

Special Direction—Extension of Visas Held by a Class of Work to Residence Visa Holders, and Their Partners and Dependent Children, to Manage the Effects and Deal With the Consequences of Measures Taken to Contain or Mitigate the Outbreak of COVID-19 or its Effects

Under section 78A of the Immigration Act 2009 (“Act”), by special direction, I extend the visas held by the following classes of people:

1. Every person who is in New Zealand on 9 May 2022 and who holds a temporary work visa with a recorded expiry date of between 9 May 2022 and 31 December 2022 (dates inclusive), where the visa was granted under a category of immigration instructions specified in the Schedule attached to this special direction.

Visas held by this class (Principal Visa Holders) are extended for a period of six months from the date on which they would otherwise expire (for example, if a visa has the recorded expiry date of 30 June 2022, it will be extended to 30 December 2022 and expire on the beginning of 31 December 2022).

2. Every person who is in New Zealand on 9 May 2022, who holds a temporary visa based on their relationship as a partner or dependent child of a Principal Visa Holder, and whose current visa has a recorded expiry date of between 9 May 2022 and 31 December 2022 (dates inclusive).

Visas held by this class are extended for a period of six months from the date on which they would otherwise expire.

For the avoidance of doubt, visas that expire in accordance with section 63(1) of the Act, and interim visa holders, are not included in the class of persons covered by this special direction. In addition, visas held by this class are extended once only by this special direction and are not extended again if the extended expiry date falls within the period specified above.

I am satisfied that the making of this special direction is reasonably necessary to manage the effects, or deal with the consequences of, measures taken under the Act or any other enactment in New Zealand, to contain or mitigate the outbreak of COVID-19 or its effects. The border was closed to manage the outbreak of COVID-19, which resulted in a pent-up demand for visas and reduced visa processing capacity. This special direction manages the ongoing effects on processing times and resourcing due to COVID-19, by removing the demand for further visas from the system and limiting the expected surge in work visa applications as part of, and during, the phased re-opening of the New Zealand border.

This special direction expires at the end of 31 December 2022 unless revoked earlier.

Dated this 6th day of May 2022.

HON KRIS FAAFOI, Minister of Immigration.

Explanatory Note

The effect of this special direction is to extend the visas of Work to Residence visa holders (Principal Visa Holders) that expire between 9 May 2022 and 31 December 2022 (dates inclusive). Their visas are extended for a period of six months from the date they would otherwise have expired. Visas held as a partner or dependent child of a Principal Visa Holder are also extended for a period of six months from the date on which they would otherwise expire. This is so that Immigration New Zealand can maintain timely processing of visa applications as the border reopens.

Schedule

WR1 Talent (Accredited Employers) Work Instructions

WR2 Talent (Arts, Culture and Sports) Work Instructions

WR3 Long Term Skill Shortage List Work Instructions

WR5 Skilled Migrant Category Job Search Instructions

WR7 South Island Contribution Work Instructions