

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP CHANGES

The Department have released a summary of changes to the Temporary business (subclass 457) visa. The changes are as follows:

457 Visas

A new 457 Centre of Excellence will be established in Brisbane to complement existing centres in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. The new Brisbane office will commit to reducing current processing times for decision ready 457 applications. This will ensure businesses are able to meet critical skills need in the shortest possible time.

The Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT), from 01 July 2011 the new TSMIT will be \$49,330 and the new English language exemption level will be \$88,410.

Fee increases:

As of July 01 2011, fees for 457 applications will be as follows:

- ☑ Sponsorship: \$405
- ☑ Nomination: \$80
- ☑ Visa: \$305

Permanent Skilled Migration

Effective July 1, the skill stream intake will increase to 125 850 places, with 16 000 places allocated to the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS).

Processing priorities – focus on regional migration

In recognition of the needs of employers and to encourage regional migration, from July 1, visa applications in the skilled stream will be processed in the following priority (highest priority listed first):

1. Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) and regional (residence) visa
2. Employer Nomination Scheme
3. Applications from people who are nominated by a state or territory government agency under a State Migration plan
4. Applications from people with an occupation on the 2011 Schedule 1 Skilled Occupation List (SOL)
5. All other applications.

Independent skilled migration – new points test

Commencing 1 July 2011, a new points test applies to independent applicants who are not sponsored by an Australian employer.

The new points test framework recognizes a broader range of skills and attributes than the Previous system and is designed to select the skilled migrants who will make the optimum economic contribution to Australia. Key changes include recognition for candidates with:

- ☑ Higher English levels
- ☑ More extensive skilled employment
- ☑ Higher level qualifications obtained in Australia and overseas. Additionally, the program will recognise a broader age range.