

A 'Welcome to Australia' Migration Plan to Provide the Skills, People and Growth our Economy Needs



Purpose

Restore Australia's traditional migration settings as a key driver for Australia's economic recovery.

Challenge

As Reserve Bank Governor Philip Lowe observed in 2018, *"Australia's faster population growth [is] one of the reasons our economy has experienced higher average growth than many other advanced economies."*

Australia's population was forecast to grow by 1.7% per annum over 2020 and 2021,¹³ however it will now almost certainly shrink over this period. This will create an enormous economic drag.

Getting our economy going again will be impossible without the international students, visitors, skilled workers and the underlying population growth that temporary and permanent migration provides. Australia's traditional migration program does far more than just add more people, it boosts our overall productivity by bringing in skilled and relatively younger people.¹⁴ Without migration, we won't have a strong economy.

Normalising these settings will be greatly challenged in a COVID-19 world, with extended limits on international travel and the dangers of international transmission. We believe Australia should create a safe pathway to begin to normalise migration settings and support economic recovery. This plan will need to consider the level of unemployment that will exist post-crisis.

The Plan

7.1 Adopt highly secure but welcoming testing, isolation and tracing arrangements for international arrivals to protect Australians from reinfection that also facilitate economically-important travel.

7.2 Establish a major international advertising campaigning – promoting Australia as a safe and healthy destination to visit, study, work and make a new life.

7.3 Target temporary visa classes that can make an immediate and positive impact on economic growth, including students and skilled and semi-skilled workers. New Zealand would be an obvious pilot partner for opening up tourism and other working engagements.

7.4 Incentivise permanent migration via a temporary lowering of the points system for permanent skilled migration classes, similar to the recent government initiatives for regional population growth but applying to the whole country.