

## Summary

# Immigration New Zealand: Managing how it makes decisions about skilled residence visas



## Why we did this work

Although skilled residence visa applications make up a small proportion of the total number of visa applications processed each year, these applicants are a strategically important group who are in demand internationally.

The skilled residence visa system has gone through a period of significant change since the border reopened in 2022. We did this work to see how well Immigration New Zealand (part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment) manages how it makes decisions about whether to grant skilled residence visas. We were particularly interested in how well the process works for applicants.



## What we found

Immigration New Zealand understands the importance of visa applicants' experiences and has been working to provide better support. Its priorities include communications, access to information about the progress of applications, and processing times.

However, Immigration New Zealand does not have a specific focus on how well its processes are working for skilled residence visa applicants. For example, Immigration New Zealand's complaints data and satisfaction surveys do not separately identify skilled residence visa applicants. This makes it hard for Immigration New Zealand to understand whether its processes are working as expected and what it could do to better attract and retain this sought-after group of migrants.

Immigration New Zealand could also make better use of information to report on how well this part of the immigration system is working, including how well it is meeting the country's long-term skills needs.



## What next?

We have made five recommendations to support Immigration New Zealand to make improvements to the skilled residence visa system.

Immigration New Zealand should include a specific focus on skilled residence visa applicants in all aspects of its monitoring and reporting on the skilled residence visa system. It is also important that Immigration New Zealand streamlines its systems and processes for skilled residence visa applicants, who often move to this visa from other visa types.

A clearer focus on this type of visa would help Immigration New Zealand report more effectively on how well its processes are working and help inform longer-term planning.