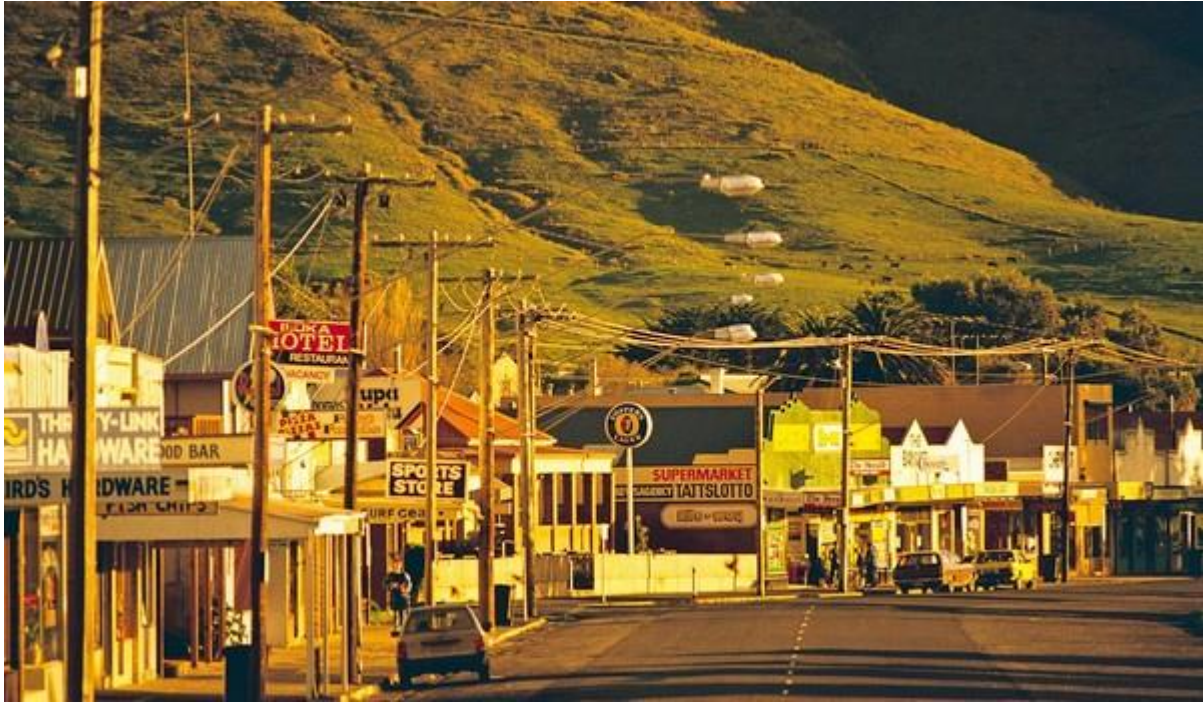


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New Regional Visas Proposed



The Australian Government has announced that the target ceiling for the migration program in the next financial year (2019 -2020), will be 160,000 visas. While the overall skilled figures have been reduced, they are pretty constant with the actual numbers from the 2017/18 year (162,417 visas against a planned level of 190,000).

The 2018/19 program year also has a planned outcome of 190,000 visas but if the trend continues from the previous year, the actual figure is likely to be lower than the target as well.

The focus will remain on the skilled migration categories, with close to 70% of the program dedicated to employer sponsored, skilled independent, state/territory nominated and business skilled visas.

Also announced was a proposal to introduce two new skilled regional provisional visas, and one new permanent regional visa from November 2019. This aligns with the Government's plan to encourage migrants to move to regional Australia (which will be redefined as anywhere outside of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth).

The **proposed** provisional visas would be the:

- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visa - requires sponsorship by an employer in a regional area, receives priority processing, and has access to a list of around 700 occupations; *and*

- Skilled Work Regional visa - requires nomination by a State or Territory government or sponsorship by an eligible family member located in a regional area, receives priority processing, and has access to a list of around 500 eligible occupations.

Both provisional visas will be valid for 5 years, with a pathway to the new permanent visa after 3 years of working and living in a regional area of Australia.

Further information will be available of these new visas over the coming months and we will ensure that we keep you up to date on the developments.

Positive News for International Students

A media release from the Prime Minister dated 20 March states that there may be an additional benefit for international students studying at regional universities, giving them access to an additional year in Australia on a post-study work visa.

CDC 's Advice

These changes are only **proposed** at this stage, and are not yet legislation. Updates will be provided as more detail becomes available.

Migrants who apply for a 489 Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa **before November 2019** will continue to be able to apply for permanent residence after only 2 years of living and working in a regional area.

It is unclear if there will be changes to the current TSS and RSMS arrangements upon introduction of the proposed employer sponsored regional provisional visa.

If you have been considering a Subclass 489 visa, then we suggest applying for this as soon as possible in order to avoid having to wait a further year to be eligible for PR.

Based on the recent results from SkillSelect, the points score required for an invitation for a 189 visa remains quite high. Some of the benefits of the 489 visa include an extra 10 points for regional sponsorship, invitations at any time during the year (not just once a month), and only the minimum 65 points are required (including the 10 points for sponsorship). This visa could be an ideal solution for anyone struggling to obtain additional points through other means, and will get you started towards your dream of permanent residency much sooner.