



SURVEY

Member feedback on coronavirus impact

1 JULY, 2020

restaurant
association
of new zealand

Q1. As at **26 March 2020**, when the COVID-19 alert level 4 commenced, how many employees in your business were:

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	3023	100%
Temporary work visa holders	955	32%
NZ residence visa holders	516	17%
NZ citizens	1552	51%

Q2. As at **today's date**, (between 25 June and 7 July, 2020) when the COVID-19 alert level 4 commenced, how many employees in your business were:

Overall, over the period end of March – end of June (aprox), employee numbers had reduced by 18%. The number of employees on temporary work visas and NZ residence visa holders had reduced by 4% respectively; NZ citizens had increased by 8%.

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	2486	100%
Temporary work visa holders	691	28%
NZ residence visa holders	330	13%
NZ citizens	1465	59%

Q3. Temporary work visa holders. As at today's date, what **types of visas do these employees hold**, and how many are currently employed on each visa type?

Of those with employees on temporary work visas, almost half of those were Essential Skills Visa holders. Just over a quarter were Working Holiday Visa holders.

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	691	100%
Essential Skills	323	47%
Working Holiday	182	26%
Student	84	12%
Post-study Work Visa	51	7%
Other Work Visa type	51	7%

Q4. Temporary work visa holders. As at today's date, **what roles do these employees hold** in your business, and how many are employed in each role?

Just under half of temporary work visa holders are employed in the back of house / kitchen. Over a third are employed in the front of house.

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	691	100%
Front of House	249	36%
Back of House	334	48%
Management	97	14%
Other	11	2%

Q5. Based on your prediction of your business over the **next 3 months**, as at 25th September, how many of your employees will likely be:

Although, a number of members commented that it was difficult to predict currently, overall forecasts by members are for the total employee pool to reduce further – by 31% from employee numbers as at the end of March. Predictions are that NZ citizens will make up 61% of the hospitality workforce by end of September (an increase from 51% at the end of March).

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	2084	100%
Temporary work visa holders	581	28%
NZ residence visa holders	228	11%
NZ citizens	1275	61%

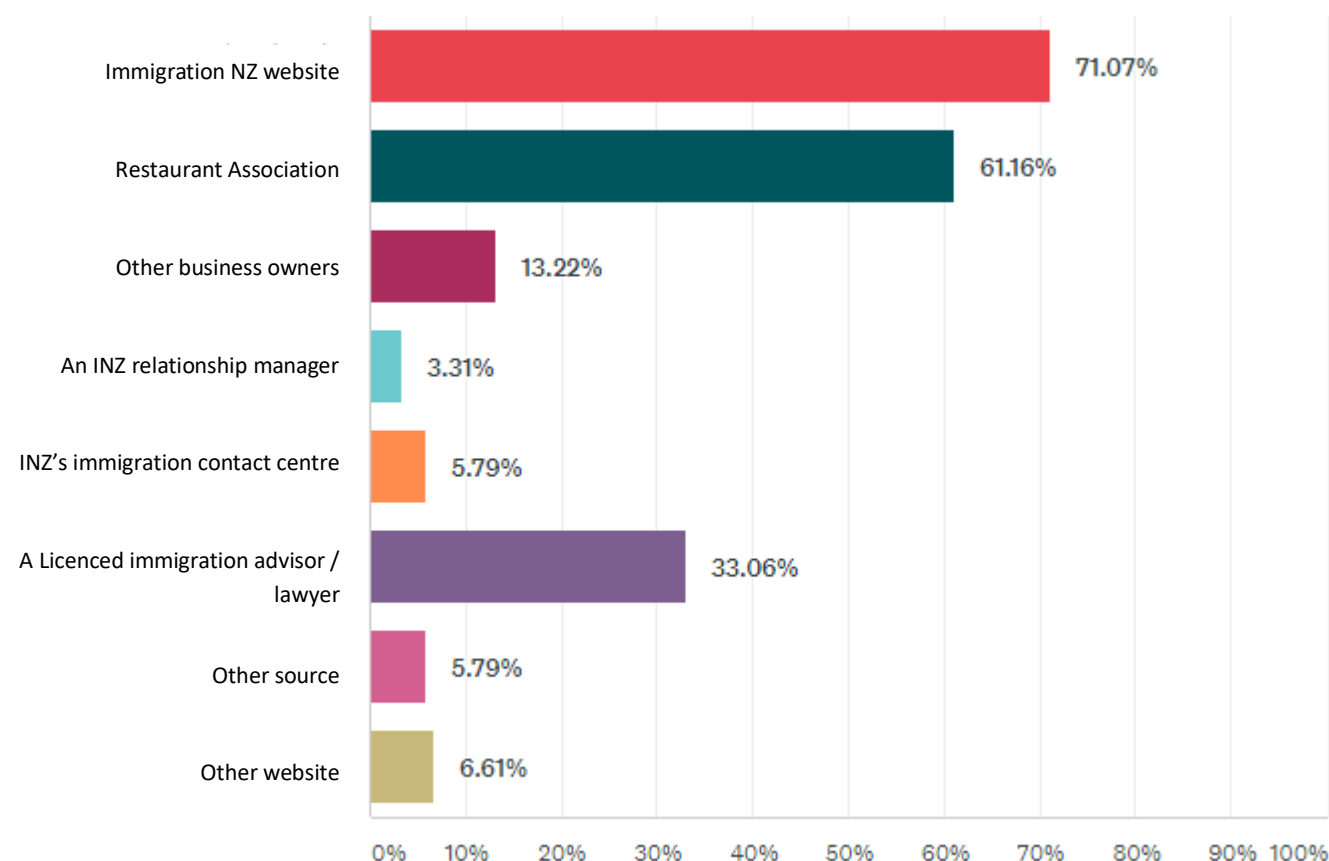
Q6. Temporary work visa holders. What **types of visas will these employees hold**, and how many are likely to be employed on each visa type?

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	581	100%
Essential Skills	298	51%
Working Holiday	159	27%
Student	62	11%
Post-study Work Visa	37	6%
Other Work Visa type	25	4%

Q7. Temporary work visa holders. What **types of visas will these employees hold**, and how many are likely to be employed on each visa type?

Total no. of employees from respondent pool	581	100%
Front of House	192	33%
Back of House	308	53%
Management	75	13%
Other	6	1%

Q8. Immigration information. What are your main sources of information on the immigration system and visa requirements (tick all that apply):



Q9. Immigration information. What are your main areas of uncertainty on the immigration system and/or visa requirements, and why? (Please state)

For those who had their temporary visa extended until 25th September, however borders may still be closed and they may not be able to travel home. Could immigration help on extending visas for another 6 months?

Will there be changes to Essential skills visas (one of our employees visa runs out in August and is reapplying)?

Processing delays - we offered someone a contract before lockdown and he has no idea when this will be looked at, never mind if it will be granted. Leaved us in difficult position as we are so short staffed but would like to honour our job offer.

So many changes recently - hard to know what the current criteria is to meet for ESWVs, ie what pay rate they need to get a 3 yr visa

The time needed to process an application; the mistakes they make and the time it takes to convince them that they made the mistake.

Are current visas likely to be extended.

Future outlook on recruiting skilled people (ie Chefs, qualified and experienced foh people

That NZ Immigration are forcing us into hiring NZ workers as chefs but there isn't enough qualified and experienced NZ chefs who have the ability to carry out the work. They are all straight out of Polytech and cannot cook very well at all, especially to the level required for our establishments.

We'd like to continue employing Work Visa holders as they have unique work attitude and outstanding performance. However, we are very concerned that their visa cannot be extended.

Immigration NZ's current position of employing New Zealanders is difficult. Many chefs have left the country and not been replaced by

returning kiwis. We have a serious crisis looming this summer if they do not allow visa holders to work or transfer employees noted on their visa. Visa applications times are too long. One employee has had an application for partners resident visa for 9 months and it has not even been looked at yet. Her current visa will expire and she will be forced to leave NZ before they even look at her application.

Requirements to get certain visas. Uncertainly over processing times. Extension of visas due to COVID19.

Whether advertising for a NZ Chef is required, even though there is a shortage. Sometimes the rules have changed since last time we did an application for a Thai Chef.

Status on existing visa holders renewals. Hiring existing visa holders who need a variation of contract or need to meet same conditions as in previous employment.

We have had our restaurant manager visa in since December, it expired March 25th, so no automatic extension. We were asked to retest the labour market post covid...so did, still no suitable applicants yet we still have no answer. To actually have them approve the visas in the time frame they themselves state would be helpful.

Details of coming New legislation. And the timing of the change.

It's always extremely complex trying to get the latest information for our industry.

The rules/requirements seem to change quite frequently which causes confusion for both employers & anxiety for employees.

Length of time to process applications, one of ours took 3 1/2 months in 2019. Lack of understanding of hospitality roles, one of our applications got approved as a Retail Supervisor as immigration said that was the

closest role based on our very detailed Role Description !!!). Unaware of shortage in areas of the country, it was well known if you went to Queenstown any application was approved whilst the BOP was screaming out for chefs, baristas and managers.

The effects of covid 19 and how it may have affect the difficulty of applying for essential work visas for key employees. Also will there be another temporary extension of visas due to COVID-19.

No progress for months. Our staff member has been waiting for nearly 18 months for his documents to be processed. No communication from immigration at all.

I can't believe in this current global crisis immigration are still talking about rolling out a whole new system to apply for visas. They can't keep up now or prior to Covid how will they cope with their new policies. They are too slow and unresponsive. They are hugely inconsistent.

There seem to have been a lot of changes in quite a short period of time (past 1-2 years) with changing thresholds and criteria. As a small employer it is extremely confusing what we are meant to do, and what our obligations are.

Continuous Changes to immigration policy.

We are not hiring any closed visa holders as processing time is super slow at the moment and questioning is too high. We are only hiring

residents, citizens and open work visa holders of more than 1 year to secure the business.

I am unsure what the applicant Visa requirements and what the essential skills qualifications are. There's so much information out there it's confusing

When and how would the boarder be opened is the main question now. there were chatters of letting students and longer term and economically beneficial visa holders to come in first as 2 week isolation is not as big a burden for them but I am not aware of any further development.

We have a baker (which is currently an incredibly key position in the team) who was on holiday in India during lockdown and has been stuck there since. His visa is to August 2022 and we have zero information about the chances or time-frames for him getting back into the country, despite him having a long time on his visa.

I am hearing stories from fellow hospitality owners/workers of Immigration NZ classing senior chefs (Head, Sous, Senior CDP) as "Cooks" as opposed to chefs. There roles require extensive cooking knowledge and experience alongside health & hygiene knowledge and staff management experience and a very different role to a "cook".

Q10. Immigration information. What could Immigration New Zealand do to help you better understand the immigration system and/or visa requirements?

Consistency in the systems or visa requirements.

Well their website has no current information. It purely states all the things that they are going to do in 2021. So it is very unclear what the current status and business is difficult enough at this time without the prospect of losing trained staff.

Extended Visas due to Covid.

Time processing info. Advise immigrant employees of how covid affects their visa status

More checklists for visa types and notifications sent out to employers that have employees on those visa types that things have changed.

Send us examples of practical options for common situations and our path. Eg ; current visa holder , wants to extend... what do we do and what is their current policy.

Understand the business of an individual rather than using one size fits all formula.

Clearer statements and consistency. Feels like a lottery to support our employees.

Just to think about how a business work and to train people from scratch. It's not easy and it's hard for us to do not knowing if we will be able to keep their jobs as they are putting more restrictions for us so we hire New Zealanders but it's very hard, it's not a reality for hospitality. There is no chefs around.

Hospitality immigration page that is a one stop shop with everything you need regarding immigration and hospitality.

Be flexible instead of one rule fits all.

Simplify the process, be more accessible

Provide a dedicated hospitality team that has an understanding of the needs and people we have in our industry and can clearly articulate guidelines for us.

It is too complicated, simplify the application form. Applications are rejected on minor issues because it is too complicated.

Simpler language.

Having an immigration account manager allocated.

Be very clear and fair about requirements. Look at the skill sets of visa holders and employer's endorsements of their employee's capabilities within the business where no local kiwis want or are committed to doing. Give them a fair opportunity to contribute to NZ's economy with their qualifications and work experience by not making visa requirements unfair and unattainable for both the visa holder and employer in this current climate

Be honest, process visa's quickly. Understand the industry.

Communicate directly

Make access to their staff easier and quicker so we can get answers in a timely manner.

What will they do with students finishing courses will post study work visas be granted. How long will it take to transfer closed visa holders or will they deport them?

Be clearer around likelihood of acceptance for individuals. We have fill the role- so if the person doesn't get accepted we are then short of a specific type of person we are looking for.

Plainer language.

Simplify the process, have a clear and easy list of requirements. Have a single contact person for each case.

More people answering calls.

Pre-lockdown we were already seeing a disconnect between WINZ and Immigration NZ with, for example, WINZ declaring a Chef de Partie role as high skilled, therefore not doing skills match report, yet when the visa was approved by Immigration NZ the role was declared low skilled and only a 1yr visa given. There needs to be a correlation between these judgments on roles and I feel there is a lack of understanding and knowledge within Immigration NZ about the needs and requirements of the Hospitality sector.

Be easier and more available to contact a live person.

ADDITIONAL MEMBER COMMENTS

We entered lockdown one chef short and our only option seems to be to try and recruit a chef who has lost their job elsewhere since we cannot bring a new chef into New Zealand. It is not looking easy - the candidate pool seems limited.

Import of qualified and suitably experienced staff is still a relevant topic both kitchen as well as front of house.

I feel sick that we won't be able to support our reliable hardworking chef and out baker to renew their visa due COVID. It looks like we would have to pull rabbits out of hats to fulfill their requirements including trialing kiwi chefs in our kitchen when we have a reliable worker who has helped establish our business.

The Industry is dependent on good employer supporting Good Visa applicants. Give some clarity - certify good businesses under the certification of RA.

Immigration needs to value skilled migrant workers and not keep trying to force us to hire disinterested locals, especially now that min wages are so high. We need the right to choose.

This is a major issue for us and causes the most stress. We have 2 staff who applied for residency over 18 months ago. At the time they were told that it would be 8 months and both have been extended several times. They are both hugely important to our team and we have now been told that both must reapply for essential skills visas and we must employ NZers if they are available or able to be trained into the positions. The cost involved is huge at a time when we can least afford to lose them. We also have costs of advertising, time to review and interview etc when we have perfectly good staff.

The whole process of sponsorship etc is too daunting for a small business. The amount of paper work immigration need for such a simple task of employing someone from overseas does not warrant our time.

I would like to bring to your attention the importance of a decent and working relationship with Immigration New Zealand for our small to medium businesses. Current INZ is unresponsive, inconsistent, and unreasonable with a demand for further advertising on applications that have been sitting there since the beginning March. My business does not currently have the budget or time to advertise for a further month.

Our vacancies are not receiving NZ applicants now, nor prior to Covid-related unemployment. The 70 working days (as advised at the Queenstown community hub) to process a visa application is impossible to operate from. The criteria of applications is wildly inconsistent between case related officers.

Immigration and MSD NZ is bringing us to a grinding halt in this already treacherous climate. It's really, really tough and without our competent staff we do not have a business to operate.

The skill chef is a role that STILL has shortages even with unemployment rates rising.

Finding it hard to find current info on wage requirements for visa applicants that want to apply for residency.

This Government has hindered our business with their lack of understanding of basic requirements of people who work in hospitality.

My head chef and restaurant manager both have to review their visas in August. Both have been with me for three years. The business climate is very tough obviously so I would hate to lose my key team members.

We are currently moving our sous chef from one of our businesses, over to another. The visa was applied for in March before lockdown. market test and evidence sent. Immigration is being a pain transferring his visa. Asking for more evidence which we have sent but have had no response back at all. Stuck in limbo!

If working holiday visa numbers are reduced, then this will be an

absolute disaster for Queenstown....we will have to close our business due to no staff.

Not limited to our sector, INZ is suggesting that Labour market test would be stricter due to an expectation of a high unemployment rate in NZ. I believe this is rather worrying for our industry. If we need to retrain someone because we lose a work visa holder employee that would otherwise be able to be granted a new visa without the above stricken rules, it would be a difficult cost to bear in a time with so many uncertainties. I can totally understand we should hire NZer workers that have lost their job because of COVID. But I would also like INZ to look at Essential Skill Work Visa holders that are continuing their position with the same employer with some leeway.

We do, and always have, stand by the requirement to consider NZ applicants and hire them where possible, however, when it comes to senior roles, we need them to also have experience and this is often lacking and applicants aren't willing to start at the bottom and work their way up.

We train and promote from within wherever possible, but for senior and technical roles (eg bakers) we need a certain level of experience from the outset.

Currently renewing a work visa and they want to know why I didn't bother advertising during level 4 and 3 lockdown! Unbelievable!

Immigration NZ should clear the long queue for SMC applications that have not been processed.

It would be great if holiday working visas could be extended until the end of the year.

Sponsored work visas will not be renewed. There will be a shortage of staff, especially skilled staff. We have been in busy for 7 years and never have NZ citizens apply for jobs. I know there is high unemployment compared to the past, but these are still hospitality jobs - customer facing, hard work, long hours, and not jobs everybody wants to do in an expensive place to live. As soon as Australia opens, town will be busy and jobs will fill up and there will be another staff shortage.

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