



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Australia - Revised Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List Released

On 2 September 2020, Australia's Acting Minister for Immigration Alan Tudge announced a new Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List (PMSOL) complimented by more robust labour market testing requirements. These measures are in direct response to COVID-19 and are designed to boost the Australian economy during this period of economic instability.¹

Minister Tudge stated "Our priority is getting Australians back into work but we also need key health workers to help fight the virus and skilled migrants who are going to be job multipliers, to help the economy recover."² Individuals who are granted visas under the PMSOL will still be subject to the mandatory 14-day quarantine requirements imposed by each state and territory.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The PMSOL is comprised of 17 occupations in targeted sectors of health care, construction, and IT and will provide employers with the ability to bring in foreign workers as soon as possible by providing access to a travel exemption to the current border closures.

The PMSOL and Taskforce announcements (more on the Taskforce below) provide more certainty for Australian business sponsors that the Australian government is working to provide solutions that complement the current migration programs. The PMSOL recognises the importance for businesses of being able to supplement their workforce in times of critical shortage and provides streamlined access to the travel exemption process with the Australian Border Force.

Occupations on PMSOL

The list is very much a reflection of the industries focused on supporting Australia's COVID-19 recovery. Given the circumstances in the state of Victoria, medical staff are required to support existing Australian workers who are isolating due to COVID-19 exposure. The Australian government is also looking to the mining and construction industries to help stimulate the economy at the local level.

The occupations included on the PMSOL include:

Chief Executive or Managing Director (111111)	Construction Project Manager (133111)
Construction Project Manager (133111)	Mechanical Engineer (233512)
General Practitioner (253111)	Resident Medical Officer (253112)
Psychiatrist (253411)	Midwife (254111)
Medical Practitioner nec (253999)	Registered Nurse (Aged Care) (254412)
Registered Nurse (Critical Care and Emergency) (254415)	Registered Nurse (Medical) (254418)
Registered Nurse (Mental Health) (254422)	Registered Nurses nec (254499)
Registered Nurse (Perioperative) (254423)	Developer Programmer (261312)
Software Engineer (261313)	Maintenance Planner (312911)

Source: KPMG, Australia

Labour Market Testing (LMT) Changes

In conjunction with the PMSOL introduction, the Australian government has amended the legislative requirements relating to LMT. For businesses wishing to sponsor foreign nationals under the temporary employer-sponsored visa categories (subclass 482 or subclass 494), advertising will need to be conducted on the government's "jobactive" website in addition to the standard LMT criteria.

The Explanatory Memorandum states that the objective of this change is to help ensure that Australian workers are prioritised over foreign workers for labour opportunities within the domestic market. The disruption within the domestic labour market due to increased unemployment rates and high employee stand-downs is driving these legislative changes.

KPMG NOTE

With the borders remaining closed (both internationally and locally) and continued COVID-19 community transition, we can continue to expect more stringent legislative and policy changes from the Australian government and Department of Home Affairs.

Global Business and Talent Attraction Taskforce

On 4 September 2020, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Simon Birmingham announced the creation of a new taskforce designed to increase investment and secure exceptional talent into Australia.³ The taskforce will be known as the Global Business and Talent Attraction Taskforce (“the Taskforce”), led by a specifically appointed Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Global Business and Talent Attraction. Peter Verwer AO, has been appointed as the Special Envoy and will lead the Taskforce which will be comprised of experts across the commonwealth, state, and territory governments as well as specialists from the private sector.

The Taskforce is part of the Australian government’s “JobMaker” plan and continues the government’s focus on propping up and supporting Australia’s economy during the recession. Minister Birmingham’s media release has described the Taskforce operating as “a strike team’ to turbo-charge the creation of jobs by boosting our efforts to attract high value global business and exceptional talent.”⁴ In the first instance, the Taskforce will focus on the key sectors of advanced manufacturing, financial services (including FinTech), and health.

KPMG NOTE

This initiative can be viewed as complimentary to the Global Talent Independent and Employer Sponsored Programs that are currently being administered by the Department of Home Affairs. Over the coming months, we could continue to see adjustments and additional measures added as the government looks to leverage Australia’s migration programs to boost the country’s economy.

Adding LMT criteria increases the evidentiary requirement on business sponsors sponsoring foreign workers under the subclass 482 and subclass 494 visas. We recommend that your recruitment policies are updated to reflect the new LMT criteria.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For the 2 September 2020 media release, see: <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/alantudge/Pages/supporting-australian-business-to-fill-critical-skills-needs.aspx>.

2 Ibid.

3 For the 4 September 2020 media release, see: <https://www.trademinister.gov.au/minister/simon-birmingham/media-release/new-taskforce-create-jobs-attracting-business-and-talent-australia>.

4 Ibid.

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RELATED RESOURCE

This article is excerpted, with permission, from “[Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List Release](#)” (8 September 2020) in *Migration Newsflash*, a publication of the KPMG International firm in Australia.

Contact us

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