

Occupations and Concessions

This document is the third of four documents provided as pre-reading material to stakeholders prior to Phase 2 consultation.

Visa Conditions

Conditions are attached to employer sponsored visas to ensure that overseas workers complement, but do not displace, Australian workers. An overview of these conditions is outlined in Appendix A.

These conditions include:

- mandating a minimum salary known as an ‘income threshold’
- requiring employers to pay annual market salary rates (AMSR) to sponsored workers if the AMSR is above the income threshold¹
- limiting the occupations that are eligible for employer sponsorship to the relevant Skilled Occupation List
- requiring employers to contribute to the Skilling Australians Fund
- requiring overseas workers to hold relevant Australian registration, licences and certificates
- ensuring that employers do not exploit skilled workers to recoup financial benefits in return for visa sponsorship
- specifying suitable skills, English language, age, and work experience requirements for overseas workers.

A Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) provides greater flexibility for employers located within the Designated Regional Area, as they can access a broader range of overseas workers due to negotiated variations to the standard list of occupations and concessions.

Concessions may include changes to the standard conditions, the inclusion of new conditions, or apply only to specific occupations, skill levels or regions within the DAMA. They should be supported by a strong business case.

2026-27 Queensland Skilled Occupation List

Each year the Queensland Government undertakes consultation to develop the [Queensland Skilled Occupation List](#) (QSOL) to guide its State Nomination Migration Program. Shortages exist when employers are unable to fill, or have considerable difficulty filling, vacancies for an occupation, or significant specialised skill need within that occupation, at current levels of remuneration and conditions of employment, and in reasonably accessible locations.²

To streamline stakeholder feedback on skilled migration needs, Migration Queensland is also using the input gathered through this consultation process to inform the development of the 2026-27 QSOL (which is based on occupational shortage lists administered by the Department of Home Affairs). The QSOL consist only of occupations with Skill Levels 1, 2 or 3.

Consequently, Migration Queensland is seeking stakeholder feedback on

- a) occupations in shortage in Queensland
- b) the distribution of the shortages, and
- c) occupations and concessions that could be included in a state-led DAMA to support employers to meet their workforce needs.

The occupations and concessions discussed below in relation to a state-led DAMA do not reflect Queensland Government policy and do not indicate a Queensland Government position.

¹ The Annual Market Salary Rate (AMSR) is determined by assessing what an equivalent Australian worker is paid, enterprise agreements or industrial awards, JSA occupation and industry profiles, advertisements for the last 6 months in the same location or remuneration survey or advice from unions or employer associations.

² Jobs and Skills Australia definition.

Occupations

To be considered for inclusion in a state-led DAMA, all occupations should be supported by strong **evidence of workforce shortage and demand** for that specific occupation and/or **be supported by a strong business case**. Migration Queensland will provide further advice and support throughout the consultation period.

Occupations to be included in a state-led DAMA must be **core** to the business and filled on a **full-time** basis. Seasonal or casual positions are not eligible. Before proposing an occupation, employers should consider if the recruitment for that occupation could be adequately achieved via standard migration arrangements or alternative programs.

Migration Queensland has developed a list of occupations for potential inclusion under a state-led DAMA using a combination of existing skills shortage lists,³ occupation lists for Queensland regional DAMAs and stakeholder feedback (see Occupations for consideration). As requested by the Australian Government, occupations have been transferred from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations to the new [Occupation Standard Classification for Australia](#) (OSCA) using the [correspondence tables](#) published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Any information about standard conditions, outlined in this list by Migration Queensland, is a **guide only** as the Department of Home Affairs is yet to move to the OSCA system.

This list will help you prepare for feedback prior to attending a webinar and receiving the feedback template. You can use the OSCA to check the definition, main duties and skill level of each occupation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Example of an OSCA occupation entry

713131 Truck Driver (General)

Drives a rigid truck, requiring a specially endorsed class of licence, to transport goods, usually over short distances.

Registration or licensing is required.

Articulated Truck Drivers, Delivery Drivers and Tanker Truck Drivers are excluded from this occupation. Articulated Truck Drivers are included in Occupation 713231 Articulated Truck Driver. Delivery Drivers are included in Minor Group 712 Delivery Drivers. Tanker Truck Drivers are included in Occupation 713232 Tanker Truck Driver.

Specialisations

- Cement Mixer Driver
- Compactor Driver (Waste Collection)

Skill level: 4

Main tasks

- Drives and manoeuvres a truck into position for loading and unloading goods
- Drives a truck to transport goods to designated locations
- Communicates with dispatchers and other truck drivers to coordinate deliveries
- Maintains accurate records of goods transported, including delivery times and locations
- Performs routine maintenance on the truck, such as checking oil and tyre pressure

³ Department of Home Affairs Short-term Skilled Occupation List, Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List and Regional Occupation List; Jobs and Skills Australia Occupation Shortage List (Queensland); FNQ and TNQ DAMA.

Industry Labour Agreements

Occupations that are available in existing [Industry Labour Agreements](#) (ILAs) will only be approved by the Australian Government if they are used outside of the industry covered by the relevant ILA. Current ILAs include:

- Advertising
- Aged Care
- Dairy
- Fishing
- Horticulture
- Meat
- Minister of Religion
- Pork
- Restaurant (premium dining)

Age

Generally, standard skilled migration programs have an age limit of 45 years with the following exemptions for subclass 186 and 494 visas nominated as:

- an academic (university lecturer or faculty head at Academic Level A, B, C, D or E) by a university in Australia
- a scientist, researcher or technical specialist at OSCA skill level 1 or 2 by an Australian scientific government agency or Australian university
- a medical practitioner in a designated regional area of Australia, and in the 3 years immediately before an application, have worked in that occupation in a designated regional area of Australia for at least 2 years as a subclass 457 or 482 visa holder.

Concessions for limits up to 55 years of age are common across DAMAs.

Salary

The employer of a migrant worker must pay them at the Annual Market Salary Rate or the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Thresholds (subclass 494), Core Skills Income Threshold or Specialist Skills Income Threshold (subclass 482), whichever is the higher.

The thresholds are indexed annually. As at 1 July 2025, the Temporary and Core Skills Income Threshold is \$76,515, while the Specialist Skills Income Threshold is \$141,200.

Concessions to these amounts of up to 10% have been granted provided financial hardship risks are managed.

Pathway to permanent residence

Under the regional subclass 494, visa holders must live and work in a Designated Regional Area for at least 3 years before applying to become a permanent resident, while holders of a temporary subclass 482 can be nominated to apply for permanent residency by their employer after completing 2 years of sponsored work.

Concessions for shorter pathways may be granted provided timeframes are realistic in terms of the time needed for a migrant worker to settle and integrate into a community.

English language

Under the standard skilled migration system, migrant workers must have a prescribed level of English proficiency across speaking, reading, writing and listening, unless exempt. This ensures workers can perform their jobs safely, participate at work and in their community, and transfer skills and experience. English language proficiency may be especially important in jobs that are customer facing, those with specific workplace health and safety demands or those requiring registration or licencing. The standard visa program requirements are:

- IELTS General Training 5.0 or equivalent (Vocational) – subclass visa 482
- IELTS General Training 6.0 or equivalent (Competent) – subclass visa 494
- IELTS General Training 6.0 or equivalent (Competent) - subclass visa 186 (Temporary Residence Transition stream).

English concessions for Skill Level 1 and 2 occupations will generally not be considered but concessions for occupations at other skill levels may be requested.

Skills and Experience

Overseas workers are expected to have a level of skill and experience and be able to transfer skills to Australian workers. Where applicable, they will also need to meet Australian registration and licensing requirements. The standard minimum work experience requirements are at least:

- 1 year of relevant work experience – subclass visa 482
- 3 years of relevant work experience – subclass visa 494
- 2 years of relevant work experience in the last 3 years – subclass visa 186 (Temporary Transition stream).

Some visa applicants⁴ (provisionally identified in the occupation list provided) must undergo a mandatory skills assessment as part of the visa application process – the skills assessment must commence prior to submission of a visa application.

Concessions may be requested to levels and recency of work experience, skill level or other conditions.

OSCA Skill levels

Skill levels for each occupation equate to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and include relevant levels of experience which may substitute for qualifications.

- Skill Level 1: Corresponds to Bachelor Degree or higher OR at least 5 years of relevant experience.
- Skill Level 2: Corresponds to Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree OR at least 3 years relevant experience.
- Skill Level 3: Corresponds to Certificate III (includes min. 2 years of on-the-job training), Certificate IV OR at least 3 years relevant experience.
- Skill Level 4: Corresponds to Certificate II, Certificate III OR at least 1 year of relevant experience.
- Skill Level 5: Corresponds to compulsory secondary education or Certificate I. A short period of on-the-job training may be required in addition to or instead of the formal qualification.

Additional concessions or changes to conditions

During Phase 1 consultation, stakeholders advised they want Queensland to act as a single, consistent administrative hub that standardises and simplifies currently repetitive, inconsistent or costly processes.

Some stakeholders were looking for additional concessions beyond those usually negotiated. For instance, providing concessions to the Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) when relevant training options are not available regionally. Others suggested waiving the requirement for an additional SAF levy to encourage employers to nominate existing workers for the subclass 186 transitional stream, assisting retention. Full or partial refunds of the SAF levy were suggested to also mitigate the costs of losing a sponsored worker to higher paying industries, major projects or more desirable locations.

Stakeholders also sought recognition of the different skills and experience requirements across industries and occupations, rather than the arbitrary standards for individual visas set by the Department of Home Affairs. Other stakeholders suggested the introduction of scaled concession arrangements that account for industry profit margins and the high cost of living in remote regions. Others suggested salary concessions should reflect local wage expectations to avoid distorting local labour markets.

During Phase 1 consultation, several employers noted that migrants transitioning to Permanent Residency (PR) failed aspects of the English Language requirements. This was often because they lacked local language support, even though they were able to meet the requirements of their jobs. Stakeholders asked that this lack

⁴ For further information see [Migration \(IMMI 18/039: Mandatory Skills Assessment—Subclass 482 Visa\) Instrument 2018 - Federal Register of Legislation](#)

of English language support be taken into consideration when assessing current workers who are applying for visa extensions or PR.

With worker retention a high priority for stakeholders, employers identified issues with developing career pathways for workers. For example, promotion of a worker becomes costly given the Department of Home Affairs' requirement that any change in duties require a new employer nomination and new visa application. Organisations with multiple branches across regions identified restrictive sponsorship regulations that prevented them easily transferring workers across their network, impacting business needs and restricting opportunities for workers. Other stakeholders requested a condition that workers who were changing employers remain in a specific region.

Skills recognition

The Designated Area Representative (DAR) can undertake the function of providing skills assessments for occupations that are not on skilled occupation lists or not covered by current assessing authorities. Feedback is sought on mechanisms to support formal recognition of candidates' qualifications or experience.

Stakeholders said it would help if there were better ways to help employers understand and recognise the skills and experience of the partners and families of sponsored workers. Better recognition of overseas work experience and qualifications and helping partners or dependent children to find jobs opportunities that match their skills, could benefit local communities and encourage long-term retention in regions.

Processing under a state-led DAMA

Employers familiar with the skilled migration system noted that some of the compliance and processing requirements were onerous and time consuming. Labour Market testing and skills assessment were commonly identified as "pain points," as was the endorsement process itself. For instance, employers noted that seeking endorsement for individual occupations was time consuming and resource intensive, and suggested endorsement could be for a specific period rather than covering the sponsorship of a worker for a specific occupation.

Stakeholders also suggested priority processing for employers seeking to engage workers under a state-led DAMA to address the lengthy delays many have experienced using standard sponsorship systems.

Feedback is sought on concessions, innovations or proposals that could be considered to improve the operation of a state-led DAMA while maintaining the integrity of the skilled migration system.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Vacancies that may be more easily filled under the framework of a state-led DAMA.

Occupational concessions to standard conditions that would make filling occupations easier.

Additional concessions, innovations, or other proposals that improve the operation of a state-led DAMA.

APPENDIX A - Overview of key visa requirements of employer sponsored visas

Key requirements	Subclass 482 Skills in Demand (Temporary) visa – Core and Specialist streams	Subclass 494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa	Subclass 186 Employer Nominated Scheme (Permanent) visa – Temporary Residents Transition stream	Subclass 186 Employer Nominated Scheme (Permanent) visa (subclass 186) – Direct entry stream
Occupations	456 occupations	650 occupations	456 occupations	456 occupations
Age limit	No age limit	45 years	45 years Exemptions for academics, scientist, researcher or technical (scientific) specialist nominated by govt agency or university. Medical practitioners that have worked in designated regional area for last 3 years	45 years Exemptions for academics, scientist, researcher or technical (scientific) specialist nominated by government agency or university
Work experience	1 year	3 years	2 years	3 years
Minimum salary⁵	Higher of \$76,515 or annual market salary rate core skills Higher of \$141,210 or annual market salary rate for specialist skills	Higher of \$76,515 or annual market salary rate	n/a	Higher of \$76,515 or annual market salary rate
English language	Functional English (Generally)	Competent English	Competent English	Competent English
Visa duration	4 years	5 years	n/a	n/a
Pathway to permanent residency	Minimum 2 years sponsored employment in last 3 years to qualify for visa subclass 186 visa – TRT stream	Minimum 3 years employment in a designated regional area to qualify for visa subclass 191 - Regional Provisional stream	n/a	n/a

⁵ Nomination applications lodged between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026