



AustraliaMigrate Examines Direction 119 Visa Processing Priorities

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AustraliaMigrate, a registered migration agency established in 2000, has published an analysis of Ministerial Direction 119, the new instruction that sets the order in which skilled visa nominations and applications are processed. The direction commenced on 25 July 2026 and replaces the previous Ministerial Direction 105, applying to applications already in the processing queue as well as new ones.

A significant change identified in the analysis is that the Skills in Demand (subclass 482) visa is now covered by the processing priorities, having sat outside the previous direction. Under Direction 119, the Department of Home Affairs processes skilled nominations and applications according to the applicant's occupation and whether the applicant was in Australia or outside Australia at the time of application.

The direction sets five priority tiers. The highest priority goes to nominations and applications in law enforcement and defence occupations where the applicant is in Australia, followed by the same occupations where the applicant is outside Australia. The third tier covers construction, healthcare, and teaching

occupations in which the applicant is onshore. The fourth tier is all other applications where the applicant is in Australia, and the fifth and lowest is all other applications where the applicant is outside Australia.

"The key point for applicants to understand is what this direction does and does not do," said Ian Singer, Director and Principal Registered Migration Agent at AustraliaMigrate. "It changes the order in which cases are picked up, not the rules for who qualifies. A well-prepared application in a lower priority tier is still far better placed than an incomplete one, because priority decides when a case is looked at, not whether it succeeds."

The analysis notes two practical consequences. First, an applicant's location at the time of applying now carries real weight, with onshore applicants processed ahead of offshore applicants in most tiers. Second, occupation matters more than before, with construction, healthcare and teaching roles singled out for higher priority alongside defence and law enforcement.

Mr Singer said the change is likely to affect planning for both workers and employers. "For an employer sponsoring a worker on a Skills in Demand visa, where the candidate is applying from now feeds into how quickly the case is likely to move," he said. "For workers weighing an onshore against an offshore application, this is a factor worth advice before lodging. None of it changes eligibility, and no direction guarantees approval or a processing time, but it does change the queue."

The analysis is careful to stress the limits of the direction. The priority tiers determine the order of processing only. They do not guarantee that any application will be approved, and they do not set a fixed timeframe for a decision. The Department of Home Affairs continues to publish indicative processing times separately and updates them regularly.

AustraliaMigrate advises applicants and employers affected by the change to confirm which tier their occupation and circumstances fall into before lodging, and to ensure the application is complete regardless of tier. Eligibility depends on individual circumstances, and the agency has published guidance on the Skills in Demand visa and the broader skilled program on its website.

AustraliaMigrate is based in Chatswood, Sydney, and has assisted individuals, families and businesses with Australian visa applications for more than 25 years. The firm's agents are registered with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority and provide advice across skilled, employer-sponsored, partner, parent and student visa categories. For more information about the Skills in Demand (482) visa, skilled visa pathways or the new processing priorities, visit the AustraliaMigrate website.

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AustraliaMigrate is a trusted leader in immigration & visa services. Led by Director Ian Singer and a team of five registered migration agents, we provide expert visa solutions for individuals and businesses of all sizes.

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