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21 JUN 2018 - 11:25AM



Skilled visa squeeze set to dip migration intake to lowest in eight years



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According to reports, Australia's migration intake could fall by up to 25,000 due to a reduction in skilled and sponsored visas, with concern also mounting of a 'quiet cut' to immigration.

Language
English



By

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14 Jun 2018 - 1:44 PM UPDATED 21 Jun 2018 - 11:25 AM

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Australia's immigration intake for the current year is likely to be lower than the last year's 183,608 against the planning levels of 190,000 places.

The Guardian reports, based on information obtained under freedom of information, that the number of visas granted under this year's immigration program is likely to be 165,000 - close to 2009/10 levels.

The expected decline is attributed to a reduction in skilled and sponsored visas granted during the current year.

Yatharth Bharadwaj is a migration agent in Adelaide. He says some of his clients have been waiting for an outcome of their applications for many months.

"The department has really tightened the screws on invites during the past few months," he tells SBS Punjabi.



Independent skilled visa applicants lodge an expression of interest with the Department of Home Affairs and then the department issues the highest ranked applicants invites to apply for the relevant visa.

According to information available on the Department of Home Affairs website, the number of invites issued during the last six months has dipped below one-third of those issued during the first five months of this year.

The department issued a total of 12,026 invites for Skilled Independent Visa Subclass 189 and Skilled Provision Visa Subclass 489 from July to November 2017. From December last year to May this year, the number of invites issued for these two visas dipped to 3,355 - with just 305 invites issued in May.

While the minimum threshold of the general points test for skilled migration is 60, most applicants are required to have between 70 and 75, in some cases even 80 in order to be successful.

Mr Bharadwaj says that for some occupations the required points are so high that an applicant rarely gets a visa nominating that particular occupation.

"Accountants and IT professionals are among the most commonly nominated occupations by our Indian clients. But for many months, there were no invites issued for accountants at all.

"An applicant who has nominated Accountant [as their occupation] needs to have minimum 80 points then only they will get an invite. Not many will have that kind of points," he says.



In the general points test for skilled migration, points are granted for an applicant's age, education, work experience, English proficiency etc. Additional points are given if an applicant has been nominated by a state or territory government.

An official of the Department of Home Affairs told a Senate Estimates last month that [the visa numbers stood at 138,086 as of April 30th this year](https://www.sbs.com.au/news/australia-s-migration-intake-plunges-amid-beefed-up-visa-checks) [<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/australia-s-migration-intake-plunges-amid-beefed-up-visa-checks>] .

'Quiet cut to immigration'

Earlier this year, the Minister for Home Affairs merged a visa stream that grants permanent residency to up to 10,000 New Zealand citizens already residing in Australia, with skilled visas under Australia's annual migration program without increasing the number of places in it.

Trade insiders believe the move has quietly shrunk the net overseas migration.

"This is effectively a further cut to immigration levels," writes [Abul Rizvi](http://insidestory.org.au/immigration-policy-by-stealth/) [<http://insidestory.org.au/immigration-policy-by-stealth/>] , a former Deputy Secretary in the Immigration Department.

Applicants from India hit hardest

Information released by the Department of Home Affairs shows a total of 8,517 permanent residency applications were lodged during the first seven months of this financial year under the merged stream by New Zealand citizens.

This means fewer overseas applicants will get visas this year, with applicants from India likely to be the worst hit. In 2016-17, out of 42,422 places in the general skilled stream, Indian-born migrants claimed 14,484 of those visas.

Since 2012, Indian applicants have secured the most number of all the visas granted under Australia's immigration program. In 2016-17, Indians received 38,854 visas out of total 183,608 and In 2015-16, a total of 40,145 visas were granted to Indians out of 189,770 visas.

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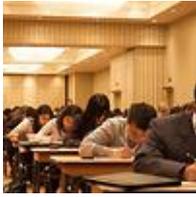
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Skilled partner age limit lowered for Australian permanent visas

Migration agents feel the move will slam the door on older visa applicants who they say will be severely disadvantaged.

[[yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/06/08/changes-made-english-tests-australian-student-visas?cid=inbody:skilled-visa-squeeze-set-to-dip-migration-intake-to-lowest-in-eight-years](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/06/08/changes-made-english-tests-australian-student-visas?cid=inbody:skilled-visa-squeeze-set-to-dip-migration-intake-to-lowest-in-eight-years)]



Changes made to English tests for Australian student visas

The Department of Home Affairs has said TOEFL-PBT results are no longer accepted for Australian student visas.

[/yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/06/05/family-visa-applications-processing-taking-50-years?cid=inbody:skilled-visa-squeeze-set-to-dip-migration-intake-to-lowest-in-eight-years]



Family visa applications processing taking up to 50 years

Limited places and a very high demand for some family visas have ballooned the waiting periods up to half a century.

[/yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/06/01/australia-permanently-closes-visa-new-applicants?cid=inbody:skilled-visa-squeeze-set-to-dip-migration-intake-to-lowest-in-eight-years]



Australia permanently closes this visa for new applicants

The visa, started in 2005, allowed people to live and work in Australia for up to four years. The government says it no longer aligns with Australia's economic priorities.

[/yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/05/31/occupations-flagged-removal-skilled-occupation-lists?cid=inbody:skilled-visa-squeeze-set-to-dip-migration-intake-to-lowest-in-eight-years]



Occupations flagged for removal from Skilled Occupation Lists

The Department of Jobs and Small Business is carrying out a review of Australia's skilled migration occupation lists.

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