



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Andrew Little	<b>Portfolio</b>	Immigration
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Immigration Rebalance - implementing agreed changes to partner work rights	<b>Date to be published</b>	12 July 2023

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
February 2023	Immigration Rebalance - implementing agreed changes to partner work rights	Office of the Minister of Immigration
22 February 2023	Immigration Rebalance - implementing agreed changes to partner work rights DEV-23-MIN-0012	Cabinet Office
25 November 2022	Options for changes to partners work rights and oral item for Cabinet, 28 November	Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment
8 December 2022	Further advice on possible changes to partner work rights	Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment
2 February 2023	Draft Cabinet paper on Immigration Rebalance - implementing agreed changes to partner work rights	Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment

### Information redacted

**YES / NO** (please select)

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld to maintain the privacy of natural persons.



# Cabinet Economic Development Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Immigration Rebalance: Implementing Agreed Changes to Partner Work Rights

**Portfolio**                      **Immigration**

On 22 February 2023, the Cabinet Economic Development Committee:

- 1        **noted** that in December 2021, as part of the Immigration Rebalance, Cabinet agreed to restrict work rights of partners of migrant workers (unless they were in highly paid or Green List occupations) to roles they qualify for in their own right [CAB-21-MIN-0554];
- 2        **noted** that in April 2022, Cabinet noted that the change referred to in paragraph 1 would be implemented through an Accredited Employer Work Visa, although there would be no minimum hours of work requirement [CAB-22-MIN-0145];
- 3        **agreed** that, rather than requiring migrant partners of most temporary workers to apply for an Accredited Employer Work Visa, they can apply for a partnership-based work visa which has conditions that only allow the visa holder to work:
  - 3.1        for an employer accredited under the Accredited Employer Work Visa system; and
  - 3.2        in roles paid at or above the median wage (or the relevant wage threshold for roles covered by uncapped sector agreements or temporary exemptions to the median wage threshold);
- 4        **noted** that the changed implementation approach still supports the original intent of the policy by removing the ability for migrant partners to work in lower skilled, lower paid roles and lessening employer reliance on this group, while also provides greater certainty and a more streamlined process for applicants;
- 5        **noted** that, compared to the approach outlined in paragraph 2, the approach in paragraph 3 forgoes upfront assessment of the role and there is no requirement for the employer to advertise the role to New Zealand citizens and residents first;
- 6        **authorised** the Minister of Immigration to make any ancillary decisions required to give effect to the decision outlined at paragraph 3, in line with the decisions under DEV-23-SUB-0012;
- 7        **noted** that the Essential Skills Work Visa was replaced by the Accredited Employer Work Visa, and closed to new application on 4 July 2022;

- 8 **noted** that the change to partner work rights was only going to apply to partners of Accredited Employer Work Visa holders, and was not going to cover partners of Essential Skills visa holders as this category was being phased out;
- 9 **noted** that the number of visa holders on Essential Skills visas who are eligible to sponsor partners is greater than previously expected, and these partners would be eligible for an open work rights visa and could take up lower-paid, lower-skilled work unless subject to this proposal;
- 10 **agreed** that the changes to the partner of a worker work conditions will also apply to partners of essential skills work visas, in order to ensure a consistent approach to partner work rights is taken and the rationale of the policy is upheld.

Jenny Vickers  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Hon Grant Robertson (Chair)  
Hon Michael Wood  
Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
Hon Willie Jackson  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Peeni Henare  
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan  
Hon Kieran McAnulty  
Hon Ginny Andersen  
Hon Rino Tirikatene  
Hon Dr Deborah Russell  
Jo Luxton MP

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for DEV