

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL CHANGES TO GENERAL SKILLS - FAMILY MIGRATION

DID YOU KNOW?

- ✚ On 21st August new migration regulations which will overhaul the General Skilled Migration Programme will be introduced into Parliament. These changes are scheduled to take effect from 1st September.
- ✚ Some of these changes will directly affect people who want to sponsor their families to Australia (to areas other than regional/rural areas).

These changes will include:

- ✚ The reduction of the pass mark for people migrating under the family sponsorship component from 110 points to 100 points.
- ✚ The abolition of the 15 points awarded to people who have family who want to sponsor them to migrate to Australia;
- ✚ The abolition of Assurances of Support (AoS) and the Sydney and Selected Areas Skill Shortage List (SSASSL).

SOUNDS FAIR BUT HOW WILL THESE CHANGES AFFECT YOU?

- ✚ Currently the base mark is 95 points PLUS the 15 points to qualify for the 110 points to pass the Points Test but with the new changes, from 1st September, applicants will require a base and pass mark of 100 points and not have the benefit of the additional 15 points from their family sponsorship. In other words, the base mark has been increased by 5 points.
- ✚ Whilst the legislation appears generous in abolishing the AoS and the SSASSL requirements, it should be acknowledged that these requirements are now simply obsolete with the new changes.

The proposed changes highlight serious issues regarding the future of Family Reunion via the skilled visa program and deserves further evaluation as these changes will effectively result in the abolition of the Family Reunion programme by stealth.

WHEN WILL ALL THIS HAPPEN?

Although the Government has been talking about introducing these changes from 1st September for some months, the final regulations will not be tabled in Parliament until 22nd August. As Parliament will be in recess until 11th September and possibly may not sit again until after the federal elections, these Regulations can be implemented without undergoing Parliamentary scrutiny.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Below is a form letter which you can copy and send to the people listed below and/or your local MP. These changes will go through automatically, unless people are prepared to register their objection to these regulations. We would also ask that you forward this email onto other interested parties so that they may become involved in trying to ensure that the migration programme recognises the importance of families and the sponsorship of their relatives as part of the Government's immigration programme.

14th August 2007

Dear Member of Parliament

I am writing to you to express my concern at the Government's proposed changes to the General Skilled Migration Programme scheduled for 1st September which raises serious issues regarding the future of the Family Reunion component.

People who have migrated to Australia over the years have relied upon their strong family units to help them settle in Australia. By abolishing the 15 additional points which are currently awarded to applicants whose families are prepared to sponsor them to Australia, the Government diminishes its recognition of the family's importance in the migration process. It will be the end of the family reunion programme by stealth. The changes will also effectively raise the base pass mark (currently $95+15=110$) required by an applicant who is sponsored by their family to $100+0=100$ points.

I would strongly urge you to reconsider these proposed Regulations. If the Government is truly committed to the importance of family values then they should at the very least, maintain the tradition of recognising the importance of family sponsorships and award an additional 5 points for applicants with family sponsorships. This would recognise the importance of the family unit in assisting in the migration process.

Yours Faithfully

Addresses for MPs:

The Hon. John Howard, PM. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Howard does not have an email address. No email but fax to: (02) 9816 1349 (electoral office) or (02) 62734100 (Parliament House)

NB: Just press CTRL + Click on the email address and it will automatically go to Outlook Express.

Hon. Kevin Andrews, Minister for Immigration & Citizenship
Kevin.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au

Kevin Rudd, MP Leader of the Opposition

Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au

Tony Burke, MP Opposition Spokesperson on Immigration

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Senator Kerry Nettle, Greens Spokesperson on Immigration

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Senator Andrew Bartlett, Democrats Spokesperson on Immigration

Senator.bartlett@aph.gov.au

Senator Steve Fielding, Family First

Senator.fielding@aph.gov.au

Full details of the proposed changes can be found at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/changes/qa.htm>