



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Erica Stanford	Portfolio	Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	Accredited Employer Work Visa – progressing coalition commitments and improving efficiency	Date to be published	14 February 2025

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
December 2024	Accredited Employer Work Visa – progressing coalition commitments and improving efficiency	Office of the Minister of Immigration
4 December 2024	Accredited Employer Work Visa – progressing coalition commitments and improving efficiency ECO-24-MIN-0286 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES / NO (please select)

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Some information has been withheld for the reasons of Confidential advice to Government.



Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Minute of Decision

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Accredited Employer Work Visa: Progressing Coalition Commitments and Improving Efficiency

Portfolio Immigration

On 4 December 2024, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee (ECO):

Background

- 1 **noted** that in August 2024, ECO invited the Minister of Immigration to report back in December 2024 with proposals for the second phase of the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) review [ECO-24-MIN-0164];
- 2 **noted** that current processing times and AEWV settings are causing concern for employers who need to fill skill and labour gaps;

Supporting access to skills and labour gaps in the short term

- 3 **agreed** to remove the median wage requirement for the AEWV, and instead have no wage requirement (i.e. rely on the New Zealand minimum wage);
- 4 **agreed** to remove components from existing sector agreements that provide for a lower wage threshold and end agreements that then become redundant;
- 5 **noted** that the only sector agreements remaining will be the transport and care workforce sector agreements which provide residence pathways;
- 6 **agreed** to reduce the wage requirement for the current seasonal pathway under the Specific Purpose or Event Work Visa to align with the decisions in paragraph 3 above;
- 7 **agreed** to increase the income threshold for supporting dependents on an AEWV to an annual rate equivalent to a 40-hour work week paid at 80 percent of the median wage (updated annually);
- 8 **agreed** to amend the requirement for employers recruiting in ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) Level 4 and 5 roles to engage with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) as part of the Labour Market Test to a declaration that employers must, in good faith, advertise with MSD and interview New Zealand candidates that could be suitable for the role;
- 9 **agreed** to increase the duration of an AEWV for applicants in ANZSCO Level 4 and 5 roles from two years to three years;

- 10 **agreed in principle** to introduce a three-year visa for specified roles where there is a highly experienced global seasonal workforce for a maximum stay of 9 out of 12 months, subject to the report back paragraph 12 below;
- 11 **agreed in principle** to introduce a seven-month seasonal visa for specified roles with lesser skill requirements where there are surging labour needs during peak activity periods [REDACTED] Confidential advice to Government [REDACTED] subject to the report back paragraph 12 below;
- 12 **invited** the Minister of Immigration to:
- 12.1 in consultation with the Minister for Social Development, review the Labour Market Test changes agreed in paragraph 8 above after 12 months to ensure the changes are working as intended;
- 12.2 report back to ECO by June 2025 on the detailed design of the visas referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11;
- 13 **agreed** to reduce the minimum experience requirement for the AEWV to two years;
- 14 **agreed** to extend interim work rights to AEWV applicants who are applying from any work visa type or from a student visa that allows them to work during term time;
- 15 **authorised** the Minister of Immigration to make changes to how ANZSCO skill levels are recognised in the immigration system for a small number of roles, as required;
- 16 **agreed** to reduce the domestic workforce threshold, for triangular employers in the following construction roles, from 35 percent to 15 percent:
- 16.1 bricklayers;
- 16.2 carpenters and joiners;
- 16.3 floor finishers;
- 16.4 painters;
- 16.5 glaziers;
- 16.6 plasterers, tilers and plumbers;
- 16.7 building and plumbers' labourers;
- 16.8 concreters;
- 16.9 fencers;
- 16.10 insulation and home improvement installers;
- 16.11 paving and surfacing labourers;
- 16.12 railway track workers;
- 16.13 structural steel construction workers;
- 16.14 construction and mining labourers;
- 16.15 earthmoving plant operators, forklift drivers, and mobile plant operators;

Improving efficiency

- 17 **noted** that alongside the above policy changes, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment will continue to identify operational improvements to current requirements to assess applications in the AEWV, including re-designing the ICT and operational settings (and immigration instructions) in key parts of the AEWV to enable greater risk-based streamlining to improve efficiency across the process;
- 18 **authorised** the Minister of Immigration to make further policy decisions to give effect to the above decisions, as required.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon David Seymour
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Chris Bishop (Chair)
Hon Simeon Brown
Hon Erica Stanford
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Judith Collins KC
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Simon Watts
Hon Melissa Lee
Hon Nicola Grigg
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Mark Patterson
Simon Court MP

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Office of Hon Chris Bishop
Office of Hon Erica Stanford
Office of Simon Court MP
Officials Committee for ECO