Securing skills & investment

New Zealand’s openness to the world is an important part of our economic success – through trade, new ideas and attracting talented people from around the world. National embraces that.

Migrants bring skills, capital and connections and they make New Zealand an even better place, providing opportunities and creating jobs for all New Zealanders, and helping our economy to grow.

We are focused on ensuring highly skilled and talented individuals are prioritised for work visas, and that the quality of inward migration supports the economy and labour market.

We are attracting workers for growing industries like horticulture and viticulture, IT, and construction. Immigration also underpins tourism and export education – two of our biggest export industries.

We have recently raised the standard for gaining residence and prioritised access for higher-skilled migrants, ensuring we strike the right balance between attracting skilled workers and managing demand in a period of strong growth and low unemployment.

“We are attracting the skills and talent we need to support our growing economy.”

− Immigration spokesperson Michael Woodhouse

Policy highlights

• Fewer Kiwis leaving and more coming home because the opportunities are here

• Attracting migrants with the right skills and capital to invest in New Zealand

• Provided a one-off pathway to residence for long term temporary migrants filling a genuine labour shortage in the South Island

• Streamlined the immigration system through the roll out of the Immigration Online Service

• Improved outcomes for refugees by rebuilding the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre and implementing the Refugee Resettlement Strategy

• Introduced the Global Investment Visa to encourage young, successful entrepreneurs to set up here

• Raised the points required under the Skilled Migrant Category to ensure we are attracting the people we need

• Reinforced the ‘temporary’ nature of temporary work visas for lower-skilled/lower-paid migrants

• Helping ensure more migrants move to the regions to fill jobs there
National is...

**Targeting immigration to benefit New Zealand**

- Attracting migrants with the skills and talent we need to support our growing economy
- Growing investment into New Zealand through the Investor and Entrepreneur Visa categories
- Working with businesses to streamline visa processing for priority applicants
- Helping provide skills for the rebuild of Christchurch and support for our most in need industries through the Skills Shortage Lists
- Providing seasonal workers for our growing horticulture and viticulture industries through the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme – increasing the cap from 5000 in 2007 to 10,500 in 2017
- Managing expectations around the conditions and length of time that lower-skilled/lower-paid migrants are able to come and work in New Zealand

**Addressing exploitation**

- Migrant workers have the same employment rights as all other workers in New Zealand
- We do not tolerate employers who exploit migrant labour for their own commercial advantage
- Providing authorities with the ability to impose heavy penalties on employers who exploit migrants
- Removing access to international labour for employers who breach employment standards

**Supporting refugees**

- Improving refugee outcomes through our Refugee Resettlement Strategy, helping ensure they can settle well and contribute here
- Increasing the size of the Refugee Quota from 750 to 1000 places from 2018/19
- Piloting a new community based sponsorship programme for refugees with a view to allowing more refugees to come here while ensuring they are well supported
Our results so far

Kiwis are coming home

- The biggest contribution to the rise in net migration over the past four years has been the movement of Kiwis
- Kiwis are voting with their feet, fewer are leaving for Australia and more are coming home
- Five years ago a net 40,000 people were leaving for Australia. Now, net migration has turned around to a net 800 people returning to New Zealand
- 150,000 more Kiwis now live and work here, instead of on the other side of the Tasman
- This is a huge vote of confidence in New Zealand’s direction because New Zealanders know there are real opportunities for them and their families here

Attracting skills and investment

- We’re getting more Kiwis into work, but still allowing employers access to the international labour market where there is a genuine need
- Our economy is growing strongly and created 181,000 jobs in the past two years – with unemployment at 4.8 per cent, we need to match immigration with the needs of businesses
- International visitors spent $14.5b in 2016, with the tourism sector directly employing 188,000 people, and almost double that indirectly
- Export education is worth $4.5b to the economy per year and employs 33,000 people
- Investment from Investor and Investor Plus migrant categories totalled over $1b for the first time in the 2016/17 year

Addressing border risk and people trafficking

- We have passed tough laws to combat people smuggling, which is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment and/or a $500,000 fine
- We secured New Zealand’s first conviction for people trafficking in December 2016 to a total of nine and a half years jail and $28,000 reparation
- Refused entry to 1,211 people at the border from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017
- Prevented 3,578 high-risk individuals from boarding planes destined for New Zealand in the same period
What we will do next...

Expand the global impact visa

- Enable younger, successful and well-connected entrepreneurs at the start of their career to establish their ventures in New Zealand
- This new visa will help lift innovation and create jobs through the establishment of new business ventures and access to global networks
- Increase the pool of smart capital in New Zealand
- The visa will target younger entrepreneurs at the start of their journey who may not fit into any of the investor/entrepreneur categories

Support business and investment

- Continue to look at ways to encourage high value tourists, international students and business visitors to New Zealand
- Continue to back our employers and make sure access to the international labour market is available when there is a genuine need
- Encourage investment that provides greater economic benefits for New Zealand through our Entrepreneur and Investor migrant categories
- Attract migrants with the skills and experience we need for our growing economy

Don’t put it all at risk

The opposition would...

- Slash immigration by “tens of thousands” which would decimate some industries and grind others to a halt
- Their proposed cuts would result in job losses and a slow down of the economy
- They don’t support the idea of New Zealand as a confident, growing country so they want to put the handbrake on