



Skilled Visa eNews – Special edition March 2019

Migration Program ceiling for 2019-20

The Migration Program planning ceiling for 2019-20 is 160,000, with a continued focus on skills. More than two thirds of the Program is allocated to the Skilled stream, with a focus on categories that allow employers or states or territories to nominate skilled migrants. Further information is available [here](#).

New skilled regional provisional visas

There will be two new skilled regional provisional visas introduced in November 2019:

- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa: for people sponsored by an employer in regional Australia.
- Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa: for people who are nominated by a State or Territory government or sponsored by an eligible family member to live and work in regional Australia.

Under these new visas, migrants will be required to live and work in a regional area of Australia for at least three years before they are eligible to apply for permanent residence.

These new regional visas will provide greater incentives for regional employers to nominate skilled workers, including priority processing of applications and access to additional skilled occupations. Based on current eligible skilled occupation lists:

- the Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa will have almost 700 eligible occupations; and
- the Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa will have over 500 eligible occupations.

Holders of the new skilled regional provisional visas will need to live and work in regional Australia. Visas will be granted with a validity period of up to five years.

The introduction of the two new regional visas will not impact people who already hold existing permanent skilled visas. Applications lodged prior to November 2019 will continue to be processed as normal. Further information is available [here](#).

New permanent visa pathway

A new permanent visa pathway, the Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) Visa, will also be available for holders of the new regional provisional visas in November 2022. This new permanent visa will provide further incentives for migrants to bring their skills to regional Australia and grow the Australian economy.

Definition of Regional Australia

In November 2019, the definition of Regional Australia for all skilled visas will be simplified and expanded to include all of Australia except for the following metropolitan areas:

- Sydney
- Melbourne
- Brisbane
- Gold Coast
- Perth

Areas within the new regional definition will have access to the two new skilled regional provisional visas, which enable migrants and employers to access a wider range of occupations as well as receiving priority processing.

Expansion of Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs)

The expansion of Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) will get the right skills into the right regions, to support regional businesses and make sure local communities thrive.

These tailored agreements are a formal agreement between the Australian Government and a specific regional area. They enable participating regions to respond to their unique workforce shortages by accessing experienced overseas workers for vacant skilled or semi-skilled occupations that cannot be filled by Australian workers from the local labour market.

The Northern Territory DAMA has been operating successfully since 2015 and a further five-year agreement commenced in December 2018. The Minister has also agreed to establish DAMAs in additional regional locations:

- Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia (Goldfields)
- Regional South Australia
- Adelaide City
- Great South Coast, Victoria (which was announced late last year).

Further Information

As settings for these new measures are finalised, including transitional arrangements, more information will be made available on the Department's website.