



RECENT CHANGES IN AUSTRALIA'S GENERAL SKILLED MIGRATION PROGRAM

The Government of Australia has recently announced several significant changes to Australia's General Skilled Migration (GSM) program. The announcement was made on 08 February 2010 by Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. The GSM program is for people who are not sponsored by an employer and who have skills in particular occupations required in Australia. The changes on GSM include the following:

- *Revocation of the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL).* After a thorough review, it was found that the MODL was not supporting the GSM program to meet Australia's medium to long-term future skills need.
- *New Skilled Occupation List (SOL) will be introduced in the second half of 2010.* The SOL will be a more targeted list, based on advice from Skills Australia on priority occupations required to meet Australia's future labor market needs. The new SOL listing will apply to all visa applications lodged on or after the 08 February 2010 announcements. However, those who have pending GSM applications on the date of the announcement will not be subjected to the new SOL listing.
- *Offshore GSM visas made before 1 September 2007 would be capped and ceased.* There would be a limit on the number of places available for applicants who lodged a GSM application prior to 01 September 2007. Once the limit is reached, no further visas will be granted and all pending applications will be returned together with the visa application fees paid.
- *Review of the current Points Test that applies to GSM Visas.* The review is aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the current Points Test and pathways for international students to permanent residence.

The above-listed changes will impact on those wishing to migrate to Australia under the program, including international students currently studying in Australia. The details of the changes on GSM can be found on Australia's Department of Immigration and Citizenship website (www.immi.gov.au).