

## New Zealand

The net inflow of permanent and long term migrants continued to fall, mainly due to a drop in the number of students granted visas and the increase of New Zealanders moving abroad (mainly to Australia). Around 46 000 people were approved for residence in New Zealand in 2007-08 which was around 1 000 people less than in the previous year. The largest source countries remained the United Kingdom (which decreased to 22% of the total), China (13%), South Africa, the Philippines and India, each representing between 7 and 9% of the total. An increasing number of Filipinos were granted residence through the Skilled Migrant Category.

Temporary labour migration continued to grow at a significant rate. Almost 130 500 work permits were granted to principal applicants in 2007-08, an increase of more than 13% from the previous year. Increases were due to the expansion of the working holiday schemes and the trends of the Work to Residence and Study to Work policies. Two-thirds of the Graduate Job Search permits in 2007-08 were issued to Chinese graduates.

Despite the continued decrease in the number of students from China (main source country) since 2002-03, the number of student permits increased in 2007-08, by 3%, for the first time since 2002-03. South Koreans represented the second source country for students, with nearly 16% of the total flow. India almost doubled its number of international students (to 8.3% of the total).

A free trade agreement (FTA) with China came into effect in October 2008. One of the NZ-China FTA objectives is to make it easier for New Zealand and Chinese nationals to enter each other's country for a temporary stay related to the supply of services. Once a completed temporary entry or temporary employment entry visa application is received, a decision, or at least an indication of the time within a decision will be made, must be made within 10 working days.

The FTA also exempts certain Chinese temporary migrants from the labour market test. The exemption is granted to skilled workers in traditional Chinese occupations, subject to specified qualifications, work experience and a bona fide job offer. In addition, each year, up to 1 000 skilled Chinese workers shall be granted temporary employment for up to three years, in specified skills shortage occupations (no more than 100 workers in each occupation per year). Although involving only a limited number of Chinese workers, these commitments aimed at easing labour shortages in New Zealand's tight employment market. Alongside the FTA, New Zealand has established a working holiday scheme with China. The scheme provides for a maximum of 1 000 Chinese nationals per year to enter New Zealand for one year.

A new immigration bill was introduced to parliament in July 2007, but will have no direct impact on foreign workers, as immigration policy is still determined by the Minister of Immigration.

A new temporary work policy framework, the "Essential Skills" policy, replaced the General Work Policy in 2007-08. It aims at better targeting workers by skill level of the occupation. Visas/permits under the Essential Skills policy are generally restricted to workers with a job offer for an occupation classified as an ANZSCO skill level 1, 2 or 3, and granted for 3 years. However, the visas/permits may be issued for up to 5 years if the job offer is for a position classified as an ANZSCO skill level 1 and the base salary is at least NZD 55 000.

The Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme introduced in April 2007 was further implemented during 2008 to help meet the labour requirements of the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries when no suitable New Zealanders are available. Employers may recruit from Pacific island nations (and subsequently other countries), with workers allowed to return the next season.

Other important developments include a longer open work permit for graduates of New Zealand tertiary institutions and the establishment of a new Active Investor policy for business migrants.

The annual salary requirement under the Residence policy for holders of work permits granted under the Talent (Accredited Employer) work policy has been increased to NZD 55 000 for applications made after 28 July 2008.

For further information:

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/>

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/actreview/>

<http://www.chinafta.govt.nz/1-The-agreement/1-Key-outcomes/2-Services/4-Temporary-entry-and-employment/index.php>