



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Erica Stanford, Hon Louise Upston	Portfolio	Immigration, Hospitality and Tourism
Title of Cabinet paper	Immigration options to support Government priorities	Date to be published	15 July 2025

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
March 2025	Immigration options to support Government priorities	Office of the Minister of Immigration, Office of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
2 April 2025	Immigration options to support Government priorities ECO-25-MIN-0042 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES / NO (please select)

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reasons of:

- International Relations
- Confidential Advice to Government
- National Security and Defence
- Free and Frank Opinions



Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Immigration Options to Support Government Priorities

Portfolios **Immigration / Tourism and Hospitality**

On 2 April 2025, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

- 1 **noted** that Chinese visitor arrivals are currently at 61 percent of pre-COVID levels and visa approvals are at 85 percent;
- 2 **noted** that Australia is experiencing similar challenges with arrivals currently at 62 percent of pre-COVID volumes;
- 3 **noted** that boosting the arrival of visitors from the China market would support the Government's economic growth objectives;
- 4 **noted** that the following actions will be taken by Immigration New Zealand to respond to perceptions of visitors and the tourism industry that the immigration system is a barrier to tourism and that measures are being taken to improve these perceptions:
 - 4.1 campaigns to highlight our short processing times (7-8 week days on average);
 - 4.2 promotion of the five-year multi-entry visitor visas and a single lower fee for a family compared to Australia;
 - 4.3 new Chinese language website material;
 - 4.4 a dedicated in-market facilitator in Beijing and New Zealand call line for the Chinese travel industry;
 - 4.5 alignment of document translation requirements with Australia by removing certification requirements;
- 5 **noted** that any more substantial policy change is likely to impact both the revenue generation of the immigration system and the ability of agencies to employ risk management practices;
- 6 **agreed** to implement visa waiver status for individuals on Chinese passports that hold a valid Australian visitor, student, work, or family visa to enter New Zealand for up to 3 months on a trial basis for 12 months;

- 7 International relations [REDACTED]
- 8 **agreed** to implement visa waiver status for individuals on passports from Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu (Pacific Islands Forum countries) that hold a valid Australian visitor, student, work, or family visa to enter New Zealand for up to 3 months on a trial basis for 12 months;
- 9 **agreed** to the following conditions on the visa free travel trial:
- 9.1 individuals are required to have a valid Australian visitor, work, family or student visa on the day they travel;
 - 9.2 individuals are required to travel from Australia;
 - 9.3 individuals must hold a New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA);
- 10 **authorised** the Minister of Immigration to determine, in the course of the drafting process, the specific Australian visas that will be included or excluded from the visa-free trial consistent with the policy intent of the paper under ECO-25-SUB-0042;
- 11 International relations [REDACTED]
- 12 **noted** that it is estimated there will be revenue impacts for Immigration New Zealand from shifting China and Pacific visitors from a higher charge visitor visa to an NZeTA of approximately \$13.5 million per annum;
- 13 **invited** the Minister of Immigration to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Council Office to give effect to the policy intent of the paper under ECO-25-SUB-0042 and to report back to Cabinet Legislation Committee to amend regulations;
- 14 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration has instructed Immigration New Zealand to issue two-year multi-year visitor visas as the default for Pacific Islands Forum countries and this will decrease revenue by approximately \$1-2 million per annum;
- 15 Confidential advice to Government [REDACTED]
- 16 **authorised** the Minister of Immigration to take decisions to give effect to the policy intent of the immigration settings changes agreed above and any on issues that arise in the drafting process;
- 17 **noted** that the changes above will have an estimated impact on immigration revenue of approximately \$14.5 to \$15.5 million in 2025, impacting the fee and levy memorandum accounts in future and the Crown's operating balance;

- 18 **agreed** to charge the fiscal impact of the decisions in paragraphs 6, 8 and 14 above to the memorandum accounts, which will directly impact OBEGAL and net core Crown debt.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon David Seymour
Hon Nicola Willis (Chair)
Hon Simeon Brown
Hon Brooke van Velden
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Erica Stanford
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Dr Shane Reti
Hon Todd McClay
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Penny Simmonds
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Nicola Grigg
Hon Mark Patterson
Hon James Meager
Hon Scott Simpson
Simon Court MP

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Office of Hon Erica Stanford
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
Officials Committee for ECO