

Employing skilled workers

that hold a Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491)



This document is designed to assist employers in understanding this visa's conditions and to support fair consideration of skilled workers that can contribute to addressing Queensland's regional workforce shortages.

Visa overview

The **Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491)** is a five-year skilled visa granted by the Australian Government to support skilled workforce needs in regional Australia. Migration Queensland nominates people with the skills to help address regional workforce gaps to apply for this visa.

In Queensland, regional areas for this visa include all locations except for most postcodes in Greater Brisbane.

Why employers can confidently hire suitable 491 visa holders

- Main applicants granted the subclass 491 have qualifications, skills and experience in demand in regional Queensland and met English language proficiency requirements.
- The visa provides stable, long-term, full work rights for up to 5 years.
- There are no restrictions on the number of hours they may work, the type of work they may undertake, the industry they can work in or the type of employer they can work for.
- There are no additional costs or obligations for employers. Same as hiring any other worker.
- Offers a direct pathway to permanent residency, subject to residency, health and character requirements.



Pathway to permanent residency

The subclass 491 visa is a 'provisional visa' with a pathway to permanency, rather than direct permanent residence. This means visa holders must live and work regionally for at least 3 years before they can become a permanent resident, thereby supporting regional Australia.

Visa holders can apply for the **Skilled Regional (Permanent) visa (subclass 191)** when they:

- have lived, worked or studied in a **designated regional area** during the 3 years immediately before the date of application. A list of postcodes that specify designated regional areas is available **here**.
- satisfy health and character requirements.

Verification of work rights

Employers can independently verify the visa holder's work rights at any time using the Australian Government's **Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO)** system.

All visa holders are entitled to the same employment rights and protections as Australian citizens and permanent residents under Australian workplace law.

Disclaimer notice to applicants

The details presented in this FAQ sheet are time-sensitive and reflect information as of May 2026. It is intended for awareness purposes only and should not be considered as advice. For official or professional migration information and advice, you should refer to:

www.homeaffairs.gov.au, or;
www.mara.gov.au