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Migration Law e-alert

Budget Highlights: 2009-2010 Migration Program

The Federal Budget reveals that the migration program for 2009-2010 will include a total of 168,700 places. The Government has made a further cut to the permanent skilled migration intake to 108,000 places for the coming year. This figure represents a 20% reduction which will be achieved mainly through cutbacks in the skilled independent visa categories. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship actively encourages overseas workers to obtain employer sponsorship and prioritises the processing of employer sponsored visa applications.

A "job ready test" will be introduced from 1 January 2010 for general skilled migration applicants nominating trade occupations. Details of the job ready test are being developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in consultation with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and key industry stakeholders.

Applicants nominating a trade occupation will also be faced with an increased English language requirement. The standard for trades occupations will be increased to IELTS 6 from 1 July 2009 for offshore applicants and 1 January 2010 for onshore applicants.

While there will be fewer visas granted to workers without employer sponsorship, there will be an increase in family migration places for the spouses, parents and children of Australian citizens and permanent residents.

Details of the Government's Budget statements are available online:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/budget/budget09/budget09pbs.htm>

Contact Macrossans Lawyers for advice on:

- Obtaining permanent residence for your overseas workers
- Latest news and changes to the skilled migration program
- English language requirements and testing
- Business monitoring for current sponsors.

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