

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee COVID-19

**QoN Number: CV19-332**

**Subject: Visa Processing - Interim status**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

Is the Department considering any interim status or deemed extension provisions to prevent those waiting for a validly made application to be resolved becoming “unlawful”?

**Answer:**

Bridging visas allow non-citizens to stay lawfully in Australia while they are dealing with the Department on a range of matters. Most Bridging visa holders have made a valid application for a substantive visa while in Australia and are pending the outcome of that application or a subsequent appeal process.

The Temporary Activity (subclass 408) visa had special provisions introduced on 4 April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist temporary visa holders in Australia to remain lawful should they be unable to depart and where they are not able to make an application for another type of temporary visa, they can apply for the Temporary Activity (subclass 408) visa which has a nil Visa Application Charge.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-333

**Subject: Visa Processing Delays**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

What actions have been taken to address the delays in granting visas? For example, have additional resources been allocated to expedite processing of applications?

**Answer:**

The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the Department and its operations, including the processing of visa applications.

The Department continues to prioritise applications for immediate family members of Australian citizens and permanent residents with an urgent need to travel and applicants providing critical or specialist skills in support of the Government's response to COVID-19 and economic recovery.

Ongoing discussions are being held with service providers such as those providing biometrics collection, English language testing, application lodgment and panel doctor services to ensure services are recommenced where possible. While services are unavailable or disrupted, applicants are being given additional time to complete checks and provide the requested information.

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**QoN Number: CV19-334**

**Subject: Bridging Visa E - Determined after expiry**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

How many applications for Bridging Visa E have been determined after the expiration of the applicant's current visa since June 2020?

**Answer:**

There were 13,378 Bridging E (subclass 050 / 051) visas (BVEs) granted to non-citizens between 1 June 2020 and 31 August 2020.

This data includes persons who have held a visa prior to the BVE grant, or have a BVE in effect, or who have never been previously granted a visa. The Department is unable to disaggregate this data from reportable systems.

<b>BVE Grants between 1 June 2020 – 31 August 2020 by month</b>	
Jun-20	5,166
Jul-20	4,042
Aug-20	4,170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,378</b>

*\* As data has been drawn from a dynamic source, any historical figures provided may differ slightly in previous or future reporting.*

*- These figures include BVE (subclass 050) and BVE (subclass 051).*

*\*\* Information is based on departmental systems data as at 6am, 01 September 2020.*

Please note: applicants who hold substantive visas, as defined in section 5 of the *Migration Act 1958*, will not meet the time of application criteria for a BVE until their substantive visa ceases.

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**QoN Number: CV19-335**

**Subject: Bridging Visa E Delays**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

We have received reports from stakeholders that Bridging Visa E applications that are lodged 4-5 days before visas expire, are now taking over 14 days to resolve and, in some cases, many months to resolve.

- (a) Is the Minister aware of these delays?
- (b) If so, when was the Minister made aware?

**Answer:**

Bridging E (subclass 050 / 051) visas are not included in regular reporting to the Minister on visa processing times.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-336

**Subject: Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visa - Overseas**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

How many holders of Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visa are stranded overseas?

**Answer:**

As at 14 September 2020, there were 10,591 Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visa holders outside Australia. This figure includes both primary and secondary visa holders. The Department has no information on how many of these visa holders wish to travel to Australia at this time.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-337

**Subject: Visas Granted - Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188)  
Visa**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

How many visas have been granted under this subclass since 20 March 2020?

**Answer:**

From 20 March 2020 to 14 September 2020, 485 Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visas were granted. This figure includes both primary and secondary applicants.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-338

**Subject: Applications - Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visa**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

How many visa applications for the Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visa have been received since Australia's borders were closed on 20 March 2020?

**Answer:**

From 20 March 2020 to 14 September 2020, 3,161 applications for the Business Innovation and Investment (subclass 188) Visa have been received. This figure includes both primary and secondary applicants.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-339

**Subject: Update to website - Further information**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

In response to question CV19-282 “When did the Government update the Home Affairs website advising that the PMV class was not allowed to enter Australia? What date and time?” the answers states:

At 5.53pm on 17 February 2020, the Department of Home Affairs published a fact sheet on its website titled “Novel Coronavirus – Information for immediate family member of Australian citizens and permanent residents”, which included the following Q&A:

I am the fiancé of an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

Fiancés are not yet immediate family members. If you hold a Prospective Marriage (subclass 300) visa, you can travel to Australia once travel restrictions are lifted.

Given the Borders weren't closed on 17 February 2020, can you please update and provide further detail on your answer to this question?

**Answer:**

On 1 February 2020, in response to COVID-19 pandemic, the Australia Government introduced travel restrictions for foreign nationals arriving from mainland China. Australian citizens and permanent residents, as well as their immediate family members, were exempt from the travel restrictions.

The fact sheet titled “Novel Coronavirus – Information for immediate family member of Australian citizens and permanent residents” was published on 17 February 2020 to complement the information on travel restrictions on the Department's website. The fact sheet was developed as general advice and only applied, at that time, to foreign nationals arriving from mainland China.

The travel restrictions were subsequently extended to foreign nationals travelling from Iran from 1 March 2020; South Korea from 5 March 2020; and Italy from 11 March 2020, prior to implementation of the global travel restrictions on 20 March 2020. The fact sheet was not updated as it was still applicable to those visa holders, subject to the travel restrictions.

The Department's website continued to be revised in line with these updates.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-340

**Subject: Prospective Marriage (Subclass 300) - Outside Australia**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

How many Prospective Marriage (Subclass 300) visa holders are currently outside of Australia?

**Answer:**

As at 14 September 2020, there are 214 Prospective Marriage (subclass 300) visa holders outside Australia.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-341

**Subject: Expired Bridging Visa B - Processing new Visa**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

For people on expired Bridging Visa Bs that have received travel exemptions to return to Australia, how long are their new visas taking to process?

**Answer:**

People overseas whose Bridging Visa B has expired would have been granted a new visa prior to 'being granted a travel exemption'. The processing time for the new visa is dependent on the type of visa being applied for.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-342

**Subject: Expired Bridging Visa B - Applications for New Visa**

**Asked by:** Nick McKim

**Question:**

Between 1 June and 31 July, 139 people with an expired Bridging Visa B applied for a new visa, of which 35 were granted and 12 were rejected – what is the status of the other 92 applications?

a) Can you provide updated numbers from 1 June until 31 August 2020?

**Answer:**

Between 1 June and 31 August 2020, 203 people with an expired Bridging Visa B applied for a new visa, of which 61 have been granted and 14 have been refused. The remaining applications remain on hand and continue to be processed.