

## 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:

Angela Margaret Fullerton 9(2)(a)

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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.

Director of Family Dairy Farming Company – a dairy farmer who employs migrants

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

What industry or industries does that group work in?

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

Dairy Farm Assistant,

Dairy Farm 2IC or Asst Manager

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.

Essential Skills work visa,

Travel Work visa

**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)

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

Yes, we have had over 6 foreign workers which we have sponsored on various work visas over the last 12 years.

## 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.

I agree with the alignment of remuneration thresholds rather than a job title which has previously been a very important aspect of a work visa application. However, I see huge impact for my business with the changes to the definition of lower-mid skilled migrant. We do have a shortage of lower- mid skilled dairy farm employees from my perspective. The NZ farming system requires ability to get up early be on time, feed yourself from your own kitchen (not takeaways), be outside in all kinds of crappy weather, like animals, respect property and machinery, work long hours on some days, be free from drug dependency or recreational drug use AND THIS is before you actually look at skills required for milking cows, treating cows, driving tractors, managing pasture, maintaining infrastructure, feeding out supplements, calculated feed requirements, matching calves to their mums, applying effluent, detecting cow reproductive cycles, assisting cows with calving difficulties.

In the past 12 months, we have advertised via paper, fencepost, and Work and Income on 3 separate occasions. We have had between 22-35 applicants for our Dairy Farm Assistant Position on the three times we advertised over 90 applied in last 12 monthsh. I had only one applicant from work and income apply but the accommodation wasn't suitable for the applicant as he had 3 children and only a 1 bedroom unit. We did employ a NZ who didn't make it to the end of a 90 day trial – and we have had to rely on holiday work visa holders to get our cows milked for 4 months this year. We would prefer employing locals (NZ resident/citizen) as you don't have to go through the visa application process and we are generally great people. The reality is on our high input farm we require a skill level 3-4 as an entry position. We need someone who has 1-3 years' experience at a minimum and it is simply too hard to find locally.

The implication for our family business is we cannot afford to be renewing a work visa every year this can be very time consuming (advertising and proving no NZ able). It will be very demoralizing to spend a year training an employee in your farming system, policies, procedures and then risk having to train another person. I estimate it takes 2 weeks full time for me to seriously assess 25 applicants and contact referees and conduct interviews. It will take 6 months before a new staff member is conversant on farm and we will be having to start process again 3 months later to find a possible replacement. I also imagine each visa application there will be the view Total Package Value should be increasing.

We need lower-mid staff to receive visa for a minimum of 2 years or it is simply too costly for our business.

## **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.

Dairy Farming – We have a shortage of skilled Dairy Farm Managers. They became skilled by learning over the years, educating themselves and working up the ladder. If we cut these foreign workers out at 3 years we are going to create a continued gap in the skilled area. The NZ farming system can be quite different from other farming countries, as such a skilled applicant would need to demonstrate understanding of NZ dairy farm. If they were just hitting this stage and have to leave as 3 years is up - How is this helping our industry our country? If we simply have NZ able to do the job then we will find them when we advertise.

Our foreign workers came to NZ for opportunity – there is less opportunity for them and our business if they must leave if they reach the maximum duration. After 2 years our farm assistant should be ready to take on the 2<sup>nd</sup> in charge role and after 2-3 years they could be reclassified as midskilled but our business would have lost them at 3 years.

Many family dairy farms employ 1-3 staff we don't have HR departments, we are jack of all trades and when we find a good employee not matter where they come from we want to keep them please don't take this employment opportunity away. 2 out 3 staff are on work visas on our farm we need them to operate our business.

### *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.

If we still have a shortage of lower-skilled essential skills positions in our dairy industry what is purpose of sending good nz training lower skilled migrants away for a year stand down and replacing them with another lower skilled foreign migrant who now has to learn the NZ farm system. This just seems ludicrous to me and counterproductive for our industry and even

more work for immigration department.

*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.

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*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.

Our local Rural Korokonui school has 95% of its role coming from local farming families. This includes farm staff and their families if they are NZ or foreign our rural communities need the numbers to justify teachers, buses, sports teams.

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

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*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.

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

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

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)?