



Answer to question:

## PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

### MIGRATION, PATHWAY TO NATION BUILDING INQUIRY

**QUESTION:** How could Australia harness a digital nomad or remote worker visa?

**ANSWER:** A digital nomad/remote worker visa is a temporary visa that allows visitors to work remotely for an overseas employer for a period of time. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, Vialto Partners has assisted many Australian and multinational companies to develop remote working policies to meet growing requests from employees to spend extended periods of time working remotely overseas. Reasons for remote work include family reunification after Covid-19 lockdowns and to retain staff in a critical skills shortage environment. 72.4% of participants in our client survey believe that an Australian digital nomad/remote worker visa would be useful to enable remote work within their organisations.

It is important to note that digital nomads/remote workers should not displace local employment; rather the digital nomad/remote worker is fulfilling an overseas role or has a means of support from overseas whilst living locally in Australia. Benefits of a digital nomad/remote worker visa for Australia include:

- Tying into Tourism Australia's global campaign to encourage tourism back to Australia
- Economic benefits of more international travellers injecting money into the local economy, particularly remote and regional areas
- Enabling multinational companies to include Australia in their remote worker programs
- Encouraging workers with disruptive skills to consider Australia as a destination of choice
- Enabling older travellers who are aged out of the Working Holiday Visa program to take extended holidays in Australia
- Enhancing Australia's reputation as a tourist destination
- Potential for individuals to convert to a longer-term visa option if they see an opportunity to invest in, start a business or secure a work opportunity (particularly in critical sectors) in Australia.

An increasing number of countries including the UAE, Argentina, Brazil, Iceland, Greece, Denmark and Spain have introduced digital nomad/remote work visas to take advantage of

the remote work movement. In these countries, digital nomad/remote worker visas are generally valid for up to one year and are open to candidates with established employment overseas.

For Australia, integrity measures could include a minimum income or asset level given Australia's high cost of living, and restricting where digital nomads/remote workers can reside to avoid added congestion in major cities. For example, digital nomad/remote worker zones might include Far North Queensland and other regional or remote parts of the country.

We recommend that consideration be given to a digital nomad/remote worker visa for Australia to capitalise on the increasing, global shift towards international remote working and to encourage overseas visitors to consider Australia for an extended holiday and potentially to seek work opportunities in critical sectors.