

Skilled Migrant Review
Immigration Policy (Skills & Residence) Team
Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment
Via: Email

18 November 2022

Tēnā koe,

Re: Future of the Skilled Migrant Category – Letter of Support

Export New Zealand (ExportNZ) writes in support of the Business New Zealand (BusinessNZ) submission to the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) on the Future of the Skilled Migrant Category (SMC). ExportNZ wholly endorses the comments made in the BusinessNZ submission and supports all the recommendations put forward in their paper.

New Zealand's immigration settings need to be 'fit for purpose'. New Zealand exporters need effective immigration policies that meet the challenges of the current skills shortage and help firms fill skills gaps and also have enough flex to respond quickly to labour market changes.

Open, simple, and permissive immigration settings and an ability to attract good talented people to New Zealand are crucial to the success and continued growth of New Zealand's exporting firms. Anecdotal feedback and survey results show us that sourcing the right talent and skills is difficult for exporters in New Zealand. Time and time again, exporters around the country have mentioned to ExportNZ the difficulty they have dealing with New Zealand's immigration settings and the growth opportunities lost to them and New Zealand because they could not find the right local hire or bring the right person into the country.

While exporters do hire locally and recognize the value of training and developing local talent, growth opportunities often depend on exporters employing people with specific engineering and science-based skills and experience in a short space of time. Often this skilled workforce is unavailable in New Zealand and needs to be sourced from overseas. These skilled migrants do not take jobs away from New Zealanders but instead, help to grow the exporting firms to offer more job opportunities and often also higher wages.

The simple fact is, that if difficult immigration policy, coupled with other factors, continues to hinder firm growth and scalability, these exporting firms whether they be high-tech manufacturing, service, or digital exporters will take their opportunities overseas. New Zealand

needs to do all it can to ensure firms are able to scale and grow here, and a more sensible immigration policy is an effective lever for this.

The recommendations made in the BusinessNZ submission will help exporters source the necessary skilled migrants to support their growth and scaling to the benefit of the New Zealand economy. A simple and easy-to-navigate immigration system as proposed in the BusinessNZ submission will go a long way to keeping New Zealand firms operating in New Zealand, namely;

- A 6-month catch-all, limited-purpose visa to meet seasonal demands and remove seasonal sector carve-outs.
- Pathways to residency for all skill levels where there is not a New Zealand workforce available.
- Recognition of vocational skills and qualifications in the SMC.
- Removal of stand-down periods for skilled migrants.

ExportNZ supports the BusinessNZ submission on the Future of the Skilled Migrant Category and will continue to advocate for immigration policy that is sensible, effective, and helps support exporter growth.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joshua Tan', written in a cursive style.

Joshua Tan
Senior Policy Advisor
Export New Zealand