AustraliaMigrate Reviews the Subclass 191 Regional Permanent Residence Pathway

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CHATSWOOD, NSW - November 11, 2026 -
AustraliaMigrate, a registered migration agency established in 2000, has published a review of the Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) subclass 191 visa, the permanent stage of Australia's regional skilled migration pathway. The review is aimed at skilled workers who hold a Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) subclass 491 or a Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) subclass 494 visa, and at the regional employers who sponsor them.

The subclass 191 cannot be applied for directly. It is open only to people who have held an eligible regional provisional visa, and it has been available since November 2022, three years after the first subclass 491 and 494 visas were granted. The review explains that the 191 does not involve a new points test or a new skills assessment. Instead, the Department of Home Affairs looks back at how the applicant has lived and worked while on the provisional visa.

The review sets out the three areas that most applications turn on. Applicants generally need to have held

their subclass 491 or 494 for at least three years. They need to have complied with the conditions of that visa, including the requirement to live, work and study only in a designated regional area. They also need to show taxable income across at least three income years while holding the provisional visa, evidenced by notices of assessment issued by the Australian Taxation Office.

"The regional pathway rewards people who genuinely commit to a regional community, but the 191 is assessed on years of history, not on a single form," said Ian Singer, Director and Principal Registered Migration Agent at AustraliaMigrate. "By the time someone is ready to apply, their address history, employment records and tax returns all need to tell the same story. The applicants who are in the strongest position are the ones who understood the requirements from their first year and kept their records in order along the way."

The review identifies the problems that most often put a permanent residence application at risk. These include tax returns lodged late or not at all, leaving fewer qualifying income years than expected; moving to a capital city for work while still subject to the regional condition; and assuming a minimum salary figure taken from an unofficial source, rather than checking the current requirements published by the Department. Because the provisional visas run for about five years, a weak year can sometimes be made up, but only if the issue is identified early.

"Every regional visa holder's situation is different, and eligibility depends on individual circumstances," Mr Singer said. "No agent can promise an outcome or a processing time. What we can do is help people check, well before they lodge, that their three years will stand up, and fix any gaps while there is still time."

AustraliaMigrate advises regional visa holders to confirm the current subclass 191 requirements with the Department of Home Affairs before lodging, as migration settings are reviewed regularly.

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, regional, employer-sponsored, partner, parent and student visa categories. For more information about the subclass 191 visa, the regional subclass 491 or other regional pathways, 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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