

Summary of Progress in the Immigration Portfolio

The Government's vision is to: Build an economy that is growing and working for all of us; Improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders and their families; and, Make New Zealand proud.

The immigration system supports this vision by:

Vision



The key priorities for the Future of Work Ministerial group are:

- Better aligning and co-ordinating policies, systems and processes across the immigration, workplace relations and safety, income support, education, and employment portfolios to get more New Zealanders into work, with a particular focus on improving labour market outcomes for priority groups
- Supporting the transformation of the New Zealand economy from low skill/wage jobs towards high skill/wage jobs, and (as part of this)
- Helping workers and firms anticipate and constructively respond to the impact of technology change on jobs and skill requirements, including those workers at the highest risk of job displacement and those facing mid-career transitions

Other Government priorities with implications for immigration include:

- Refreshing New Zealand's approach to the Pacific islands region, including developing deeper partnerships and adopting principles of engagement based on mutual understanding, friendship, mutual benefit, collective ambition, and sustainability
- Deepening cooperation with Australia to enhance New Zealand's security and prosperity, including by streamlining trans-Tasman travel and working together to counter people smuggling and trafficking of persons in the region
- Supporting the rules-based international system and increasing New Zealand's overseas development contribution and improving responses to global emergencies and issues

Government Priorities

2018 Immigration portfolio priorities

Better match the skills New Zealand needs with the skills New Zealand gets and ensure that the immigration, education and welfare systems work together to improve labour market outcomes for New Zealanders*

*below are the first steps of immigration's contribution to wider work to better align labour market systems and to address skill and labour shortages that is underway

Tackle the exploitation of migrants, particularly of international students and temporary workers

Review New Zealand's approach to Pacific migration issues

Changes to Refugee Quota

Make immigration system improvements and contribute to the security of New Zealand's borders

Upcoming papers

A new approach to employer-assisted work visas and regional workforce planning

Seek agreement to consult on a set of proposals to:

- improve the employer-assisted temporary work visa system, and
- ensure better connections between the immigration, education/skills and welfare systems

Would make it more difficult to employ low skilled migrants where New Zealanders are available and easier to recruit higher-skilled migrants

Visa approvals ↓

Due to DEV in December 2018

Changes to immigration settings to support the KiwiBuild programme

Sets out the key elements of an immigration package to support KiwiBuild, the Construction Skills Strategy, and the wider construction sector

Would target more facilitative visa settings at construction occupations whilst ensuring better labour market outcomes for the domestic construction workforce

Visa approvals ↑

Cabinet decisions taken 28 May 2018 and 17 September 2018.

New Zealand Residence Programme

Seeks agreement to the next iteration of the New Zealand Residence Programme, which sets out who gets residence in New Zealand

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Unknown - Impacts will depend on the decisions made by Cabinet

Visa approvals ↔

Due to DEV in December 2018.

Changes to immigration settings for international students

Seeks agreement on proposed changes to restrict access to post-study work visas to higher qualified former international students and tighten access to work and student visas for family members of students

The changes would reduce the number of students who stay and work here after study and may reduce the number of international students

Visa approvals ↓

Cabinet decisions taken 6 August 2018.

Establishing a policy review into temporary migrant worker exploitation

To seek agreement to establish an internal policy review into temporary migrant worker exploitation (including international students) to make recommendations to mitigate migrant vulnerability and reduce exploitation

Strengthen the labour market and immigration protections for migrants.

Visa approvals ↔

Cabinet decisions taken 10 September 2018.

Pacific migration Review

Seeks agreement to a proposed immigration policy work programme from 2018-2020 for Pacific immigration policies

Unknown - No specific changes are proposed at this stage. In the longer term impacts will depend on the decisions made by Cabinet

Visa approvals ↔

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Increasing the Annual Refugee Quota to 1,500 Places

Seeks Cabinet agreement to increase the annual Refugee Quota to 1,500 by June 2020, and to the funding required to implement the increase

Increase in number of permanent residence visas granted (by 500 annually)

Visa approvals ↑

Cabinet decisions taken 17 September 2018.

Setting the next 3 year Refugee Quota programme

Seeks Cabinet agreement to proposals on the international regional allocation and distribution of sub-categories of the Refugee Quota for 2019/20-2021/22 years.

No impact on overall numbers

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Proposal to develop an Electronic Travel Authorisation

Seeks agreement to introduce an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), which would be mandatory for most people who currently travel to or transit New Zealand visa free

An estimated 1.3 million visa free visitors per annum would be required to hold an ETA

Cabinet decisions taken 12 September 2018.

Removal of departure card

Seeks agreement to the removal of the requirement that travellers complete a physical departure card at the border (Statistics New Zealand has developed new measures which do not depend on departure card data)

Would facilitate border processes for all passengers departing New Zealand

Cabinet decisions taken 20 August 2018.

Expected impacts

Status / Timing