

Submitter information

Please provide your name and phone number, and preferred email address for contact if it is different from the one used to send this form:

s 9(2)(g)(i), s 9(2)(a)

In what capacity are you providing feedback?
e.g. on behalf of: your company, the company you work for, an industry organisation, a union, a licensed immigration adviser etc.

As Chief Executive of Rural Contractors New Zealand Inc, representing 550 rural contractors throughout New Zealand

If you are representing a company or group, what is the name of that group?

What industry or industries does that group work in?

Agricultural sector, rural contracting

In your company or industry, what are the most common occupations for migrant workers?

Agricultural Machinery Operators, operating large complex harvesting machines during the harvesting season

What visa categories are commonly used by those workers?

I.e. resident visa, Essential Skills work visa, Work-to-Residence work visa (under the Talent or Long Term Skill Shortage List categories), Post-Study work visa (open or employer assisted), open work visa.

Workers usually enter NZ under an AIP (either arranged by the contractor or more frequently under the AIP held by Rural Contractors New Zealand) or on working holiday visas

Only answer the following questions if you directly employ migrant workers:

How many migrant workers do you currently employ? (Refer to the visa categories in the question above)

Have you supported an Essential Skills visa application for any of these workers?

Using wage or salary information to help determine skill level and access to Essential Skills migrants

Proposal 1: Introduction of remuneration thresholds to determine skill levels and associated visa conditions for Essential Skills visas

Consider the proposal of aligning the remuneration thresholds for the Essential Skills visa with the remuneration thresholds for the Skilled Migrant Category.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from defining lower-, mid- and higher-skilled Essential Skills migrants in this way?

Give details of the occupations or sectors and wage or salary levels you are thinking of.

There is a risk that some positions could result in slightly inflated remuneration to access more favourable visa requirements

Reinforcing the temporary nature of the Essential Skills visa and managing the settlement expectations of temporary migrants

Proposal 2a: Introduction of a maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills migrants

Consider the option of a three years for a maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visas.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from the proposed maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Workers brought in for the harvest season usually stay no longer than 8-9 months, depending on the state of the crop and the variances of our weather. However, these workers may return several years in a row

Proposal 2b: Introduction of stand down period for lower-skilled Essential Skills migrants

Consider the option for a year-long stand down period following the maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visas.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

This should have applicability if the worker is not staying for more than 8-9 months and then

returning in 3-4 months' time

Proposal 3: Require the partners of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right

Consider the proposal to require the partners of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Not applicable

Proposal 4: Require the children of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right

Consider the proposal to require the children of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Not applicable

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Reinforce that Essential Skills visas should only be granted for the period for which the employment is offered

Proposal 5: Make it explicit how the 'period of employment' condition applies to seasonal work

Consider the option to reinforce that Essential Skills visas for seasonal work are only for the length of the season and that the offer of employment must match the length of the season.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these options?

Give details of the occupations or sectors you think are likely to be affected.

Defining the season is problematic. The season usually involves harvesting. For that the crop must be ready and the weather suitable. In considering the last 12 months, there were droughts, floods and everything in between and it is important that the worker can stay long enough to complete the work. That is why the AIP applied for by Rural Contractors New Zealand covers from 1 July to 31 May of each year.

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

Are there any seasonal occupations that should be added or removed from this list? Why?

Agricultural Machinery Operator is the only one that this Association is involved in and it is crucial that this labour resource continue if the Government is to meet its target of doubling food production by 2025.

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

If you employ seasonal staff, or represent a sector with seasonal staff:

- What are the occupations of the seasonal staff within the sector that you are commenting on?
- For each of the occupations that you have identified, what is the typical period that you require seasonal staff to cover (e.g the peak of the season)?

Agricultural Machinery Operators

Typical period would be September through to April but will vary significantly on the weather, type of crop being harvested and whether more than one harvest can be completed on the same crop