



# Pandemic Event visa closure

The Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408) Australian Government endorsed events (COVID-19 Pandemic Event)—the Pandemic Event visa—is closing.

From 2 September 2023, the Pandemic Event visa will only be available to existing Pandemic Event visa holders. If you hold a Pandemic Event visa, you may continue to be eligible for a subsequent visa after 2 September 2023 up until the visa is fully closed on 1 February 2024.

All other visa holders will be ineligible for the Pandemic Event visa from 2 September 2023.

As part of the staged closure:

- All visa applications lodged on or after 2 September 2023, if granted, will have a stay period in Australia of up to 6 months
- All applications lodged on or after 2 September 2023 will incur a Visa Application Charge (VAC) of AUD405.00
- The Pandemic event visa will close to all new applications on 1 February 2024.
- At the time of application you must hold a Pandemic event visa that expires in 28 days or less, rather than the previous 90 day period.
- Applications lodged before 2 September 2023, if granted, will continue to be considered for a period of stay in Australia of up to 12 months (or 2 years for TGV holders).
- your Pandemic Event visa will remain valid until its expiry or you are granted another visa.

## Why is Pandemic Event visa closing?

The Pandemic Event visa was introduced in April 2020 to enable temporary migrants to lawfully remain in Australia while the border was closed. It also addressed labour shortages in critical sectors in the local economy.

Now Australia's borders are open and temporary visa holder numbers in Australia have returned to pre-COVID levels the purpose for the Pandemic Event visa is no longer required.

Closure of the Pandemic Event visa will contribute to a well-managed migration system that better regulates visa pathways and normalises the flow of temporary migrants in and out of Australia.

It will help to ensure that people are applying for the right visa that matches the reason for their travel and stay in Australia.

Closure also bolsters integrity of the visa system. Along with employers who seek to utilise the visa to avoid sponsorship obligations, an increasing number of potential migrants have been coming to Australia with the intent of applying for this visa as soon as possible. This is most prevalent in the

English language education sector, where international students were withdrawing from courses upon arrival.

## Next steps for visa holders preparing for closure

If you hold a Pandemic Event visa it is now time for you to regularise your visa status and apply for a visa that is designed for your intended purpose of stay or make arrangements to depart Australia.

You can use VEVO (Visa Entitlement Verification Online) to check your visa details, including your visa expiry date, visit [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo).

You will be able to apply for a subsequent Pandemic Event visa after 2 September 2023, up until the visa is fully closed on 1 February 2024, as long as at time of application you have 28 days or less remaining on your Pandemic Event visa.

You should ensure you remain lawful if you wish to stay in Australia. Becoming unlawful may impact your ability to visit Australia in the future.

If you are worried because your visa is about to expire or has expired the Department's Status Resolution Service can help. You should contact them as soon as practicable either online at [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/csrs](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/csrs) or phone 131 881 (Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm).

## Next steps for employers preparing for closure

Employers of a Pandemic Event visa holder should check what their employee's plans are, including whether they intend to transition to another visa or depart Australia.

By extending the time period before full closure, employers of a Pandemic Event visa holder will have more time to find new workers.

It is the responsibility of employers to ensure that they employ overseas workers with a valid visa, otherwise they risk significant penalties.

Employers are encouraged to use the [Visa Entitlement Verification Online \(VEVO\) system](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo) ([www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo)) to check the visa conditions and visa validity period for any non-citizen employees. You will need your employees permission first.

## More information

For more information about the Pandemic Event visa or other Australian visa options visit: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au)

**Check my visa details:** [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/VEVO](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/VEVO)