

Minimum Wage increase 1 April 2021

The new minimum wage rates, before tax, are:

- Adult - \$20.00 an hour (up from \$18.90)
- Starting-out - \$16.00 per hour (up from \$15.12)
- Training - \$16.00 per hour (up from \$15.12)

Government eases visa restrictions for visitors in New Zealand

Visitor visa holders will be able to stay in New Zealand a little longer as the Government eases restrictions for those still here, the Minister of Immigration has announced.

“The Government recognises that some visitor visa holders are keen to stay in New Zealand longer while the COVID-19 pandemic is still attacking communities in their home countries,” Kris Faafoi said.

“We have also listened to New Zealand’s business sector, including tourism ventures, which say foreign visitors who are still here can help our local economies.

“So, where people are here on visitor visas which expire on or before 31 March 2021, the Government will allow their visitor visas to be automatically extend by two months. During that two-month extension, which will be applied from the date of expiry on their current visa, they will need to apply for a new visa to stay longer,” Kris Faafoi said.

The extension does not apply to visitors on the [special Covid-19 short term](#) two month visitor visa, which was introduced in September last year.

In a second temporary change to immigration settings, the Government has agreed to temporarily waive a rule which states that visitor visa holders can only be in New Zealand for nine months out of an 18-month period.

“Most visa holders currently in New Zealand will have been here for more than nine months by now, which would have excluded them from applying for another visitor visa.

“Waiving this nine months of 18 rule means that visa holders who are still here can apply for a further six-month visa.

“While applicants with visitor visas expiring after 31 March 2021 won’t be eligible for the automatic two-month extension, they can still apply for a new visa that gives them exemption from the nine months of 18 rule if they apply for their new visa before 30 June 2021. That is because the temporary waiver of that nine months of 18 rule will end on 30 June 2021.

“Applicants will still need to meet all other requirements for a visitor visa, including proof that they have enough funds to support themselves in New Zealand, as well as pay for their travel home at the end of their stay,” Kris Faafoi said.

“While we have made these changes to help many visitors facing uncertain and worrying situations back in their home countries because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government wants to make clear that

people who are here on visitor visas are here as guests for a limited time. We cannot guarantee further extensions or waivers when these changes expire," Kris Faafoi said.

He pointed out that the Government expects all migrants in New Zealand to ensure they are here lawfully and are able to support themselves.

"Temporary migrants who are in New Zealand without the means to support themselves, or who become unlawful, are at risk of migrant exploitation or not being able to meet their basic needs. Migrants who stay here after their visas have expired also risk having their unlawful status count against them should they wish to travel to New Zealand or elsewhere in the world in the future," Kris Faafoi warned.

Source: [Beehive](#)

More information about visitor visas is available at immigration.govt.nz

Holidays (Bereavement Leave for Miscarriage) Amendment Bill (No 2)

This Bill was passed by Parliament on 24 March and, at the time of writing, is awaiting Royal Assent, when it will take effect immediately. That may well have happened by the time this newsletter is published.

Background

This bill amends the Holidays Act 2003 to remove some ambiguity around bereavement leave entitlements. It will now be clear that employees are eligible for bereavement leave following the unplanned end of a pregnancy by miscarriage or still-birth.

The mother and their spouse or partner would be entitled to 3 days' bereavement leave. This is consistent with the bereavement leave entitlement for employees who experience the death of a family member.

Mother's knowledge of pregnancy

The mother does not need to have known they were pregnant. Miscarriages can occur before a person is aware of the pregnancy.

Proof of a pregnancy

Proof of pregnancy would not be required for an employee to take bereavement leave.

Definition of "miscarriage"

The definition of "miscarriage" has been clarified to say that bereavement leave can be sought for the unplanned end of a pregnancy, no matter how far along that pregnancy was.

The relationship requirement

The definition of who is eligible for bereavement leave has been expanded. Parents planning to adopt a child and parents having a baby through surrogacy will be entitled to bereavement leave on the unplanned end of the relevant pregnancy.

The former spouse or partner of the pregnant person is also entitled to bereavement leave on the unplanned end of a pregnancy, if they would have been a biological parent of the child.

Abortions not covered

Employees who experience the end of a pregnancy by way of an abortion would not be eligible for bereavement leave.

This article is brought to you by AdviceWise People, who provide WGANZ's free employment helpline 0800 692 384. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the bulletin above, please call Philip or Anthony.