



COVID-19 AND AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION

UPDATES TO AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION AND VISAS DURING THE COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) OUTBREAK

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There is so much confusion and wrong information running around social media with the fact that the Coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone in Australia and abroad including Australian Citizens, Permanent Residents, and Temporary Visa holders. The recent unfortunate travel global bans means up to 2 million Temporary Visa holders, from international students to tourists and skilled workers will be forced to stay in Australia. If you are one of them and are stressed about what to do? Don't worry, we can help you to be happy and safe!

Let's start with the key points of the Government's recent announcement

1 International students working in supermarkets will have their working hours return to the maximum 40 hours a fortnight on 1st May as more Australians are being recruited into these roles.

2 International students working as nurses and in aged care continue to have their hours extended to support these critical sectors.

3 Students who have been here longer than 12 months who find themselves in financial hardship will be able to access their Australian superannuation.

4 Working Holiday Visa (417) holders working in 'critical sectors' will be exempt from six-month work limitations.

5 Temporary residents can access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation this financial year and \$10,000 next year.

6 Visa holders who can't support themselves for the next six months are being encouraged to return to their home countries.



Here is what the Department has done for Australia's international students.

- 1 Visa processing continues.** The Department is approving Student Visa applications which meet all the visa requirements so that they can travel as soon as travel restrictions are lifted.
- 2** Many Student Visa applicants cannot meet health, character and English language criterias as key services in China are still closed.
- 3** If a student has remained outside of mainland China for more than 14 days after 1st February 2020, they are able to travel to Australia.

If you are in Australia and you hold a temporary visa such as:

- Student Visa
- Working Holiday 417
- Work and Holiday 462
- Graduate Visa 485
- Tourist Visa



Brightannica has plans in place to ensure ongoing operations for our current and prospective students. If your visa expires soon and you want to stay longer in Australia, you must apply for a new visa before your current visa expires. If you don't you will not be compliant and may face severe penalties.



If your visa has expired and you don't know what to do.

WORKING HOLIDAY VISA HOLDERS

Working Holiday Visa holders who are working in:

- Health
- Food processing
- Aged and disability care
- Childcare
- Agriculture

There is an **exemption** from the six month work limitation with the one employer and eligible for a further visa (Student Visa or Visa Subclass 408 for Covid-19) to keep working in these critical sectors if their current visa is due to expire in the next six months.

Holders of working holiday visas are **currently not eligible for financial support from the Australian Government**, however, there is a **possibility to gain early access to superannuation**.



118,000

BACKPACKERS
currently residing temporarily
in Australia on visas which offer
conditional work rights.

TEMPORARY SKILLED AND GRADUATE VISA HOLDERS



139,000

PEOPLE ON TEMPORARY VISAS
including 485s, 457s and 482s
in Australia.

If you are in Australia and you hold a temporary visa and it is expiring soon, you must apply for a new visa (Student Visa or Tourist Visa) before your current visa expires. If you don't, you will not be compliant and may face severe penalties.

There is a **possibility you will be able to access your superannuation early** and we are waiting further details. We will update this article in due course.

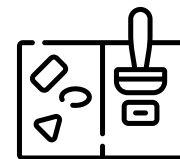
If you're looking to stay in Australia longer, the most popular option for many people is to move on to a student visa.

We can help you enroll into a course and then support your application and visa lodgement process (all for free). We can guide you through a range of courses based on price, flexibility and whatever factors meet your needs.

VISITOR AND TOURIST VISA HOLDERS

There are **203,000 overseas visitors** in Australia at present. From 9pm AEDT 20 March 2020, people can enter in Australia only if:

- Australian citizen
- Permanent resident
- A New Zealand citizen usually residing in Australia
- Immediate family member (spouse, dependents and legal guardians)



THREE MONTHS OR LESS
validation for VISITOR VISA



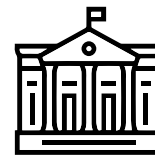
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISA HOLDERS

Most of the schools have launched **virtual learning classes** for the next couple of weeks, in order to increase safety for the students. Some schools are very flexible when organising payment plans and allowing students to defer their study term. This means that you can put your course on standby and defer the payment, if the school agrees. Call us if you want to explore this option and get our full support.

Key points can be helpful:

- 1 The Government will be flexible in cases where the virus has **prevented international students meeting their visa conditions** (such as not being able attend classes).
- 2 **Superannuation can be accessed early** if necessary, but only for students who have been here longer than 12 months.
- 3 Students working in aged care, nursing and for major supermarkets **can work longer hours**.
- 4 If a student requires additional time in Australia to complete their study, they only need to apply for **a new student visa at least six weeks**, but no more than three months prior to their existing Student Visa.

If you are thinking of staying longer, a better option would definitely be to apply for a Student Visa. As currently most of our schools are offering discounts, special installment plans, or other forms of help. We know that we can help you.



GOVERNMENT ADVICE

Tourists should return home as quickly as possible, particularly anyone without family support. However, any visitor visa holders who are unable to – or do not wish to – travel at this time may be able to renew their Tourist Visas onshore or change to Student Visas if you wish to study in Australia.

How long does the travel ban last?

At the moment, there is no indication about the timeframe. It is incorrect that the travel ban has been announced as a 6-month ban. It is likely that the ban will be as long as needed to keep the virus spread under control.



HOW TO ORGANIZE ENGLISH TESTS (IELTS AND PTE)?

For students that are coming from non-English speaking countries, an alternative for IELTS is available. At Brightannica, we can get you an **Internal English Test - IELTS Waiver**. However, If you need to sit a test urgently and cannot choose IELTS or PTE due to cancellations you can try TOEFL here: [Asia Pacific: Coronavirus TOEFL Test Updates](#)

WHAT ABOUT HEALTH EXAMINATIONS, BUPA HEALTH BOOKINGS?

You need to complete the [Request for Appointment Form](#).

If you are not contacted in the next five (5) business days, it means your assessment has not been prioritised. Your request will be noted and they will contact you when an appointment is available.

WHAT IS VISA SUBCLASS 408 FOR COVID-19?



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

The Department of Home Affairs has opened up a new visa opportunity, which is aimed to help those whose visas are expiring in the next 28 days.

The 'COVID-19 408' visa provides a **pathway for temporary visa holders to lawfully remain in Australia**. But this is not for everyone as you will be requested to work in certain areas and meet very specific requirements.

This infers that if you don't have a qualification to work in aged care or public health you will have to undertake work on an approved farm or agricultural centre, which is often reported to be physically challenging and poorly paid for many workers – which means it's not a hugely attractive option for many people. This is why most working holiday visa holders end up changing to a student visa where they can work with fewer restrictions and stay longer in Australia legally.

BRIGHTANNICA'S CORONAVIRUS ACTION PLAN

We know this is a tough time for everyone in Australia. At Brightannica, we have the right people who are able to support you positively step by step and guide you through this challenging journey. Before you make any decision, which may affect your current visa or situation, please contact us and seek advice.

We are able to work entirely remotely in the event that self-isolation including emails and phones, lodging applications, and accessing documents. Our support is free of charge!

Further information can be found here: [Department of Home Affairs | News and media | COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) and the Australian border](#)

