

New Zealand | Further Changes to the Accredited Employer Work Visa

Article By:

BAL Global Practice Group

New Zealand announced a policy change for certain Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) holders who want to bring family to New Zealand.

Key Points:

- Individuals in roles at Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) levels 4 and 5 without a pathway to residency are no longer able to support work, visitor or student visa applications for their partners and dependent children, who will need to apply for their own visas and meet the qualifications independently.
- Individuals who already hold visas as a partner or dependent child will not be impacted by the change.
- If an AEWV holder in an ANZSCO level 4 or 5 role has a pathway to residency, sector agreement with residence pathways or earns at least 1.5 times the median wage threshold for the skilled migrant category, they also will not be impacted by the new policy change.

Additional Information: Government officials recently announced that some AEWVs will now require higher work experience and qualification requirements, as well as a new English language standard and a shorter stay for people applying to work in certain roles assessed as ANZSCO skill levels 4 and 5. Individuals in the ANZSCO levels 4 and 5 job categories who receive the required wage rate will no longer be able to access the maximum eligibility time of five years if they applied before June 21, 2023, for their first AEWV. Applicants in this category must also now demonstrate that they meet the new English language requirements. The maximum visa length is reduced to two years, with the ability to apply for one more year with a new job check. The total time an individual in an ANZSCO levels 4 and 5 job category can stay in New Zealand (also called a maximum continuous stay) on one or more AEWVs is now reduced to three years.

BAL Analysis: Accredited employers should be aware of the new guidelines and understand their responsibilities when hiring individuals. The government has made this change to align with the broader suite of changes to the AEWV scheme and tighten immigration requirements, particularly for low-skilled migrant workers.

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