

A FLUID BUSINESS GUIDE

Hiring International Talent in Australia

What the Process Actually Looks Like

SERIES
Workforce Planning

PUBLISHED
2026

BY
Fluid Resourcing

INTRODUCTION

The Perception Gap

For many Australian businesses, the idea of hiring internationally through a skilled migration pathway triggers an immediate response: too complex, too slow, too uncertain.

That perception is understandable. The migration system involves regulatory frameworks, documentation requirements, and processing timelines that are unfamiliar to most employers. Without prior experience, the process can look opaque from the outside.

In practice, it is structured. The complexity is real but manageable. The steps are defined. The requirements are knowable. And for businesses in sectors where local talent supply is genuinely constrained, working through this process is not an optional strategy — it is a necessary one.

The businesses that have the strongest international hiring programs are not the ones with the most resources. They are the ones that treated the process as learnable rather than impenetrable.

Why Businesses Get Here

Accessing international talent through a sponsored visa pathway is rarely the first option considered. Most businesses have already tried the local market — advertised, waited, interviewed, and either found no suitable candidates or found candidates who did not stay.

The sectors where this is most acute are consistent: construction and civil infrastructure, electrical and mechanical trades, engineering and technical disciplines, healthcare and aged care, accounting and professional services, and transport and logistics.

Businesses that reach the point of considering international hiring are not doing so speculatively. They are doing so because they have run out of viable local alternatives.

THE FRAMEWORK

Australia's Employer-Sponsored Pathways

Australia's primary pathway for employer-sponsored skilled migration is the Temporary Skill Shortage visa (TSS / subclass 482), which allows businesses to sponsor overseas workers for roles that cannot be filled from the local labour market.

VISA / PATHWAY	KEY FEATURE	BEST FOR
TSS 482 – Short-Term	Up to 2 years, extendable once	Roles on the short-term occupation list
TSS 482 – Medium-Term	4-year stay + pathway to PR	Broader occupations, long-term commitment
ENS 186	Permanent residency direct	Candidates after 3 years in role
SESR 494	Regional pathway, 5 years	Businesses in regional locations

Standard Business Sponsorship

Before sponsoring any individual, a business must be approved as a Standard Business Sponsor by the Department of Home Affairs. This authorises the business to bring in skilled workers under the TSS framework.



WHAT'S REQUIRED

Demonstrate the business is a lawfully operating enterprise with a genuine need for the skills being sought, and meets the obligations associated with sponsorship.



TIMING

For businesses that have not previously sponsored workers, this is often the first step — it runs in parallel with or ahead of identifying specific candidates.

Labour Market Testing

Before nominating a position, employers must generally demonstrate they have tested the local labour market and been unable to find a suitably qualified Australian citizen or permanent resident. This is a documentary requirement — for businesses that have genuinely been unable to fill a position locally, the key is maintaining proper records throughout the advertising and selection process.

THE PROCESS

Nomination, Visa Application & Employer Obligations

The Nomination and Visa Application

Once Standard Business Sponsorship is in place and the candidate has been identified, the process moves to two separate sequential applications.

01 Nomination

The employer's application to nominate the specific position and candidate — requires detailed information about the role, salary, and the candidate's qualifications. Assessed by the Department of Home Affairs.

02 Visa Application

Once the nomination is approved, the candidate lodges their visa application — drawing on nomination information plus health and character requirements, qualifications documentation, and criteria specific to the visa stream.

03 Skills Assessment (where required)

For many occupations in trades, engineering, and professional services, candidates must undergo a skills assessment through a designated assessing authority. This can be variable in duration — build it into planning.

What Employers Are Responsible For

Taking on a sponsored worker carries ongoing obligations for the duration of the sponsorship:

- Employ the sponsored worker in the nominated role, at the agreed location, at or above the nominated salary
- Notify the Department if the employment arrangement changes materially or employment ends
- Cooperate with any Department audit of sponsorship obligations
- Maintain training benchmarks, demonstrating ongoing investment in the Australian workforce

These obligations are not onerous for businesses genuinely employing the person in the nominated role. They become relevant when employment arrangements change or adequate records are not maintained.

COMMON CHALLENGES

Points of Difficulty and After Arrival

Timeline Management

Overall timeline from initiation to arrival can range from several months to over a year. Businesses that start when the vacancy becomes urgent tend to find it more stressful than necessary.

Documentation Quality

The most common cause of delay or refusal is documentation that is incomplete or inconsistent. Quality over speed at the preparation stage consistently produces better outcomes.

Occupation Alignment

Attempting to fit a role into a category it does not genuinely match creates risk. The occupation must accurately describe the role and the candidate's background must genuinely align.

Candidate Readiness

Offshore candidates face additional steps — police clearances, health examinations, document authentication, and sometimes English testing. Build these into the candidate's preparation timeline.

After Arrival: Making the Investment Work

The visa approval is not the end of the process — it is the beginning of the employment relationship. Workers relocating to Australia are navigating a significant life transition alongside starting a new job.

Businesses that provide practical support during the settlement period — accommodation orientation, understanding local systems, community connection — tend to see better early performance and significantly stronger retention. This is not welfare. It is a return on investment.

Building This Into Workforce Planning

The businesses that use international hiring most effectively have built it into their broader workforce planning — understanding which roles will be difficult to fill locally over the next two to three years, identifying which are eligible for sponsored migration, and initiating the process ahead of the vacancy becoming acute.

Disclaimer: This guide provides general information about Australia's employer-sponsored migration pathways only. It does not constitute legal or migration advice. Immigration law is complex, frequently updated, and specific outcomes depend on individual circumstances. Seek advice from a registered migration agent or qualified immigration lawyer before making any decisions. Fluid accepts no liability for decisions made on the basis of this guide. Information current as of date of publication and subject to change.



Remove capacity constraints. Strengthen delivery.

Fluid helps organisations embed qualified, dependable talent from the Philippines into their teams, both virtually and in person.

fluidresourcing.com

info@fluidresourcing.com