KPMG

# GMS Flash Alert

**Immigration**

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## New Zealand – Reforms to Accredited Employer Work Visa Announced

In this *GMS Flash Alert*, we report on the New Zealand government's announcement of significant reforms to the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) programme, to be implemented in four different stages over the course of 2025, commencing in January 2025.[1]

As part of these changes, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) will also be revising the Job Check phase of the AEWV process, to streamline Job Checks for low-risk employers and to decrease processing times for this application type.

**WHY THIS MATTERS**

The announced changes should make sponsoring of foreign workers, easier and faster, with more consistency and predictability in the decision-making process.

The New Zealand government has acknowledged the extensive wait times currently experienced under the AEWV, and the changes highlighted in this newsletter seek to address preparation and lodgement timeframes to increase programme efficiencies.

### More Details

INZ has engaged in significant stakeholder consultation on the usability of the AEWV programme, in efforts to maintain a "responsive immigration system … fundamental to rebuilding the economy."[2] As a result of this consultation and an internal review of the programme, the government has announced several significant changes to take effect in 2025, including:

- The requirements to complete online employer modules will be removed from January 2025 for all current and future accredited employers and Recognised Seasonal Employers (RSE).

- Removal of the wage threshold requirement for the AEWV from March 2025. Employers still need to pay the market rate for any role offered under the AEWV. Residence visas will maintain their wage requirements.

- From April 2025, work rights will be afforded to interim visas for all AEWV applicants applying from any work visa type or from a student visa that allows them to work during term time.

- Reducing the minimum experience requirement for lower-skilled migrants to two years. The visa duration for lower-skilled migrants will also be extended. Level 4-5 roles will be able to access three years' validity to align with the maximum continuous stay.

- The income threshold for an AEWV holder to support a dependent child will increase from NZ$43,322 to NZ$55,844. [NZ$1 = US$0.56 | NZ$1 = €0.545 | NZ$1 = A$0.90 | NZ$1 = £0.45 | NZ$1 = ₹48.465 *Source*: www.xe.com]

- The domestic workforce threshold for employers of certain construction roles is being reduced from 35 percent to 15 percent.

## KPMG INSIGHTS

The changes to streamline the AEWV application requirements and deliver greater consistency in processing timeframes should remove some of the challenges encountered by businesses using the programme in the future.

The changes underscore the New Zealand government's stated recognition of the need to have a flexible and efficient immigration system that responds to the needs of business and is receptive to the feedback from industry.

More information about the changes will be available in the coming months.

## FOOTNOTES:

1 New Zealand Immigration News Centre, "Reforms to Accredited Employer Work Visa announced" (17 December 2024).

New Zealand Immigration:

"Accredited Employer Work Visa"

"Accreditation for the AEWV"

2 Hon. Erica Stanford, "Securing the skills and experience NZ needs" (17 December 2024) on the Beehive.govt.nz web site at: https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/securing-skills-and-experience-nz-needs.

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## Contact us

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**The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Australia.**



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