

## **New Zealand relaxes visa rules to attract further business investment**

**16 May 2011:** Immigration New Zealand has announced changes to the eligibility criteria for its investor visa, making it even easier for high net worth individuals to move to the country and take advantage of the favourable investment climate.

The Investor Visa was launched 19 months ago to grant applicants permanent residency in New Zealand. Since its launch the investor visa has attracted NZ \$652 million in potential investment with funds being directed into various investment vehicles ranging from bonds, shares and securities to Auckland Airport, Fonterra Dairy and even a chicken farm. It is hoped that relaxing the eligibility criteria will encourage further foreign investment.

The biggest changes include a reduction in the amount of time investors are required to spend in New Zealand each year (from 73 days per annum to 44), and the broadening of the range of investments that qualify for a visa. Bank bonds and equities are now acceptable for investments, as is residential property. Investors now also qualify for immigration if they employ at least five people OR record at least NZ\$1 million in annual turnover- previously applicants needed to meet both requirements.

New Zealand Immigration Minister Dr Coleman comments: "We reviewed the policy settings to ensure the changes that come into effect from mid-2011 will provide more incentives for wealthy migrants to upgrade their investment.

"Not only are we attracting valuable capital, but we are attracting people with commercial nous, experience and global business networks. Over time the aim is to see more migrant capital invested in New Zealand."

To date NZ \$142.5 million has been transferred and invested in New Zealand under the Business Migrant Policy and \$167.25 million has been approved for funds transfer. Applications from investors worth an additional \$252.5 million are being processed.

**Ends**

### **Background information**

The Government's business migration scheme offers two investment categories:

- Investor Plus – minimum investment of \$10 million for at least three years
- Investor – minimum investment of \$1.5 million for at least four years.

Some of the key changes to the business migration scheme include:

- Reducing the residence requirements for Investor Plus migrants during the three year investment period from 73 days to 44 days per annum.
- Investment opportunities will be expanded by allowing migrants to invest in entities established by parent organisations to raise funds. Migrants will also be allowed to invest in bank bonds and equities.
- More flexibility is being provided around the requirement for business experience. Instead of previously having to meet both conditions, business migrants only need to meet one of the following criteria - to have owned or managed a business with five full time employees or to have owned or managed a business with a minimum \$1m in annual turnover.
- Migrants will be allowed to transfer funds through foreign exchange companies which recognises the emerging international trend in funds transfer.

- Residential property is to be included as an acceptable investment. Safeguards are required so that residential property investments create economic growth and increase the total housing stock available to New Zealanders.

**Further media information**

For more information on working and living in New Zealand, please visit [www.newzealandnow.govt.nz](http://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz) and search for 'jobs and event'. You can also call Immigration NZ on 09069 100 100 (calls cost £1 per minute).

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