which can help build a well-rounded and competent person ready for the workforce.

StartupAUS's recent Crossroads report recommended that such early stage exposure can "produce graduates who have the ability to create technology-based companies that will underpin Australia's future economic growth workers to meet the current skills shortfall".

At UTS, my alma mater, my engineering degree stressed the importance of mandatory industrial experience and it later served me well after graduation.

Working on real world projects, interacting with co-workers and learning from those with more experience gave me the foundations in both the hard and soft skills I would later use in industry.

Experience in any form - preferably paid - is as important as the underlying education itself.

Career fairs, internships and scholarships are all good steps towards a more skilled workforce, but it will take an effort from businesses offering these work placements to ensure they are learning the right skills for their future careers.

The Future of Work Report commissioned by the NBN and the Regional Australia Institute projects that "one in two Australians will need skills such as programming, software development and skills to build digital technology" by 2030.

It is therefore not only up to schools but parents, tertiary institutions and the government on all levels to provide support in ensuring future job success. This in turn prepares people for the workforce and will hopefully inspire them to pursue more STEM-based careers.

Slowly but surely, it looks like we're making good progress, but clamping down on visas isn't going to speed things up.

If the Labor Party continues with its rhetoric, sooner or later, the notion of skilled labour will cease to exist. Industries will be crippled, foreigners will be put off working here, an exodus of talent offshore will ensue and those wanting to build something for themselves will have no choice but to do it elsewhere.

(Source: www.afr.com)

6) How much 457s get paid and where they come from

457s take up less than 1% of the Australian workforce .. here is an interesting article on source countries and pay rates of 457 visas ..

Australia's 457 Temporary Worker visa program is on the lips of lawmakers again as both the government and the opposition promise to tighten eligibility requirements for businesses and applicants under the scheme.

According to a departmental report issued in June 2016, there are almost 95,000 temporary skilled migrants in Australia under the program.

A total of 55 per cent of applications were granted to "professionals", with 23 per cent granted to technical and trade workers and 17 per cent granted to managers.

We dived a little deeper into that report to see where those workers were coming from, where they were going, what jobs they were doing and how much they were getting paid.

This is what we found:

Workers appear to be well paid, on average

The report details average pay by sector and by location. The total average remuneration (which includes superannuation) for workers under the program is \$94,200.

Hospitality workers are paid, on average, \$58,800 per year.

While the figures aren't calculated in the same way, that roughly lines up with the median hospitality wage provided by livesalary.com.au - \$55,000 as a base salary and \$60,225 in total remuneration.

The highest paid in the 457 program are those in the mining and finance/insurance industries.

Visa holders working in mining are paid an average of \$218,200 and those in finance or insurance are paid an average of \$128,800.

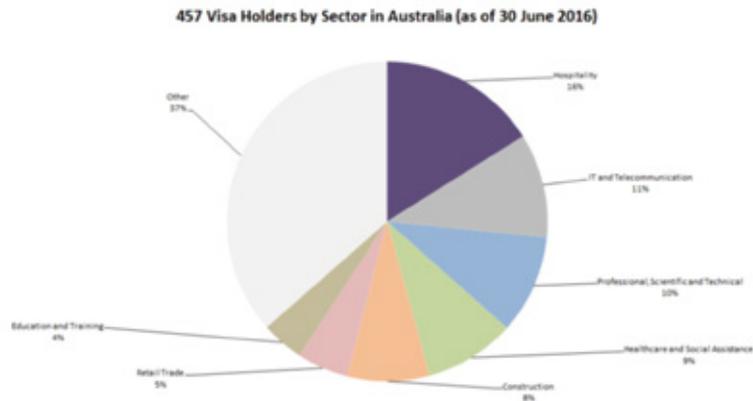
Doctor Joanna Howe, an expert in 457 visas at the University of Adelaide, told SBS that the high wages weren't surprising.

"The data that you've found probably does reflect that the 457 visa program is a skilled migration program," she said. "You're not going to see the same exploitation that you see in the international student and working holiday visa programs."

Laws mandate that employers pay 457 visa holders comparable wages to those who are employed locally, and there's a minimum salary of \$53,000 if a business wants to use the visa.

There were, however, other problems with the 457 visa system, experts said, including how the relationship of dependency between visa holder and employer can lead to exploitation, and the compilation of the Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List itself.

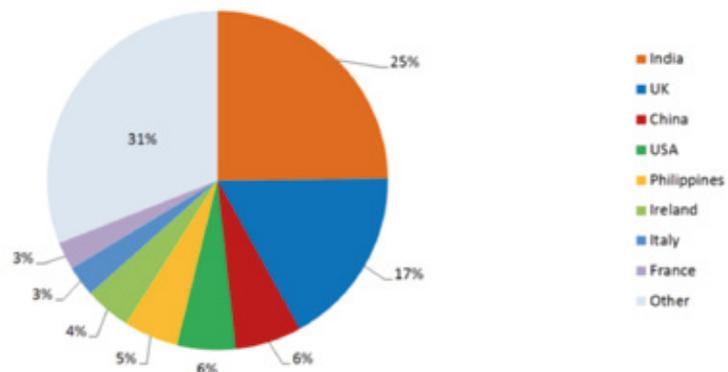
ICT, professional, scientific and technical skills are in high demand



India and the UK are the highest suppliers of temporary workers

India, the UK, China and the USA make up more than half of the source countries.

Source Countries - 457 Visas (Granted 2015-16)



NSW is the most popular destination

New South Wales was, by far, the most popular destination for 457 visa holders, reflecting both the size of the state and the strength of its economy.

(Source; www.sbs.com.au)

7) Minister calls for revamp of citizenship test for migrants

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton has called for a tougher citizenship test for migrants wanting to become Australians.

Mr Dutton said revamping the test "was a debate worth having", as the federal government looks at measures to prevent terrorists from exploiting migration pathways.

He said he wants to see greater focus on people's ability to integrate into Australian society - an individual's willingness to learn English, educate their children and employment prospects or potential welfare dependence.

"There's overwhelming support from the Australian community for these sorts of changes," Mr Dutton said. "There are many people we would want to fast track as well, who have demonstrated the fact that they have integrated well into Australian life."

Key senate crossbencher David Leyonhjelm backed the minister's calls.

"Raising the bar on citizenship is the right response to the concern about immigration which is currently circulating in Australia," Senator Leyonhjelm told AAP.

He believes Australia should look at Switzerland as a potential model where there is a sponsorship program and fellow citizens have to vouch for applicants.

He said the citizenship test should cover people's links to the community, work history and fundamental liberal democratic values such as free speech, equality before the law, rights of women and respect for diversity.

The controversial test was brought in by the Howard government in 2007 and covered Australia's history, sporting greats, government, geography and traditions.

The Rudd government tweaked the test two years later to cover civic duty and responsibilities.

Topics include the significance of Anzac Day, the role of the governor-general, laws and government, and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

Potential citizens must answer correctly at least 15 of the 20 questions to pass - up from 60 percent under the old test.

(Source: www.9news.com.au)

8) A “tougher” citizenship test should not be used to further divide and exclude

Peter Dutton says he would like to see criteria tightened to deny citizenship to those who have not integrated into Australia. AAP/Lukas Coch

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton recently raised the prospect of changing the law around acquiring Australian citizenship.

He acknowledged the vast majority of migrants are well-integrated, and should be fast-tracked for citizenship. However, Dutton would like to see criteria tightened to deny citizenship to those who have not integrated into Australia. While details are unclear, he referred to people involved in serious crime, those who are welfare-dependent, or who have links with extremism.

Dutton was also concerned about people who don't undertake English lessons or prevent their children from being educated.

What's the point of citizenship?

Permanent residents in Australia enjoy almost the full range of civil and political rights as citizens. They have access to the welfare system (after initial waiting periods), Medicare, and education.

Citizens alone are able to vote and have a greater security of residence. They are subject to removal only if they have fought for the armed forces of an enemy country or, since 2014, if they are involved in activity defined to be linked with terrorism.

Citizenship is important for people to feel fully connected and committed to Australia. For some – in particular refugees – the increased security of residence is of extremely high importance, given they are unable to return to their countries of origin for fear of persecution.

For those who came to Australia by boat, citizenship is the only pathway to sponsoring family members to join them.

The pathway to citizenship

Citizenship is the final step in a process of becoming a full member of the Australian community. There are many checks along the way.

When Australia admits permanent residents, the expectation is that they will stay permanently and take up citizenship at some point in the future. When permanent residents become citizens it is a marker of their successful integration.

Knowing that permanent residents are likely to be future citizens, Australia makes difficult policy choices around the balance of skilled, family reunion and humanitarian migration.

The government sets a target for the maximum number of new residents each year, and visa-holders are subject to rigorous checks to ensure they meet the criteria for those visas. These checks include detailed security and character assessments.

By the time a permanent resident is in a position to apply for citizenship, they must have lived in Australia for four years and have remained of good character during that time. If they do not remain of good character, their visa may be cancelled and they can be removed to their country of origin.

The immigration minister regularly exercises this power – even, controversially, in relation to long-term permanent residents with children in Australia.

Also, as part of eligibility for citizenship, a person must be of “good character” and must provide national police checks. The Department of Immigration can also request Interpol and overseas police checks.

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Are citizenship tests the best way?

In 2007, the Howard government introduced a citizenship test to help determine whether applicants satisfied two further requirements for citizenship. They must have:

a “basic knowledge” of English; and

“an adequate knowledge of Australia and of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship”.

Citizenship tests are not well-suited to testing an applicant’s “values”. They are also a crude measure of an applicant’s level of English.

Australia’s test no longer contains questions about cricketer Don Bradman, after it was reviewed in 2008. It now focuses on knowledge of the institutions of government, and of basic constitutional values such as free speech.

Being able to rote learn these values is not an indication that a person lives by them. And the language of values and rights is complicated, and not a useful test of basic English literacy skills.

Can we test for ‘integration’?

Questions remain as to whether it is possible to test for successful integration into Australia.

A recent Productivity Commission report framed integration as both economic integration and social inclusion. It is not just the skills and efforts of individual migrants that are key to promoting integration, but the societal attitudes, and government policies and programs that support settlement and removing barriers to integration.

The most important benefit of citizenship for migrants is the sense of inclusion and acceptance into their adopted community. Requirements for citizenship should therefore promote inclusion, not exclusion.

Discussions that focus on exclusion have the potential to alienate sectors of the community. They are a hindrance to people obtaining a sense of connection in Australia.

As Dutton observed, there are good reasons to encourage permanent residents to take up citizenship: for one, it enhances their integration in the community.

To the extent that poor English and poor understanding of Australian values is a barrier to this integration, the government needs to increase its efforts to educate prospective citizens – not look for ways to exclude them.

(Source: theconversation.com)

9) New PR pathway for New Zealand citizens

A reminder of the proposed visa for NZ citizens to be introduced in July 2017

An additional pathway to permanent residence for 'non-protected' Special Category Visa (SCV) holders

Options for permanent residence for 'non-protected' SCV holders

In acknowledgment of our special bilateral relationship, the Australian Government will provide an additional pathway to permanent residence, and therefore citizenship, for New Zealand Special Category visa (SCV) holders who arrived after 26 February 2001, who have lived in Australia for the last five years and shown a commitment and contribution to Australia.

This additional visa pathway will be available from 1 July 2017, for New Zealand citizens who arrived post 26 February 2001, but on or before, the date of the announcement, 19 February 2016.

How this pathway will work

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection will have responsibility for implementing the pathway.

The pathway will be made available within the Skilled Independent category of the General Skilled Migration (GSM) stream of Australia's annual Migration Programme.

This pathway will allow SCV holders who have been living in Australia for the past five years, and have earned income at or above the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) as evidenced by their Australian Taxation Office Notice of Assessment throughout their qualifying residence period, to apply for permanent residency and thereafter citizenship.

The pathway requirements

Requirements for this visa pathway will include mandatory residence, contribution and community protection criteria. This includes:

have been resident in Australia for the five years immediately prior to visa application

contributed to Australia, demonstrated through income tax returns (Notice of Assessment) for the period of residence evidencing taxable income at or above the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT)

mandatory health, character, and security checks.

Eligible applicants not in Australia the day of the announcement

If an applicant meets all relevant criteria and can demonstrate they were resident on the date of announcement, they will be eligible.

Estimated number of eligible applicants

Approximately 60,000 – 70,000 of the 140,000 post 2001 SCV holders who have been in Australia for at least five years are expected to be eligible.

Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) and eligibility

The Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) is a salary threshold used by the 457 programme as an indicator that an occupation is skilled and to ensure that a visa holder has reasonable means of support whilst in Australia. It is currently set at AUD53,900.

Setting the eligibility threshold at the TSMIT ensures we are providing a pathway to prospective citizens who can make a strong contribution to Australia's future.

This is consistent with the economic objectives of Australia's Migration Programme, as it takes into account a level of contribution based on income tax returns.

Enabling Special Category visa holders to supply evidence from tax returns provides a concession to requirements relative to citizens of other countries, as it does not duplicate existing government requirements and is not onerous, but provides clear evidence of contribution.

This represents a clear concession over existing migration pathways. It reflects the ease of mobility under the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA), while retaining a focus on skilled migration through a demonstrated contribution to Australia's income tax system.

Exemptions to the income test

Limited exemptions to the income test requirement will be considered for particularly vulnerable New Zealand citizens. The mandatory residence criterion, including all other relevant criteria, will still need to be met before a visa could be granted.

Details of how applications for exemptions to the income test will be assessed will be determined between the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and the Minister for Social Services.

Who will be considered a vulnerable individual

This level of detail will be determined between the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and the Minister for Social Services. The mandatory residence criterion would still apply in these circumstances.

As an example, possible vulnerable individuals may include the primary carer of children who, for reasons of a court order are unable to return to New Zealand with their children, and who as an SCV holder is unable to access working age payments.

Will an applicant who has been on maternity/paternity leave during the qualifying period be ineligible if their income fell below the required threshold during that period?

If the applicant continued to be employed during that period, DIBP may take that into account and have the capacity to consider other proof of income, for example, a statement from the applicant's employer covering the period in question.

This level of detail will be worked through by DIBP during implementation of the measure, noting that there is no intention to disadvantage applicants with a consistent record of income and employment but who have taken periods of parental leave.

Visa application charge (VAC)

There will be concessions to the visa application charge (VAC) solely for New Zealand citizens to better reflect the freedom of movement and right of abode they enjoy under the TTTA by:

The visa application charge will be consistent with the General Skilled Migration Programme: AUD3,600 per primary applicant with an additional AUD1,800 for partners, AUD1,800 per dependent child over 18 and AUD900 per child under 18.

Applicants will only have to pay 20 percent of the VAC when they lodge their application, with the remainder to be paid before the visa is granted.

Steps to become an Australian citizen

New Zealanders taking advantage of this pathway will usually be able to apply for citizenship after one year of permanent residence, provided they meet the allowable overseas absences requirement.

Note: This requirement means, a person must not have been absent from Australia for more than one year in total in the four year period, including no more than 90 days in the year before applying

The usual citizenship eligibility requirements will apply such as:

be of good character if 18 years of age or over

be likely to reside, or continue to reside, or maintain a close and continuing relationship to Australia

meet the identity requirement

pass the citizenship test if aged between 18 and 59 years or pass a citizenship interview.

Note: All applicants must submit a valid application and pay the relevant fee.

What if someone arrived in Australia the day before, or on the day of the announcement, will they be eligible to apply in five years' time?

Yes. They could apply, but the grant of a visa will depend on whether they meet all relevant criteria.

Will the visa application charge (VAC) be reduced for the Contributory Parent visa?

No.

10) Skill Select results for 4th January 2017

The table below shows the number of invitations issued in the SkillSelect invitation round on 4 January 2017.

Invitations issued on 26 October 2016

Visa subclass	Number
Skilled - Independent (subclass 189)	955
Skilled - Regional Provisional (subclass 489)	13

Invitations issued during 2016-17

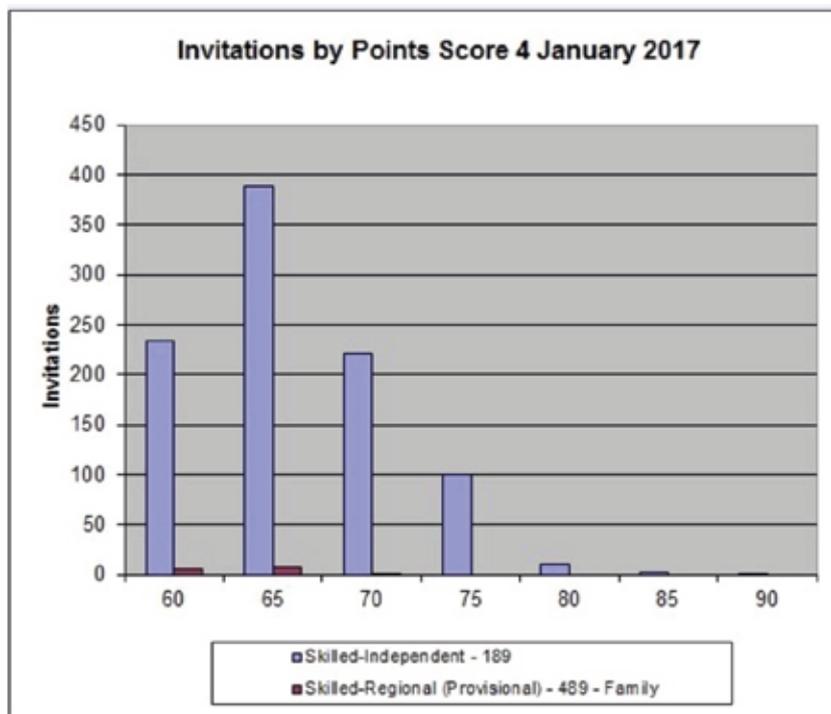
Visa subclass	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Skilled - Independent (subclass 189)	3050	2800	4200	2400	1861	2460	955	0	0	0	0	0	17731
Skilled - Independent (subclass 189)	80	80	80	40	40	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	1014
Total	3250	3000	4563	2500	1930	2530	968	0	0	0	0	0	29,945

The above figures do not include invitations issued for State and Territory Government nominated visa subclasses. State and Territory Governments nominate throughout the month for specific points tested skilled migration and business innovation and investment visas. Separate results for these visa subclasses are provided monthly.

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4 January 2017 results

The following graph shows the points for clients who were invited to apply in the 4 January 2017 round.



Invitation process and cut offs

The highest ranked clients by points score are invited to apply for the relevant visa. For clients who have equal points scores, the time at which they reached their points score for that subclass (referred to as the visa date of effect) determines their order of invitation. Expressions of Interest with earlier dates of effect are invited before later dates.

Visa subclass	Points score	Date of effect
Skilled - Independent (subclass 189)	60	4/01/2017 12.03 am
Skilled - Regional Provisional (subclass 489)	60	28/12/2016 4.30 pm

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Due to high levels of demand, and in keeping with previous years, the below occupation groups will be subject to pro rata arrangements to ensure availability of invitations across the programme year. SkillSelect first allocates available places to Skilled – Independent visas (subclass 189) and then remaining to Skilled – Regional (Provisional) visas (subclass 489). If all places are taken up by subclass 189 visas then there will be no invitations issued for subclass 489 visas in these occupations.

- Accountants
- Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers
- Electronics Engineers
- Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers
- Other Engineering Professionals
- ICT Business and System Analysts

Points scores and the visa dates of effect cut off for the below occupations in the 1 September 2016 invitation round.

ID	Description	Points score	Date of effect
2211	Accountants	70	12/09/2016 7.16 pm
2212	Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers	70	26/10/2016 1.40 pm
2334	Electronics Engineer	60	07/07/2016 6.26 pm
2335	Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers	65	1/11/2016 1.35 am
2339	Other Engineering Professionals	65	17/11/2016 2.53 am
2611	ICT Business and System Analysts	65	5/07/2016 12.26 am
2613	Software and Applications Programmers	65	1/12/2016 2.49 pm
2631	Computer Network Professionals	65	20/11/2016 5.31 pm

(Source: DIBP)

OK folks, see you all on Monday 20th February for edition number 224 and our 20th Anniversary. Yep that's right, Iscah will be celebrating 20 years of bringing the latest visa news and quality visa application management to you.

Think I'll have a beer on that ...



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