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2017 Election – The Parties’ Stances on Immigration

With the final decision yet to be made as to the makeup of our next Government, we review where the parties stand with regard to Immigration issues, and the potential changes which migrants may be facing over the next three years. With New Zealand First holding the balance of power, its conservative immigration policies will likely prove to have a curbing effect on National’s policies, or a more restrictive approach in conjunction with Labour’s proposed policies.

The National Government recently implemented some significant changes to the Essential Skills Category and the Skilled Migrant Category (**SMC**). It was also indicated that the National Government would also undertake reviews of the Hospitality, Aged Care and Primary Industry Sectors by the end of this year, and undertake a review of the Regions by mid-2018. However, if National enters into a coalition with New Zealand First, then we may see a more conservative approach to immigration as a result, especially so if the recent changes implemented on 28 August have not resulted in a reduction in the number of visa approvals under the SMC (which we are expecting).

The Labour party has a more conservative attitude to immigration than National. Labour has proposed an overall net migration reduction of 20,000 to 30,000, and this is likely to be higher if Labour’s proposed policies are introduced. If it enters into coalition with New Zealand First it is possible that their approach to immigration may see the net migration reduction pushed even further.

We anticipate that under a Labour-New Zealand First coalition, proposed policy changes are likely to be implemented for Students and Post-Study migrants, such as more stringent English Language requirements being imposed. A positive point for migrants to note would be New Zealand First’s aim to reduce migrant worker



exploitation. Since immigration did not appear to be one of Labour's major policy platforms for the election, changes to the sector may not be introduced as quickly. However, in combination with New Zealand First, a conservative approach to immigration is likely. Policy shifts under a Labour-led government would also likely see the recruitment processes become more onerous for migrants, with a significant reduction in options available to lower-skilled migrants, such as Level 4-6 Students and Post-Study work visa holders.

On a positive note, Labour has made a commitment to ensuring that genuine skill needs in the market are met. The indicated intention of Labour is to facilitate the flow of skilled migrants into roles where a genuine need exists. Highly skilled migrants may therefore feel less impact than their Student and Post-Study counterparts, as long as New Zealand First are in agreement with Labour on this issue.

Time will tell whether we will have a National-New Zealand First coalition or a Labour-New Zealand First one. Whichever the resulting Government, there will be changes impacting on migrants to New Zealand. Increased complexity around migration and tightening of eligibility criteria will be best navigated with professional assistance.

For further information or assistance with emigration please contact the Lane Neave on + 64 3 379 3720 or email liveinnewzealand@laneneave.co.nz.



Your First Source For Business Advice



Housing in New Zealand

Finding good accommodation is one of the key tasks when settling into a new country. Whether you are planning to rent a room or house, or buy a property, it pays to do some research into accommodation before arriving in the country.

Most newcomers to New Zealand choose to rent initially, and eventually buy when they find an area that suits their needs. A good location is subjective in every region. In Christchurch there are equal benefits to living in the beautiful seaside suburbs, the leafy west, the south with its proximity to the stunning Port Hills, or a little further out of the city in the increasingly popular satellite townships of Rangiora and Kaiapoi to the north, and Rolleston and Prebbleton to the west. These areas have seen considerable population growth post-quakes, and major upgrades to roads and motorways are underway to cater for this. Heavy traffic can still be an issue if



travelling into the central city from these areas but this frustration is relative; new migrants from heavily populated parts of the UK, for example, find complaints from locals about congestion amusing.

Properties to rent or buy can be found through letting or real estate agencies, or websites like [Trade Me](#) and [realestate.co.nz](#). The median weekly cost of rental properties in Christchurch is \$395, and rent is advertised as a weekly, not monthly, cost. Rights and responsibilities of both tenants and landlords may be different from other countries. The [Tenants' Protection Association](#) provides a useful summary of the law governing residential tenancies. The median purchase price of a property in Christchurch is \$495,070 (June 2017), and most banks require at least a 20% deposit before offering a mortgage.

In the larger cities of New Zealand, the old mantra of “location, location, location” holds true. If finding an area with a suitable school is an important consideration, it pays to bear in mind that state (government-funded) schools take their students from geographically set ‘zones’. If a student does not live in the zone, they will have to enter a ballot or be placed on a waiting list with no guarantee of acceptance. A property in a ‘desirable’ school zone can drive up the price of both rentals and houses on the market.

Most modern homes in New Zealand are warm and energy efficient, but houses built before the 1990s have very little insulation or double glazing, and consequently power bills can soar in winter. Kiwis therefore tend to heat rooms, rather than whole houses; a source of great frustration for many newcomers. When viewing a potential property, ask about the level of insulation, and note the position of the property on the land. In New Zealand, it's the north-facing properties that get the most sun. New Zealanders love their ‘indoor – outdoor flow’ so many houses have generous decks from which to enjoy that summer BBQ.

It may seem like a daunting prospect, but a little research and advice will go a long way to ensuring that finding the right place to live becomes part of a successful settlement into New Zealand.

Article provided by Lisa Burdes – SkillsConnect Canterbury Business Advisor at the Canterbury Employers’ Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber offers migrant employment assistance, and support to employers of migrants in Canterbury. This service is fully funded by Immigration New Zealand (INZ). If you have questions about living and working in New Zealand, you can visit <http://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz>.

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Employers await election result

The NZ general election has just taken place and are yet to know whether we will have either more of the same in terms of governance and business confidence or we will have a centre left Government steering the good ship New Zealand. The will depend on who builds a coalition with either the centre left Labour Party or the incumbent centre right National Party.

Business confidence generally lowers pre-election and this 2017 version is no different, with most employers being very guarded with their employment intentions.

Employment intentions will clarify next week and hopefully as the new Immigration instructions “bed in” employers become more decisive.

The infra structure needs of New Zealand continue to dominate the media with housing, roading and civil construction the most obvious focus.

Manufacturers remain understandably nervous however, hopefully their case isn't impacted negatively post the election.

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Bank of New Zealand

NZ population growth has impact on immigration

We humans are the top species on this planet not just because we have opposable thumbs and developed language, but because we are highly adaptable to change. We innovate at an increasingly fast pace, we change the environment in which we live, we shift our locations of family, work and relaxation, and we employ a collective memory/technical manual/ideas bank with the internet.

The changes which we need to adapt to seem to be coming increasingly rapidly as we live through this technological age. And there is hardly anyone who would not be aware of the technology changes and the way they are not stopping. When it comes to climate change there are still plenty of deniers and a strong undercurrent of unwillingness to change – either to cut emissions or to make some adaptations like banning construction in coastal low lying areas.

When it comes to demographics we sometimes see big changes such as migrant flows altering societies. But with demographics it is the long slow changes which really matter and which people invariably think they have plenty of time to adjust to. One example would be the aging of many populations and the resulting rising relative burdens on healthcare and pension systems which necessitate adjustments. Only slowly are governments raising eligibility ages for pensions.

But now and then demographic changes can suddenly accelerate and catch people unawares This has been happening in New Zealand in recent years.

In 1952 New Zealand's population reached two million. It then took 21 years to reach three million in 1973. To reach four million in 2003 took 31 years. But come the end of 2018 the population is likely to almost hit five million and this will have taken only 15 years. NZ population growth has accelerated this century, courtesy of a number of things.

One has been the changing of our economy away from high dependence on farming to something more diverse embracing tourism, hospitality, technology etc. This change has helped keep young Kiwis in the country and attracted both migrants and expats. Another change has been the altering in the late-1980s of immigration criteria away from preferred source countries toward a points system focussed on skills, employment, and education.



Most people probably didn't much notice the acceleration in population growth because of the focus on deep economic reforms from the mid-1980s. But this lack of attention meant that when population growth accelerated to near then above 2% per annum from 2014 and pressures on infrastructure in particular became strong, unrealistic expectations developed regarding how quickly new infrastructure could be put in place.

Government spending on infrastructure has lifted and some good results have been achieved with the likes of roading and urban rail in Auckland. But with net migration inflows still well above average near 1.6% of population and looking like continuing at high levels for the next few years, pressure on central and local government to undertake even more rapid infrastructure development will grow further.

Such pressure is likely to produce results in terms of planned projects being brought forward, new funding arrangements being entered into, and therefore new searching for people with the skills currently in short supply which are needed to undertake the transport and water infrastructure upgrades in particular.

The upshot is this. Although NZ migration criteria are likely to be tightened further, the tightening is likely to mainly impact on low skill occupations and students. Demand will remain high and strengthen for people in the broadly defined construction/engineering sectors. So don't be surprised if migration criteria are in fact loosened for the people needed to help build up the infrastructure of a country only just getting to grips with the needs of a five million population focussed increasingly on Auckland.

Tony Alexander, Chief Economist, Bank of New Zealand

BNZ Migrant Banking can assist you with opening an account pre arrival via a simple online application at www.bnz.co.nz/movingtonewzealand or contact the team on +64 9 976 6318 or email bnzmigrant.banking@bnz.co.nz



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