

What's happening in immigration

New Team Members at FRENZ

To support the increased number of applicants and increasingly complex and involved work required to meet INZ rule changes and additions, we've expanded our Immigration Team.

Hinemoa Taylor has joined as a second Licensed Immigration Advisor (LIA#201800270), bringing with her significant professional experience from NZ and abroad.

Lauren Smith has also joined us to assist with immigration documentation collection, compilation and submission as well as client engagement. Lauren is also the first port of call with any accounts enquiries you may have.

Last but not least is Sheila Elasin who practiced law in her native Philippines and who is now an international liaison for FRENZ. Part of this role is to provide pastoral care for our overseas candidates, applicants and workers to ease their way into NZ and help make their time here happy and productive.

Understanding Mid-Skill Level Visas

We receive many enquiries from employers and employees about higher skilled positions which allow for a 3-year visa and family support. It is important to understand that here are very specific, and highly scrutinised, INZ requirements for this type of visa which applicants must meet in order to be deemed eligible:

1. Title	Candidates need to be working as, or be offered the position of, Assistant Farm Manager (AFM) or Farm Manager (FM) in keeping industry specific job descriptions. Additionally, most farms can only have one AFM and, in smaller operations, the role of farm manager is often held by the employer so there are only so many of these positions available. And upon application to these roles, INZ will likely review the farm's staff structure to ensure that there are not multiple people being put forth to this role.
2. Salary	Base salary (i.e., exclusive of accommodation value) must be a minimum of \$20.65 per hour and in line with market salary (per Federated Farmers Remuneration Survey).
3. Qualifications	Applicants will require a New Zealand issued or assessed, agricultural qualification of Level 4 or higher (aka minimum completed AgITO 4). Level 2 or 3 qualifications are not enough – the actual copy of Level 4 certificate needs to be issued by the provider for the qualification to be recognised.
4. Experience	AFM will require a minimum of 2 years of relevant work experience while a FM require 3 years. Please note the word "relevant". For example, demonstrated progression of responsibilities.

At your visa renewal, if you go forward for a higher skilled title without actually meeting the eligibility criteria, you may be declined a visa and your right to work in New Zealand.

Potential Changes to Immigration Policy on the Horizon?

Christiaan and Hinemoa were invited to attend the Annual Immigration Conference on 17 August where Immigration Minister, Iain Lees-Galloway, made comments that offered some insight into potential future immigration policy.

To remind, current policy states that 36 months from the first visa after August 2017, workers who don't meet higher skilled criteria will need to leave NZ for a 12 month stand down period.

Lees-Galloway promised that he would look at this policy (maximum duration) and evaluate if it was "fit for purpose". We interpret this statement to mean that there might be a possible change to the stand-down period. At this point, no firm policy commitment was offered, but this gives us some hope. Similarly, we are optimistic of positive changes to the policy of not allowing spousal support at the lower level.

The minister is currently consulting on a major overhaul of the temporary visa. Our understanding of those changes is that immigration policy might become more regionalised with different regions having different rules and requirements.

Related, there are also discussions around whether work visas should be issued to a region rather than to a specific employer.

Likely Increase in INZ Application Fees

There is another important issue to watch: INZ are currently reviewing their fees with the expectation that application fees will increase in November. By how much is unclear but this will certainly impact workers who need to re-apply yearly for new visas at the lower level.

As always, we aim to keep you updated and ensure that your visa requirements are covered by our services. In this current immigration environment, we highly recommend that you use our services for immigration applications to avoid unnecessary complications and retrospective fees and additional cost and stress.

About Christiaan Arns, FRENZ Managing Director and Licenced Immigration Advisor # 200900034

Christiaan is the managing director of FRENZ, a business which has been serving the dairy industry for almost 20 years.

Given this tenure, Christiaan has substantial experience and invaluable insights in Recruitment and Immigration.



Christiaan is also FRENZ senior immigration advisor, providing services ranging from initial consultation and professional advice to full service visa and residency applications for FRENZ recruitment clients as well as non-recruitment employers and candidates.

Christiaan has been part of the premier reference group formed by the Immigration Advisors Association ('IAA') to assist with the interpretation of the code of conduct for Licensed Immigration Advisors. He also serves as an advisor coach for continuing professional development.

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