



Written by [David Kelly](#) on December 11, 2023

Australia to Reform “Broken” Immigration System

Seeking to overhaul their “broken” immigration system, the Australian government on Monday released a 10-year [migration strategy](#) that would tighten visa rules for international students and low-skilled workers, along with other significant reforms designed to “meet the future needs of the nation and deliver for Australia—its people, businesses, governments and migrants.”

Beginning in September 2022, Home Affairs Minister Clare O’Neil directed a [comprehensive review](#) of Australia’s immigration system. The review was tasked to identify gaps and rebuild the integrity of the visa system, and resulted in a number of [recommendations](#) that the new Immigration Compliance Division in the Department of Home Affairs will implement.

According to a government [press release](#), “The Migration Strategy outlines five core objectives for Australia’s migration system. To achieve these objectives, the Government will deliver eight key actions, supported by more than 25 new policy commitments and existing commitments already made by Government.” The reforms will focus on:

- targeted skilled migration and new streamlined pathways for top global talent
- higher standards for international students and education providers to drive quality in international education
- visa settings to tackle worker exploitation and protect wages and conditions
- support for regional Australia to get fast access to skilled workers
- a new approach to migration planning to help return migration back to pre-pandemic levels and to get the right skills in the right places.

The new strategy, according to [The Telegraph](#), “comes as migration has reached record levels in Australia, piling pressure on its housing market and infrastructure.”

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC News) [shared](#) that “Australia’s net migration is believed to have peaked last financial year at 510,000 and is forecast to fall to more normal levels, down to 375,000 next year and 250,000 in 2025. The government says without new policies, migration levels would have remained higher for longer — at 440,000 next year and 305,000 the following year.”

Reuters [quoted](#) O’Neil as saying during a media briefing, “Our strategy will bring migration numbers back to normal. But it’s not just about numbers. It’s not just about this moment and the experience of migration our country is having at this time. This is about Australia’s future.”

Over the weekend, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said that Australia’s migration numbers needed to



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be wound back to a [“sustainable level,”](#) and added that “the system is broken.”

“A survey done for the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on Monday said 62 per cent of Australian voters said the country’s migration intake was too high,” reported [The Telegraph](#).

To focus on attracting skilled migrants, the government will introduce a new visa, the “Skills in Demand” visa, which will replace the existing “Temporary Skill Shortage” visa. According to the strategy [report](#), the Skills in Demand visa will be a four-year, temporary, skilled-worker visa that “will give workers more opportunity to move employers and will provide clear pathways to permanent residence for those who want to pursue them.”

According to [ABC News](#), “There are three pathways to the four-year visa, with each pathway defined by skill level.” There will be “one for specialists skills, attracting highly skilled workers from sectors such as technology and energy”; one for “core skills to meet workforce needs with a ‘simpler’ regularly updated occupation list to be developed over time reflecting the job market in Australia”; and one for “essential skills” workers, to focus on any labor shortage in lower-income job opportunities.

The new migrant strategy is also concerned with Australia’s “transition to net zero emissions by 2050.” The report stated the net-zero transition will be the “most significant shift in our economy since the industrial revolution,” and noted that “we are well positioned to seize the economic opportunity of this transition, but we need the skilled workforce to unlock this potential, in occupations such as engineering managers, scientists and geophysicists.”

Also key to the migrant strategy were the recommendations of the “[Nixon Review](#),” which was tasked to focus on abuses of Australia’s visa system, including migrant worker exploitation such as human trafficking and other forms of organized crime. The review identified significant gaps and weaknesses in the visa system and offered 34 recommendations.

Australia is not alone in announcing immigration reform policies. The United Kingdom recently announced a plan to [reduce migration](#) and “curb abuse” of their immigration system.

Now, if only the United States government could follow this immigration-reform trend by enforcing the current laws on the books.

To learn more about immigration reform that America can implement to alleviate its immigration crisis, [click here](#).



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