

## Table of Contents

SkillSelect.....	2
Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency.....	2
Skilled Independent visa (Subclass 189).....	5
Bid to keep out dentists fails in visa shake up in 2014-15 Occupational Ceiling List.....	6
Record number of visas granted.....	6
Validity of Trades Recognition Australia skills assessments.....	6
Teen stowaway granted a visa.....	7
The people of Australia.....	7
Majority of Australia’s recent migrants are working.....	8
Migration agents’ regulator to be reviewed.....	8
Singapore e-passport holders.....	9
Australia facing asylum seeker royal commission.....	9
Children held in residential detention to be released into community.....	9
AIDS conference delegates seek asylum in Australia.....	10
Immigration Department files reveal visa fraud and migration crime.....	11
Human Rights.....	12
Same-sex couples can use British laws.....	12
New Work for the Dole.....	12
Among boat people, a would-be governor.....	13
A.P.B. Education.....	13
Specialist IELTS Test Training and Coaching.....	13
Contact us.....	14

## **SkillSelect**

SkillSelect is an online service that helps Australia manage its skilled migration programme. It helps to ensure that the skilled migration programme is based on Australia's economic needs. It supports the government in managing who can apply for skilled migration, when they can apply and in what numbers. As a result, the time taken to process a visa application is significantly reduced.

SkillSelect also helps address regional skill shortages. SkillSelect allows intending migrants to indicate if they are willing to live and work in regional Australia. This is of particular benefit to employers experiencing regional skill shortages and state and territory governments attempting to settle migrants in regional Australia.

Skilled workers and business people interested in migrating to Australia can be considered for a skilled visa by submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) through SkillSelect.

An EOI is an indication that you would like to be considered for a skilled visa. An EOI is not a visa application. You will be asked to provide a range of information in your EOI depending on the visa you want to be considered for, such as:

- Basic personal information
- Nominated occupation
- Work experience
- Study and education
- Level of English skills
- Details of a skills assessment
- Business and investment experience (if applicable)

These skilled workers and business people can then be found and nominated for skilled visas by Australian employers or state and territory government, or they might be invited by the Australian Government to lodge a visa application.

All people interested in points based skilled migration or business investment and innovation visa programmes will need to submit an EOI and receive an invitation in order to lodge a visa application.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/Work/Pages/SkillSelect/SkillSelect.aspx>

## **Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency**

AWPA has flagged a number of occupations which were borderline in terms of their inclusion on the Skilled Occupations List (SOL). These occupations may be removed in future years subject to monitoring of the labour market, education and migration data and evidence from stakeholders in relation to future oversupply issues, migration outcomes and areas of specific need.

The list of flagged occupations, currently included on the SOL, that are being monitored for significant changes in labour market conditions:

224111	Actuary
224511	Land Economist
224512	Valuer
232212	Surveyor
232213	Cartographer
232214	Other Spatial Scientist
232611	Urban and Regional Planner
233111	Chemical Engineer
233211	Civil Engineer
233212	Geotechnical Engineer
233213	Quantity Surveyor
233214	Structural Engineer
233215	Transport Engineer
233411	Electronics Engineer
233511	Industrial Engineer
233512	Mechanical Engineer
233513	Production or Plant Engineer
233911	Aeronautical Engineer
233912	Agricultural Engineer
233913	Biomedical Engineer
233914	Engineering Technologist
233915	Environmental Engineer

233916	Naval Architect
234611	Medical Laboratory Scientist
234711	Veterinarian
252312	Dentist
252712	Speech Pathologist(a)
321111	Automotive Electrician
321211	Motor Mechanic (General)
321212	Diesel Motor Mechanic
321213	Motorcycle Mechanic
321214	Small Engine Mechanic
322211	Sheetmetal Trades Worker
331112	Stonemason
331111	Bricklayer
331211	Carpenter and Joiner
331212	Carpenter
331213	Joiner
332211	Painting Trades Workers
333111	Glazier
333211	Fibrous Plasterer
333212	Solid Plasterer
399111	Boat Builder and Repairer
333411	Wall and Floor Tiler
351311	Chef
399112	Shipwright

411211	Dental Hygienist
411212	Dental Prosthetist
411213	Dental Technician
411214	Dental Therapist

<http://www.awpa.gov.au/our-work/labour-market-information/skilled-occupation-list/pages/flagged-occupations.aspx>

### **Skilled Independent visa (Subclass 189)**

This visa is for points-tested skilled workers who are not sponsored by an employer or family member or nominated by a state or territory government. It allows you to live and work in Australia as a permanent resident.

You might be eligible to apply for this visa if invited, you must have:

- Be aged under 50
- Nominated an occupation that is on the relevant Skilled Occupations List
- Obtained a suitable skills assessment for that occupation
- Achieved the minimum score specified in your letter of invitation based on the factors in the points test
- Scored at least competent English in a recent IELTS test or have a passport from a designated country.

The Skilled-Independent visa (subclass 189) is a permanent residence visa for points-tested skilled workers who want to work and live in Australia. You can be in or outside Australia when you apply and when the visa is granted. If the application is made while the applicant is in Australia, a Bridging A visa is granted.

This permanent visa lets you and any family members you have who have also been granted this visa to:

- Live in Australia indefinitely
- Work and study in Australia as a permanent resident.
- Enrol in Medicare, Australia's scheme for health-related care and expenses
- Apply for Australian citizenship (when you are eligible)
- Sponsor eligible relatives for permanent residence
- Travel to and from Australia for five years from the date the visa is granted (after that time, you will need a resident return visa or another visa to return to Australia).

For more information contact David Bitel.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/Visas/Pages/189.aspx>

## **Bid to keep out dentists fails in visa shake up in 2014-15 Occupational Ceiling List**

The Federal government has reduced the number of foreign accountants able to get permanent visas but local dentists have failed in a bid to impose new restrictions on their overseas counterparts working in Australia.

The government decision to cut the number of foreign accountants came after the Australian Workplace and Productivity Agency rejected a bid by the Department of Employment to have accountants removed from the Skilled Occupations List completely.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/industrial-relations/bid-to-keep-out-dentists-fails-in-visa-shakeup/story-fn59noo3-1226953823161?nk=04861a22b26985b63480952649f6386c>

## **Record number of visas granted**

The Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) have announced that 190,000 migration visas were granted last year – over 5,000 more places than that last year, setting a new record in successful visa applications.

The SkillSelect scheme is reported to have enabled the delivery of 38% of the General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa applications. Martin Bowles, Secretary of the DIBP had the following comments: “The past year has been one of unprecedented change. To give an idea of the scope of our work, this year alone Australia had more than 30 million cross border movements by students, tourists and temporary migrants, as well as permanent residents and Australian citizens.

<http://www.visabureau.com/australia/news/18-06-2014/record-number-of-australian-visa-grants-announced.aspx>

## **Validity of Trades Recognition Australia skills assessments**

From 1 July 2014 skills assessments issued by TRA or a TRA approved Registered Training Organisation and lodged in support of certain types of skilled visa applications must be no older than three years from the date of issue. Skills assessments issued by TRA or TRA approved RTO in support of visa applications lodged with the DIBP prior to 1 July 2014 will not be affected by this change.

This will affect intending applicants who obtained pre Job Readiness Program skills assessments.

This change follows the amendment of the Migration Regulations effective from 1 July 2014. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that a skills assessment meets the current occupational requirements for the nominated occupation in Australia

<http://www.immi.gov.au/News/Pages/new-validity-requirement-skills-assessments.aspx>

## **Teen stowaway granted a visa**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has decided to grant a permanent visa to a 15-year-old Ethiopian refugee, despite earlier indicating he would only do so if it was in Australia's national interest. The boy's lawyer, David Manne, says his client is now an Australian permanent resident.

"This is a great outcome for our client. It is also a great outcome for the rule of law and is clearly in the national interest," Mr Manne said.

The boy has told Fairfax through his lawyers: "It has saved my life. It's a huge relief to finally have an answer."

The teenager, who came to Australia last year as a ship stowaway, was found to be a refugee, but was blocked from getting a protection visa due to a government cap.

The Immigration Minister capped the number of protection visas granted in the financial year at 2,773, after the Senate blocked the Government's re-introduction of temporary protection visas.

What lies behind that decision is unclear. I don't want to speculate as to precisely why the decision has been taken. In June, the boy's lawyers won a High Court challenge to the cap.

Human rights lawyers are hoping the Immigration Minister has set a precedent in granting a permanent protection visa to a teenage stowaway.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-22/visa-for-teen-stowaway-may-have-set-precedent-says-lawyer/5614746>

## **The people of Australia**

A new report compiling data from the 2011 Census provides a key statistical picture of our population and the make-up of our migrant communities. The People of Australia report, based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, is a snapshot of a modern nation attracting people from around the world including increased migration from Asia. Comparing 2006 and 2011 census data, the report provides profiles of our existing migrant pool. 'We are a wonderfully successful and cohesive modern immigrant nation that has welcomed those from across the world to become part of the Australian story,' Minister Morrison said.

Statistics include the education, employment and income of migrants by birthplace, religion and language.

Key statistics of The People of Australia report reveal:

- 252 overseas places of birth represented in the current Australian population, with England in top spot with more than 900 000 people and New Zealand second with 483 000
- The growing importance of Asian migration to Australia - in 2011, there were 148 000 more people born in India, 112 000 more Chinese and 51 000 more people born in the Philippines compared with 2006
- The main non-English languages spoken in Australia are Mandarin, Arabic, Italian, Cantonese, Greek and Vietnamese which are all spoken at home by at least 1 per cent of the population.

The report should be a source of great pride to all Australians that we have been able to unite from all parts of the world in a modern, cohesive and successful nation.

The People of Australia report is available on the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website.

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/sm/2014/sm215811.htm>

## **Majority of Australia's recent migrants are working**

Almost two thirds of Australia's 1.5 million recent migrants and temporary residents were employed in 2013, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Australian Bureau of Statistics Director of Culture, Recreation and Migrant Statistics, Andrew Middleton, said the 2013 Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey collected information about migrants who have come to Australia over the past 10 years and how they have fared after their arrival.

"About 11 per cent of recent migrants who have had a job in Australia had their first job arranged before their arrival. Others spent three months or less looking for their first job," Mr Middleton said.

Just over one third of recent migrants experienced difficulty finding their first job, with the most common reason being a lack of Australian work experience or references followed by language difficulties.

Nearly half of recent migrants who have had a job since arrival received some form of help to find their job. The most common form of help was friends or family, followed by help from Centrelink or an employment services provider.

Recent migrants are defined as people who were born overseas, arrived in Australia after 2003, were aged 15 years and over on arrival, were not an Australian or New Zealand citizen on arrival.

Temporary residents are defined as people who were born overseas, arrived in Australia after 2003, were aged 15 years and over on arrival, were not an Australian or New Zealand citizen on arrival, do not currently hold New Zealand citizenship, do not have permanent Australian resident status and are planning to stay in Australia for 12 months or more.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/latestProducts/6250.0Media%20Release1Nov%202013>

## **Migration agents' regulator to be reviewed**

The Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA) as an industry regulator will be the subject of an independent review, Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Senator Michaelia Cash said.

This review is consistent with the government's commitment to de-regulation.

'The review will examine and report on the OMARA's organisational capability and challenges, as well as the quality and effectiveness of its internal controls and governance,' the Minister said.



'It will examine the regulatory framework and powers of the OMARA to determine if they are still appropriate and identify opportunities to reduce regulatory burden.'

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/mc/2014/mc215676.htm>

## **Singapore e-passport holders**

Singapore visitors in Australia can now use SmartGate self-service counters at any of the country's eight major airports on a permanent basis.

Australia's assistant minister for immigration and border protection, Senator Michaelia Cash, announced that following a successful trial, SmartGate use will be permanently expanded to eligible Singapore nationals holding e-passports.

SmartGate is already available to Australian, New Zealand, US and UK citizens on a permanent basis and to Swiss electronic passport holders under trial arrangements.

In response to media queries on the permanent extension of SmartGate to Singapore by the Australian Government, a spokesman from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said:

"Singapore welcomes the Australian Government's announcement today that SmartGate has been permanently extended to eligible Singapore passport holders.

<http://news.asiaone.com/news/relax/australia-permanently-extends-self-service-counter-use-singapore-e-passport-holders>

## **Australia facing asylum seeker royal commission**

Australia's poor treatment of asylum seekers would likely result in a royal commission and compensation claims from military personnel forced to participate in border protection operations, influential Australian businesswoman Janet Holmes a Court says.

At a lecture in Hobart, Ms Holmes a Court accused successive Australian federal governments of deliberately treating asylum seekers badly in order to deter others. She also attacked what she said was the Government's policy of deterrence and the suffering associated with it, especially on Nauru, saying it would have dire consequences for Australia.

She said there "was bound to be a royal commission, an eventual apology and a massive compensation payout...both for those who had been mistreated and the military personnel who'd been made to carry out the policy." Read the full story.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-16/asylum-seeker-royal-commission-needed-janet-holmes-a-court-says/5675426>

## **Children held in residential detention to be released into community**

More than 1,500 children held in asylum seeker community detention in Australia will be released, but Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says the policy will not extend to children being held on Nauru

and Christmas Island. The Government has announced new bridging visa arrangements to allow 1,547 children under the age of 10 held in residential facilities to be released into the community.

He says the measure will save taxpayers more than \$50 million. It has been reported in News Limited publications that the policy will also extend to 150 children being held in detention facilities such as Sydney's Villawood centre, however the Minister's press release makes no reference to that. He also says the children will be released on bridging visas before the end of this year.

Previously, families had been held in community detention, with no visa, no right to work and with requirements to regularly report to the Immigration Department. But 148 children on Christmas Island and around the same number of children on Nauru will not be released.

New arrangements include:

- Assistance for families to stay in suitable transitional accommodation
- Case worker support
- Support for children to go to school
- Provision of emergency relief support payments
- Access to complex health support
- Access to orientation programs
- Access to English language courses

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-19/detained-children-set-for-release/5679994>

## **AIDS conference delegates seek asylum in Australia**

At least 25 delegates who attended Melbourne's high profile AIDS conference intend to seek asylum in Australia after failing to board their flights home. The men and women, who are mostly from African countries including Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia, decided to stay in Melbourne after the week-long conference finished on July 25.

Many of them are now homeless and have been put in motels, backpacker hostels and rooming houses across the city.

Fairfax Media has spoken to three male African asylum seekers at length, but has chosen not to identify them over concerns for their safety if they were forced to return to their home countries. One of the men said he had been imprisoned multiple times because he was a member of an opposition political party. Another has faced violent persecution because of his ethnicity. "People told me 'you should go back to your own country'," he said.

Heather Holst, chief executive of homelessness service HomeGround, confirmed the organisation was assisting 14 delegates to find and pay for accommodation. She said the asylum seekers' tourist visas had expiry dates in either August or October. HomeGround has funding to house the group for at least three weeks.

"Its hard though when people don't have money at all," Dr Holst said.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/aids-conference-delegates-seek-asylum-in-australia-20140803-zzzkn.html>

## **Immigration Department files reveal visa fraud and migration crime**

Ramant visa fraud and migration crime involving people flying into Australia are going unchecked while the government focuses on stopping boats, according to secret government files detailing entrenched Immigration Department failings.

Hundreds of pages of leaked confidential departmental documents obtained by Fairfax Media reveal that Australia's national security is being compromised by wide-scale visa rorting and migration rackets operating with impunity, including some with links to terrorism or organised crime.

The confidential Immigration Department files reveal internal warnings over several years that widespread visa fraud is "business as usual yet remains largely untreated" because the department's investigation and enforcement capacity has collapsed.

Secret departmental operations have estimated that as many as in 10 skilled migrant visas may be fraudulent, while an internal inquiry into Afghan visa applicants in 2012 assessed that more than 90 per cent of cases contained "fraud of some type" and raised "people smuggling, identity fraud, suspected child trafficking and national security implications."

The leaked files also revealed:

- Tens of thousands of immigration fraudsters living freely after being assisted by migration crime networks exploiting weaknesses in working, student, family and humanitarian visa programs, including loopholes that have left the department sometimes "generating the fraud".
- The department is "responsible for granting a record number of student visas to people who may not be considered genuine students as well as granting permanent residence to skilled migration applicants who do not have the appropriate skills being claimed".
- In 2013 department chiefs were warned in a confidential report that the agency's investigations arm had collapsed risking "the integrity of its programs and ultimately national security".

Migration lawyer Nigel Dobbie said the Immigration Department needed an urgent injection of at least \$500 million to enable it to operate effectively.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/terror-touches-down-visa-fraud-migration-crime-rampant-immigration-department-files-reveal-20140806-3d8wj.html>

## Human Rights

### Same-sex couples can use British laws

The date has been set for the first same-sex couples to use British laws to marry in Australian cities. Same sex couples in which one partner has British citizenship will be able to marry from June 27 in British consulates in Sydney and Perth, with Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra to follow soon after.

In a move that will increase pressure on the Federal government to allow a conscience vote to marriage reform, hundreds of Australian couples are expected to marry and can begin the process to book ceremonies in Sydney or Perth.

The move was hailed by marriage equality advocates as a major step towards marriage reform in Australia just four months after a High Court finding struck down Australia's first same-sex marriage laws in the ACT.

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/date-set-samesex-couples-can-use-british-laws-to-marry-in-australia-20140605-39jwl.html>

### New Work for the Dole

New Work for the Dole arrangements in areas of high unemployment will help young job seekers learn the skills they need to move from welfare to work sooner.

Assistant Minister for Employment Luke Hartsukeyer has announced further details on the first phase of the Government's Work for the Dole programme to help young job seekers remain active and engaged while looking for work.

The new arrangements will apply in 18 locations across Australia. From 1 July 2014 job seekers aged 18-30 years in the targeted areas who have been unemployed for 12 months or more and receiving Newstart Allowance and/or Youth Allowance will be required to do Work for the Dole for about 15 hours per week for six months.

"The Australian Government believes that all Australians who are capable of working should be working..."

"This is an important part of the Government's plan to help young job seekers gain the skills and experience they need to move from welfare to work and make a positive contribution to their local community."

The 18 selected areas reflect a cross-section of metropolitan and regional communities experiencing high unemployment. As part of the 2014-15 Budget, the Government provided \$14.9 million for Work for the Dole Coordinators. "The Coordinators will serve as the first point of contact for organisations wishing to be involved in Work for the Dole and help match job seekers to available places," Mr Hartsukeyer said.

Work for the Dole places will be sourced in not-for-profit organisations, local councils and federal and state government agencies.

<https://ministers.employment.gov.au/hartsukeyer/new-work-dole-young-job-seekers>

## **Among boat people, a would-be governor**

When Hieu Van Le arrived in Darwin on a boat from war-torn Vietnam he could hardly have imagined that he would one day become a State Governor. But 36 years later, the 60 year old, who's married to fellow boat traveller Lan and whose sons are named after Australian cricketers, is to replace South Australia's Governor in September.

"As a young 'boat people' refugee, I arrived here 36 years ago with nothing but an invisible suitcase filled with dreams," he said. "But to be bestowed with the greatest honour and the privilege of holding the Vice-Regal office is absolutely beyond my wildest dream."

Hieu Van Le's Australian story began with a month-long journey on a dilapidated wooden boat. Mr Le's inspirational story is a powerful symbol of triumph over adversity.

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/south-australia-premier-jay-weatherill-names-hieu-van-le-as-next-governor/story-fni6uo1m-1226967500337>

## **A.P.B. Education**

### **Specialist IELTS Test Training and Coaching**

Passing an IELTS test is now an essential requirement for all applicant for General Skilled Migration, student visas, and for many employer sponsored applicants. Adrian Bitel provides individual lessons to assist applicants achieve proficiency to the required levels in:

- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing
- Listening

He gives comprehensive ONE to ONE Personalised Coaching in any or all of the above areas at very competitive rates.

Contact: Adrian Bitel on (02) 9286 8700 or Mobile: 0412 656 026

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