



AUSTRALIA TO IMPLEMENT NEW BUSINESS VISITOR VISA PROGRAM AFFECTING SHORT TERM ASSIGNMENTS

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has announced that effective this Saturday, March 23, 2013, a new Visitor Visa structure will be implemented as part of the country's simplification and deregulation program.

U.S. and Canadian business travelers to Australia will be directly affected by the change. The current electronic visitor visa that they obtain online, the Business ETA 977, will be abolished and replaced with a new Business ETA 601.

While the new Business ETA 601 will still be obtained electronically, holders of this visa will not be permitted to perform any short-term work in Australia. By contrast, the current ETA 977 permits up to six (6) weeks of short-term, highly specialized, non-ongoing work.

After March 23rd, individuals entering for any short-term work, including those entering the country prior to approval of a Subclass 457 visa, will be required to apply for the new Temporary Work (short stay activity) Subclass 400 visa. Unlike the Business ETA 977 and Business ETA 601, the Subclass 400 visa will be processed by Australian consular posts rather than electronically. Therefore any employee entering Australia to perform short-term work will need to apply for authorization through an Australian consular post prior to departure, and allow time for visa adjudication.

As the Business ETA 977 visa category will very soon become unavailable, employers in this situation may have limited options left for securing short term work authorization, such as the new Subclass 400 visa.

These changes will apply to nationals of the following countries, which are currently eligible for the Business ETA 977: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, USA, and Vatican City.

As always FosterQuan will continue to monitor global immigration regulations and procedures and will provide additional information in future Immigration Updates®, and on our firm's website at www.fosterquan.com.