



As 2011 draws to a close we have plenty of news to share with you in our last newsletter for 2011. We'll take a look at the latest updates on the Knight Review, visa fee changes announced by DIAC, Family Migration, the living-away-from-home-allowance and details of our holiday season closing times.

Knight Review: Post-Study Work Visa

AS part of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's (DIAC) Knight Review of the Student Visa program and acceptance of all recommendations, DIAC recently announced the proposed implementation of Recommendation 4 of the review – Post-Study Work Arrangements.

Proposed for introduction in early 2013, new post-study work visa arrangements are set to become available to graduates of Australian bachelor degrees, Masters by coursework degree, Masters by research degree or PhDs. While more detailed advice about eligibility requirements will be made available as legislation to support the visa is put in place, the below information is what has been provided so far by DIAC;

Eligibility Requirements (of the proposed visa);

- In the last six months before applying for the visa, the applicant must have completed a Bachelor degree (or a higher level course such as a Masters or PhD) obtained in Australia.
- Graduates must meet the Australian study requirement – study a course registered on the CRICOS for a period of at least 2 academic years (92 weeks). The course itself should be conducted in English and should be completed in no less than 16 calendar months while holding a visa that permits study.
- English language, health, character and security requirements will need to be met and evidence of adequate health insurance for the duration of the visa will need to be provided.
- English language requirement: competent English (minimum score of 6 in each of the four components of the IELTS test or the equivalent score in another English language test specified by DIAC).

Length the post-study work visa will be valid

Graduates who have **completed a Bachelor degree or Masters by coursework degree in Australia** will be eligible to apply for a two year post-study work visa. Graduates who have **completed a Masters by research degree or a PhD in Australia** will be eligible to apply for a post-study work visa for three or four years respectively.

Who this proposal applies to

These new arrangements will be ready for students who made their **student visa applications after 5 November 2011**, the date on which the first Knight Review measures were implemented.

Students **currently studying in Australia** are entitled to apply for the existing Temporary Skilled Graduate visa (subclass 485) which allows students to remain temporarily in Australia with work rights at the completion of their studies.

For more information about the Knight Review and proposed changes, click [here](#).



Visa Fee Changes

The Gillard Government will implement a new visa fee system for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, announced in late November.

Mr Bowen said the significant changes included the introduction of a fee for dependants of visa applicants from July 2013.

"If people are bringing family members with them to Australia, the fee will reflect the additional processing and checks for these family members," Mr Bowen said.

Currently, the application fees charged to people wanting to come to Australia do not cover the cost to the Commonwealth of processing the applications. The changes are projected to generate about \$613 million over the next four years in revenue. Student visa application fees will also decrease by 5 per cent from 1 January 2012, increasing the competitiveness of Australia's international education sector. At the same time, fees for a range of Skills and Business visas will increase by between 5 per cent and 15 per cent.

Mr Bowen said to encourage the use of online applications, there would also be an additional charge for people making a paper-based application where there is an 'e' visa option.

For further details of Mr. Bowen's announcement of the new visa fee system, click [here](#).

Family Migration: A closer Look

The 2011/2012 holiday season is upon us. A time to take a break, celebrate and reflect on the year gone by - a time that many choose to spend with their family. For some people however, this isn't possible as their families are living in different locations around the world.

If you are an Australian Permanent Resident or Citizen and want your family to join you there are several visa options available. Below is an outline of the most frequently sought-after family/sponsorship visas;

Partner Visa

If your spouse, de facto (live-in) partner or fiancé want to join you permanently in Australia, this is the visa option for you. You will be required to provide documents to show that you are in a genuine, long-term, committed relationship. These applications can have a lot of paperwork, but we believe it's worth it in the end!



Parent Visa

If your parents have at least half of their children living in Australia as Permanent Residents or Citizens (temporary residents are not counted), then they may be able to apply for the Parent visa. Parent visas vary greatly in processing times and cost so you will need to check carefully the type of visa you are applying for.

Family Sponsored Visitor Visa

If you have a family member who wants to visit you in Australia for a short period and they have not been able to obtain a Tourist visa on their own merit, you may wish to consider a Family Sponsored Visitor visa. This visa requires sponsorship from a family member and will usually require payment of a security bond.

While these are the most common visas for families migrating to Australia, there are several other options also available. To learn more, contact our *Family Residence Team* direct by emailing family@australianmigrations.com.

Living-Away-From-Home-Allowance (LAFHA) Changes

Australian Government has announced changes to the living-away-from-home-allowance taxation arrangements.

Under the new reforms;

- access to the tax exemption for temporary residents will be limited to those who maintain a residence for their own use in Australia, which they are living away from for work purposes, such as 'fly-in fly-out' workers; and
- individuals will be required to substantiate their actual expenditure on accommodation and food beyond a statutory amount.

The changes will apply from 1 July 2012. This start date will hopefully allow the Government to undertake an adequate consultation process on these changes, so appropriate transitional arrangements can be put in place, including in regional Australia.

To read more details of the Australian Government's announced reforms click [here](#).

AMVL Holiday Closure

The AMVL offices will be closed for the holiday season from 12:00pm on Friday 23 December 2011 and will re-open at 8:30am on Tuesday 3 January 2012. Any urgent enquiries during this period can be directed to bill@australianmigrations.com. AMVL wishes you a safe and happy holidays and look forward to working with you again in the New Year. Seasons Greetings!