



A warm welcome to 2012! Now that the holiday period is behind us we're set for another big year at Australian Migration & Visa Lawyers, with plenty of changes in migration predicted and a few changes within our offices to look forward to as well. The team will keep you as up-to-date of changes to legislation and processes wherever we can and if you have any queries please check our website (www.australianmigrations.com) or call us on +61 7 3212 2200.

Count-down to 1 July General Skilled Migration Changes

We are now close to just 5 months away from the commencement of new legislation for General Skilled Migration (GSM). The proposed legislation is still not available, but the information from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) indicates that the change will represent the most significant change in GSM since the Migration Regulations were introduced in 1994.

From 1 July 2012, prospective applicants will no longer be able to directly apply for migration to Australia – they will be required to lodge an expression of interest (EOI) and indicate for which visas they would be interested in applying. At the time of lodging the EOI, it would be expected that they have a positive skills assessment, have undertaken an IELTS test and meet the minimum points threshold.

There is no indication that the current points test will change so this would mean that a person lodging an EOI would need to have scored at least 65 points on the points test – though the more points that can be scored the better. When it comes time to select people from the pool and invite them to apply, those with the highest points and with particular occupations, will be selected first (even if you don't need the extra points for English for example, it will be better to sit the IELTS test and have 75 points rather than the minimum 65). DIAC have indicated that the first round of invitations will be made on 1 August 2012 with invitation rounds being made on a monthly basis after that.

So what does this all mean for you? If you have already lodged an application under GSM, your case will continue to be processed as usual – though there may be some adjustments to the processing priorities (again). If you are on the way to lodging an application, then we will certainly do our best to get your application lodged by 30 June 2012. It will be important however to respond to our requests promptly so that no time is lost.

If you are considering lodging an application, then you should will need to decide if you wish to lodge before 1 July 2012 or after. If you have not commenced the process before the middle of February 2012, especially if you need a skills assessment and state sponsorship, then it will be very difficult to lodge the application before the changes – so don't delay! For enquiries please email migrate@australianmigrations.com.



Australian Government

Department of Immigration & Citizenship

Priority 5 Processing

If you are one of the frustrated group of people with applications sitting in Priority group 5 – we feel your pain. This is certainly not a situation that brings us any joy and we would also like to see you processed as fast as possible. We will certainly try and keep you up to date with any changes. DIAC has announced that they will start to process group 5 applications early this year but as yet we have not yet had any of our 100 or so group 5 applications allocated to a case officer.

However it is in the hands of DIAC and the Minister for Immigration. If you have family or friends in Australia, maybe you can suggest that they write to their local Federal member and express their dissatisfaction with the current incredibly long delays. Some applications in this group were lodged 5 or 6 years ago and that is a long time to put your life on hold and wait anxiously to hear any news.

AMVL family is growing

In case you have not heard, Byron Pugh, one of the partners of the firm, had a beautiful little boy in November last year. Teri Pearce from our skilled team, is also having a baby boy – due 20 February 2012. Teri is taking maternity leave from 10 February and we wish her all the best for the big event.

It seems that there is something going around the skilled team, as Jocelene Lomas, an assistant in the team, has just announced that she is also expecting a baby boy – due 7 June 2012. All wonderful news and we will be watching the skilled team closely from now on!



Australia Day 2012 is set to sizzle

On the 26th of January each year, people across Australia and around the world celebrate Australia Day. The date marks the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of 11 convict ships from Great Britain, and the raising of the Union Jack at Sydney Cove by its commander Captain Arthur Phillip, in 1788. For more details of Australia's history, click [here](#).

Though 26 January marks this specific event, celebrations reflect contemporary Australia: our diverse society and landscape, our remarkable achievements and our bright future.

Don't be surprised if when you step outside on Australia Day, you notice the smokey smell of your neighbour's bbq, or hear the friendly laughter and chatter of friends and family who have gathered to celebrate. For some, Australia Day will be spent at Citizenship Ceremonies, where those who have come to settle in Australia from other countries will make their Pledge of Commitment and officially become Australian Citizens.

If you'd like to find Australia Day events, click [here](#) to visit the official Australia Day website. Click on the below links for some Australia Day essentials;

- [Meat Pie Recipe](#)
- [Triple J Hottest 100 Station Frequencies](#)
- [National Anthem: Advance Australia Fair](#)
- [Weather Forecast: Australian Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- [Pavlova Recipe](#)
- [Lamington Recipe](#)

Below are some Australia Day Tweets by AMVL Team Members;

What #AustraliaDay means to @Helen: *The best thing about Australia Day for me is that it is when lots of people take out Australian citizenship with ceremonies conducted all over the country, from the beach to the bush. I have attended a few times to see friends become citizens and it is an incredibly uplifting experience. There are tears and cheers and lots of Australian flags. For many people, it is the end of a very hard and long path and the joy in their faces is just wonderful to see. It makes me very proud to be an Australian when I see that we accept people from all over the world.*

What #AustraliaDay means to @Katherine: *a BBQ & beers with friends and listening to the JJJ Hottest 100 Count Down.*

To see more of AMVL's #Australia Day tweets, **follow** us on Twitter and **like** us on Facebook.

