



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Erica Stanford	<b>Portfolio</b>	Immigration
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Immigration (Visa Entry Permission and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026	<b>Date to be published</b>	4 June 2026

<b>List of documents that have been proactively released</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
April 2026	Immigration (Visa Entry Permission and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026	Office of the Minister of Immigration
April 2026	Immigration (Visa Entry Permission and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026 – Order in Council	Parliamentary Counsel Office
23 April 2026	Immigration (Visa Entry Permission and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026 LEG-26-Min-0063 Minute	Cabinet Office

### **Information redacted**

**NO**

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.

**In Confidence**

Office of the Minister of Immigration

Chair, Cabinet Legislation Committee

**Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission and Related Matters)  
Amendment Regulations 2026**

**Proposal**

- 1 This paper seeks authorisation for submission to the Executive Council of the *Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026*.

**Policy**

- 2 People movements between New Zealand and the Pacific can support our broader strategic interests in the Pacific. While we have significant soft power and people-to-people advantages in our engagement with the Pacific, New Zealand's political, strategic and economic objectives in the Pacific region are negatively affected by perceptions that we make it too hard and expensive for Pacific nationals to visit here.
- 3 Pacific nationals have an existing subsidised visitor visa application fees through the 'Pacific fee band', with those applying from the Pacific only paying \$175 (\$216 including the Immigration Levy) compared to \$300 (\$341 including Immigration Levy) for those applying from within New Zealand or the rest of the world. Pacific visitors also do not pay the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) of \$100.
- 4 In August 2025, Cabinet agreed to a 12-month, time-limited initiative to reduce visa application fees for Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) nationals [CAB-25-MIN-0259]. Cabinet authorised the Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, and myself to determine the reduced fee. We agree this reduced fee should be set at \$120, which represents a reduction of 31.4%.
- 5 Cabinet authorised Joint Ministers to authorise any appropriation adjustments from Vote Foreign Affairs (International Development Cooperation multi-year appropriation) to Vote Labour Market to give effect to the fee decision. The 12-month reduction in fees has a corresponding revenue shortfall of approximately \$1.994 million.
- 6 Changes to the *Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission and Related Matters) Regulations 2010* (Immigration Regulations) are required to give effect to this decision.

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*A 12-month reduction in visitor visa fees for Pacific nationals.*

- 7 As part of Cabinet decisions in August, I was delegated the authority to take decisions to give effect to the policy intent of the immigration settings changes agreed to by Cabinet.
- 8 I have since taken a decision on implementing this change through the immigration system's existing Pacific fee band. The existing fee band provides subsidised visitor visa application fees for Pacific nationals, funded in 2025/2026 and outyears by a Vote Transfer from MFAT due to the foreign policy objectives of the subsidy [ECO-24-MIN-0117].
- 9 While this will capture applicants from citizens not in a PIF countries, i.e. from American Samoa and Pitcairn Islands, the operational feasibility of such a change is far greater than alternative measures, such as abolishing the existing band in favour of implementing a PIF-specific band.
- 10 Pitcairn Islands are a British Overseas Territory with an approximate population of 35 people, with its nationals holding British citizenship and rights to a British passport. It is therefore unlikely that individuals would elect to use the Pacific Fee Band over the visa waiver access they could opt to use through their passport. American Samoa, as a territory of the United States of America (US), does not have US birthright citizenship for its population of 44,000. However, as US nationals they do have access to visa waiver in New Zealand. Immigration New Zealand data suggests that since 2016, no Pitcairn Islander and only 102 American Samoans have been identified as being granted a visitor visa, although this does not reflect those who may would have travelled on a British or American passport.
- 11 This will still give effect to Cabinet's agreed policy change, while allowing for simpler administration for Immigration New Zealand staff and clearer changes for the public.

*Approach to reporting back to Cabinet and assessment of the 12-month initiative*

- 12 Cabinet's original policy decision:
- 12.1 invited Joint Ministers to report back to Cabinet within 12 months of implementation to inform decisions on the future of the initiative, and
  - 12.2 noted that, if outyears funding is not identified, visa fees will revert to existing levels.
- 13 This has been reflected by a 'sunset clause' in the regulations, with provisions that come into effect 12 months after the policy's implementation to return the fee to \$175.
- 14 I will return to Cabinet in consultation with the Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs prior to the 12 months elapsing, to report on the initiative's findings. At this time, Cabinet will have the opportunity to determine the future of the policy, by either ending or making permanent the policy, including any decisions on a permanent funding source.

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- 15 This approach will ensure that the fee reduction will not continue in a scenario where no funding source has been identified.

### **Timing and 28-day rule**

- 16 The regulations will commence on 1 June 2026. They are expected to be gazetted on 30 April 2026; this will meet the 28-day rule.

### **Compliance**

- 17 The amendment regulations comply with the following:
- 17.1 the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi;
  - 17.2 the rights and freedoms contained in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993;
  - 17.3 The principles and guidelines set out in the Privacy Act 2020;
  - 17.4 relevant international standards and obligations;
  - 17.5 the Legislation Guidelines (2021 edition), which are maintained by the Legislation Design and Advisory Committee.
- 18 Section 403A of the Immigration Act 2009 requires that the amendment regulations be made only on the recommendation of the Minister of Immigration. I recommend that the amendment regulations be made and therefore this requirement has been met.

### **Regulations Review Committee**

- 19 There are no anticipated grounds for the Regulations Review Committee to draw the regulations to the attention of the House.

### **Certification by Parliamentary Counsel Office**

- 20 The regulations are certified by the Parliamentary Counsel Office as being in order for submission to Cabinet.

### **Impact Analysis**

- 21 The Climate Implications of Policy Assessment (CIPA) team was consulted and confirms that the CIPA requirements do not apply to this policy proposal, as the threshold for significance is not met.
- 22 The Ministry for Regulation has determined that this proposal is exempt from the requirement to provide a Regulatory Impact Statement on the grounds that the economic, social or environmental impacts are limited and easy to assess.

### **Publicity**

- 23 This proposal has already been publicly announced by Ministers.

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- 24 Additional communications have been developed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), with the necessary detail to allow individuals to determine if they are eligible for the reduced fee. This communication will include the full list of eligible Pacific nationalities and visitor visa types, and further detail on the changes to ensure there is clear eligibility and updated guidance prior to the ‘go-live’ of the policy.

### Proactive release

- 25 I intend to proactively release this Cabinet paper within 30 business days.

### Consultation

- 26 Initial consultation on policy proposals in August 2025 included Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Internal Affairs, the Treasury, Ministry of Social Development, and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) supported development of the previous Cabinet paper.
- 27 MFAT and Treasury were consulted again on the changes to the Immigration Regulations, with both agencies in support.

### Recommendations

I recommend that the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

- 1 **note** that, on 4 August 2025, Cabinet took decisions to reduce visitor visa fees for Pacific Islands Forum nationals for a 12-month period [CAB-25-MIN-0259, SOU-25-MIN-0097 refer];
- 2 **note** that Joint Ministers have since agreed to reduce fees from \$175 to \$120;
- 3 **note** that I have since made the decision to implement this policy change through the existing Pacific fee band;
- 4 **note** that section 403(A)(1) of the Immigration Act 2009 requires that regulations may be made only on the recommendation of the responsible Minister;
- 5 **note** the advice of the Minister of Immigration that this requirement has been met;
- 6 **note** that the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026 will give effect to the decisions referred to in recommendations 1, 2 and 3;
- 7 **authorise** the submission to the Executive Council of the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026;
- 8 **note** that the amendment regulations come into force on 1 June 2026, and that the regulations contain provisions that will return the fee to \$175 on 1 June 2027;

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- 9 **note** that the Minister of Immigration will report back to Cabinet prior to the fee returning to \$175 to seek decisions about the continuation, revocation, or amendment of the policy.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Immigration

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## **Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026**

Governor-General

### **Order in Council**

At Wellington this                      day of                      2026

Present:  
in Council

These regulations are made under section 400 of the Immigration Act 2009—

- (a) on the advice and with the consent of the Executive Council; and
- (b) on the recommendation of the Minister of Immigration made under section 403A(1) of that Act.

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### **Regulations**

#### **1 Title**

These regulations are the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Amendment Regulations 2026.

## 2 Commencement

- (1) These regulations come into force on 1 June 2026.
- (2) However, regulation 4(2) comes into force on 1 June 2027.

## 3 Principal regulations

These regulations amend the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010.

## 4 Schedule 4 amended

- (1) In Schedule 4, under the heading *Temporary visa—visitor visa*, item relating to temporary visa application—visitor visa, replace “175” with “120”.
- (2) In Schedule 4, under the heading *Temporary visa—visitor visa*, item relating to temporary visa application—visitor visa, replace “120” with “175”.

Clerk of the Executive Council.

## Explanatory note

*This note is not part of the regulations but is intended to indicate their general effect.*

These regulations amend Schedule 4 of the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010 (the **principal regulations**), which sets various fees.

These regulations come into force on 1 June 2026 except for *regulation 4(2)*, which comes into force on 1 June 2027.

These regulations amend the principal regulations to reduce the visitor visa fee for applicants from Pacific countries. This reduction applies for a 12-month trial period.

*Regulation 4(1)* decreases the fee by \$55, from \$175 to \$120.

*Regulation 4(2)* returns to the fee to \$175 on 1 June 2027.

Issued under the authority of the Legislation Act 2019.

Date of notification in *Gazette*:

These regulations are administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment.