

## INZ ROUNDUP: JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024

### KEY UPDATES

Here is a summary of recent key operational and policy updates about the immigration system. Please note this is not an exhaustive list of updates. For more information about any of the updates below, please visit the relevant page on Immigration New Zealand's (INZ's) website.

You can also check out our announcements, media releases, stories, and common topics on our [News Centre](#) on the INZ website.

---

#### 27 FEBRUARY 2024

> An independent external review into the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) has been released by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. The review makes four main findings, [which are listed on our website](#), as well as ten specific recommendations. MBIE accepts the findings and recommendations of the review.

The review is published on the [Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission website](#).

---

#### 22 FEBRUARY 2024

> Wage thresholds for the Skilled Migrant Category, the Green List Straight to Residence and Work to Residence visas, and the Parent Category residence class visa will increase in line with the median wage (NZD\$31.61 an hour) on 28 February 2024. The wage threshold for the Transport Sector Work to Residence Visa will also increase in line with the new median wage (excluding bus drivers).

> This increase does not apply to the AEWV, which the [Government signaled](#) in December will [remain at the current rate of NZD\\$29.66 an hour](#). All sector agreements and exemptions to the median wage will also remain in place with current wage rates until further decisions are taken on the use of the median wage under the AEWV. The expiry of the tourism and hospitality wage exemption and the transport sector agreement have been delayed.

---

#### 21 FEBRUARY 2024

> The New Zealand minimum wage will increase on 1 April 2024. This means that the wage threshold for all Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers will also [increase to align with the new minimum wage](#). RSE workers must be paid at the New Zealand minimum wage plus 10%. This means that from 1 April 2024, employers in this sector must pay workers NZD\$25.47 per hour to ensure that RSE remuneration continues to increase in line with the minimum wage.

---

#### 19 FEBRUARY 2024

> As at 16 February 2024 INZ has approved 108,938 AEWV applications, and 32,775 employer accreditation applications. [Post-accreditation checks](#) can occur at any time. As at 16 February 2024, INZ has undertaken 2,712 post-accreditation checks and an additional 596 are underway. We aim to check about 16% of accredited employers each year. The 16% of post-accreditation checks we undertake is a combination of random selection and targeted checks on a sample of all accredited employer types in addition to checks on all franchisee and controlling third party business models and any businesses that have been referred to us through a complaint or issue raised.

---

#### 15 FEBRUARY 2024

- › Immigration New Zealand has [improved the process for deciding student visa applications by](#) giving our staff more efficient assessment tools and letter templates. This means we can process student visa applications faster, and let applicants know the outcome of their application sooner.
- › While managing this higher volume, we've also seen an increase in complex applications needing more time. To ensure your application can be assessed in a timely manner, please ensure your application includes all necessary information.

---

#### 14 FEBRUARY 2024

- › [Senior Investigator Helen Garratt says](#) immigration scams are nothing new but with the rise of social media including apps like WhatsApp it is easy for people to get pulled into a scam. INZ's advice for people who wish to work in New Zealand is to apply through approved pathways rather than via third party agents using apps. Any person providing New Zealand immigration advice, anywhere in the world, must be licensed by the IAA or be exempt. The "[Guide to licensed immigration advisers](#)" has more information and is available in multiple languages, including Hindi, Punjabi, Chinese, Korean, Samoan, Tongan and Taglish.

---

#### 25 JANUARY 2024

- › The 2024 reopening dates for capped Working Holiday Schemes (WHS) have now been confirmed. This [table](#) outlines the date each scheme will open, as well as how many places are available in each scheme for 2024. Once each scheme opens, applications will be open until the quota is filled. Once the quota is filled, the scheme will close until 2025.

Working holiday schemes that still have places left from 2023 will remain open until the quota is reached. The quota will then reset on the 2024 opening date.

---

#### 21 DECEMBER 2023

- › The Worker Protection (Migrant and Other Employees) Act 2023 came into effect on 6 January 2024. The Act introduces a suite of [changes](#) across the Employment Relations Act, the Immigration Act, and the Companies Act, to combat migrant exploitation.
- › The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will not commence issuing infringement notices until changes to the immigration regulations have been made to prescribe the form of the infringement notice. This is subject to decisions by the new government. Once the amended immigration regulations are in place to enable the issuing of infringement notices, MBIE will be able to issue them for offending that occurred before the regulations were in place (up to a max of 90 days previously).
- › In most cases, the new infringement offences do not change employers' obligations. The power to publish the names of non-compliant employers alongside a "stand-down" period, during which they are not able to support further visa applications has also not begun. The offences that will lead to a stand-down and the formula for calculating a stand-down period are still to be approved by the government.

## KEY STATISTICS

Statistics about visa application processing and decisions for some of INZ's key visa categories are listed below, and are correct as at **21 February 2024** unless otherwise stated. Processing timeframes are based on applications decided in January 2024, unless otherwise stated.

#### AEWV

- › INZ has received 34,815 employer accreditation applications since applications opened on 23 May 2022.
- › Job Check applications opened on 20 June 2022. INZ has received 64,384 applications, equating to 288,550 jobs. Of those, 62,120 Job Check applications have been approved, equating to 275,301 jobs.
- › INZ has received 121,001 work visa applications and approved 109,605 since applications opened on 4 July 2022.

- › [Our website](#) contains current processing estimates for all three AEWV gateways, with 80% of applications being processed within the stated timeframes.
- › You can read more about AEWV on the INZ website. We publish fortnightly statistics and information updates to this page: [Accredited Employer Work Visa \(AEWV\) | Immigration New Zealand](#)

### VISITOR AND STUDENT VISA

- › Since visitor visa applications opened to visitors offshore on 31 July 2022, INZ has received 753,427 applications. 80% of visitor visa applications are processed within 4 weeks. This timeframe is for all the visitor visa types INZ is processing. To see the timeframes for a specific visa, [search for a visa](#).
- › Since 31 July 2022, INZ has received 97,254 international student visa applications. Visa processing times for international students can be found [on our website](#). 80% of applications are processed within 9 weeks.

## USEFUL LINKS

New links are added to the end of this section as they become available.

- › Our [accreditation process web page](#) outlines the steps for hiring a migrant on an AEWV.
- › Our [Accredited Employer Work Visa resources web page](#) contains helpful checklists, information packages, communication tools, and other resources.
  - › Key resources include our [Job Advertisement Guide](#) and [Applying for a Job Check checklist](#).
- › Our [median wage comparison calculator](#) helps to indicate what your employee's hourly pay rate may be and how it compares to the New Zealand median wage.
- › Our YouTube channel contains recorded webinars including a [playlist about AEWV](#) that contains webinars about accreditation requirements, requirements for franchisees and employers placing AEWV holders with controlling third parties, requirements for the Job Check and work visa, and common themes INZ has been seeing with Job Check applications.
- › Information about our online application systems can be found at our [Immigration Online web page](#). The latest version of our Enhancements to Immigration Online User Guide, which is updated regularly, can be found on our [Enhancements to Immigration Online web page](#).
- › Information on processing times is available on our [how long it takes to process a visa application web page](#).
- › Learn about your visa status by visiting our [check your visa application status web page](#).
- › Find out about visa prioritisation by visiting our [Employment Visa Escalation process web page](#).
- › A new calendar of country-wide seasonal working opportunities for those with a Working Holiday Visa has been launched and can be viewed here: [Travelling with a working holiday visa](#)
- › Information on Skilled Migrant Category EOI selections is available [on our website](#). The most recent information is: [Skilled Migrant Category - Fortnightly Selection Statistics - 19 April 2023 \(immigration.govt.nz\)](#)
- › Information on the Parent Resident Visa EOI selection process is available [on our website](#), including a table of expected selection dates.
- › Our [Can I get a refund of my application fee?](#) web page includes our [Customer Refund Request Form](#).
- › Use [this form](#) to sign up to receive INZ's email updates.

- › The new [INZ News Centre](#) is a place where we publish immigration announcements and/or changes, media releases, stories about some of the people who work at INZ, and common topics. Common topics have information to help answer questions on visas and immigration processes.
- › SMC Resident Visa processing times have now been added to the [Immigration New Zealand website](#). Processing times will be updated monthly based on data from the previous month.
- › You can now use our new tool to [check on the INZ website if an employer is accredited](#).
- › A [new online EOI form](#) for the new SMC category has been launched. [Check the criteria and evidence requirements](#) before you apply.
- › With the launch of the new SMC, INZ held a webinar for immigration professionals on skilled residence pathways in New Zealand. You can [watch the webinar recording online](#).
- › Our [immigration scams page](#) now includes information in other languages. You can use our [Resource Library](#) to find social media resources on immigration scams.
- › Our [Skilled Migrant Category Resident Visa application guide](#) is a useful guide to help applicants plan and submit their SMC application on time.
- › Our [webpage about the settlement information accredited employers must give workers on an AEWV](#) now has an optional template we have created that employers can use to provide this information.
- › We have a [new centralised process](#) to request priority allocation for urgent applications. This includes a web tool to [check if you can make an escalation request](#).
- › Our [webpage about the NZeTA](#) has now been updated with a decision tool that enables visitors to check their eligibility for an NZeTA.
- › We have recently put together [a new web page about AEWV post-accreditation checks](#). It has some useful tips on the kind of things we might ask employers to show us, and definitions of some of our common terms (like 'key people' or 'triangular employers').
- › Migrants who have been dismissed from their job while on a trial period can now apply for a [Dismissed Worker Visitor Visa](#). Applicants must have a current work visa and enough money to live on while they are in New Zealand.
- › The [Migrant Exploitation Protection Visa webpage](#) has been updated to contain all the important details regarding the visa process on the same page.
- › INZ recently held a webinar for immigration professionals on changes to how false, misleading or relevant withheld information are treated in the visa application process. You can [watch the webinar recording online](#).
- › INZ recently held a webinar for immigration professionals on student visas and post study work visas. The webinar recording will be emailed out to invitees soon.
- › Please refer to [INZ's acceptable forms list](#) for a list of forms that are currently accepted by Immigration New Zealand offices. This list contains the date of the current version of each form.