



Risk Brief: Offshore Risk Monitoring and Review Accredited Employer Work Visa Outcomes

An overview of Accredited Employer Work Visa Offshore Risk Monitoring and Review from August to December 2022.

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Summary

As part of the Offshore Risk Monitoring and Review (RMR) programme, Risk and Verification (R&V) has reviewed 1225 Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) applications decided between August and December 2022. Of these applications, 6.8% were found to have not had risk effectively managed. While the overall standard of risk management in the AEWV category is generally high, some opportunities have been identified to improve both risk identification and risk treatment practices.

Trends

Risk managed

Immigration risk in the AEWV caseload has generally been well managed. The AEWV 'Risk Not Managed' rate (6.8%) is slightly below the Risk Not Managed rate across all visa categories assessed as part of Offshore RMR between August and December 2022 (6%). This means that risk is being managed marginally better in the AEWV category than in Immigration New Zealand's overall offshore temporary visa caseload.

As part of the Offshore RMR process (R&V) conducted a series of deep dive assessments into areas of suspected risk, often based on information received from international partners. In some instances, instances of suspected risk were disproven. For example, 132 AEWV applications from South Africa were reviewed and were found to contain minimal risk. All applications reviewed were considered to have managed risk appropriately. In this instance, streamlined assessment processes were appropriate to manage the risk presented by the applicants.

Risk not managed

A total of 83 AEWV applications were identified where the risk was deemed to have not been effectively managed. Of these, 37% were due to documents being taken at face value due to risks not being identified by INZ systems. Face value assessments generally resulted from medium and low risk applications being processed in line with the general instruction on work visa processing.

These applications most frequently related to clients from South and South-East Asia, including India, Indonesia and Vietnam. These applications tended to present greater risk that applicants were not adequately skilled to undertake the role they had been hired to undertake, or that they were more likely to be working in a lower skilled role than that which they had been granted a visa to undertake. It was also noted that some risks relating to South American nationals arriving on visitor visas before applying to undertake lower skilled employment were not identified.

Opportunities to improve risk identification amongst these cohorts through triage rules have been identified and will be considered for implementation by R&V.

The remaining applications in which risk was not well managed were generally high-risk applications in which risk was identified by INZ staff or systems but was not well treated. These applications were often accepted at face value despite containing indications of risk. There are opportunities to improve the risk treatment accuracy through training and engagement between R&V and Border and Visa Operations (BVO), with support from Learning and Development (L&D).

A sample of applications on which risk was not considered effectively managed include:

- An applicant with work experience as a carpenter taken at face value. Post decision checks with the applicant’s previous employer revealed their work experience was actually as a Junior Technician.
- An applicant entered New Zealand as a tourist, declaring they were employed as ‘Operation Admin HR’. Nine days after arriving in New Zealand they signed an employment agreement to work as Front of House Assistant. This discrepancy was not detected during the assessment process.
- An applicant’s declared work experience on their current application did not match the claimed employment on their previous application. This discrepancy was not detected during the assessment process.

Recommendations

As a result of this review it is recommended that:

- R&V (including Business, Analytics and Targeting) assesses opportunities identified through Offshore RMR to better detect risk in AEWV applications through new and/or updated triage risk rules.
- R&V conducts a detailed review of risks and opportunities associated with the AEWV category to inform decisions around the continuation of a more streamlined visa assessment process.
- R&V continues to engage with BVO and L&D to improve risk assessment and treatment of high risk AEWV applications, particularly through channels such as country risk training and Quality Circles

Administration

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Production

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