

KPMG

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

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Australia – Bridging Visa B Applications to Face Closer Assessment from 30 November 2026

The Department of Home Affairs (the "Department") has announced upcoming changes to the assessment of Bridging Visa B (BVB) applications associated with employer-sponsored visa applications. These changes will impact BVB applications lodged on or after 30 November 2026. The changes will not apply to applications lodged before 30 November 2026.[1]

WHY THIS MATTERS

A BVB is generally required when a person is in Australia as the holder of a Bridging Visa A (BVA) and needs to travel overseas and return to Australia while the Department is considering the person's new visa application. A BVA does not ordinarily include a travel facility. Only an approved BVB provides a defined travel facility that allows a person to depart and re-enter Australia. The BVB must be approved before the person departs Australia as it cannot be approved while they are overseas.

What are the upcoming changes?

While the legislative requirements for a BVB remain unchanged, the Department has advised that it intends to assess applications more closely. In practice this means:

- BVB travel periods are expected to be shorter and more closely aligned with the specific purpose, dates, and expected duration of the proposed travel. This is a clear change from the Department's current practice of granting BVBs for extended periods (up to five years in some cases) to cover multiple trips. Depending on the processing time for the substantive visa application, an applicant may therefore need to obtain multiple BVBs.

- Applicants will need to clearly demonstrate substantial reasons for overseas travel and provide relevant supporting information or evidence with the application.

- A general statement that an employee wishes to take a holiday or visit family may not be sufficient, without further information or evidence demonstrating substantial reasons for travel.

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However, applicants are not expected to be required to purchase airline tickets to demonstrate their intended travel. They may wish to consider the associated risks before making nonrefundable or otherwise irreversible arrangements.

When to lodge?

The Department recommends lodging BVB applications between two weeks and three months before the proposed travel date.

KPMG INSIGHTS

Employees awaiting an employer-sponsored visa who need to travel overseas while holding a BVA are encouraged to plan ahead before making travel arrangements and to provide details of the reason for travel, proposed dates, and any supporting evidence as early as possible.

Travelers might wish to submit the BVB application as early as possible as these changes are expected to increase the volume of BVB applications, particularly ahead of the holiday period, which may affect processing times.

As a reminder, a BVB must be approved before the person departs Australia, as it cannot be approved while they are overseas. Individuals who departs Australia without an approved BVB may not have a valid visa that permits them to return to Australia.

If readers have any questions or concerns about this update and potential impacts, they should consult with a member of the KPMG Australian immigration team (see the Contacts section).

ENDNOTE:

1 Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs, "Subclass 020 Bridging visa B (BVB)."

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Contacts

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Australia:



Maria Hrambanis
Director
Immigration
Tel. +61 3 9288 5967
mhrambanis@kpmg.com.au



Bianca Go
Manager
Immigration
Tel. +61 8 8236 7361
bgo1@kpmg.com.au

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