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GLOBAL IMMIGRATION & INVESTMENT ADVISORY

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AUSTRALIA GENERAL SKILLED MIGRATION

Client Factsheet & Programme Briefing

*Subclass 189 (Skilled Independent), Subclass 190 (Skilled
Nominated) & Subclass 491 (Skilled Work Regional –
Provisional)*

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Australia's General Skilled Migration Programme

A Briefing on Points Tested Pathways to Permanent Residence | 2026

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The General Skilled Migration (GSM) programme remains the principal route by which independent professionals and tradespeople obtain Australian permanent residence outside of employer sponsorship. Built around the SkillSelect points test, it is administered through three visa pathways - the Skilled Independent (189), Skilled Nominated (190) and Skilled Work Regional Provisional (491) - each weighing age, English proficiency, work experience, qualifications and (where relevant) government nomination. This factsheet summarizes the settings in force as at August 2026, including the current points test, occupation-list architecture, recent invitation activity and the points test reform the Government has flagged for 1 July 2027, so that clients can plan their application strategy against an accurate and current baseline.

02 THE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE — 2025–26

 185,000 TOTAL PERMANENT MIGRATION PLACES	 132,200 SKILL STREAM PLACES (71% OF PROGRAMME)	 3 POINTS-TESTED GSM PATHWAYS (189/190/491)	 65 pts MINIMUM EOI SUBMISSION THRESHOLD	 A\$6,135 INDICATIVE BASE CHARGE SUBCLASS 189, FROM 1 JUL 26
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03 SKILL STREAM - WHERE THE 132,200 PLACES SIT

CATEGORY	INDICATIVE PLACES	RELEVANT VISA(S)
Employer Sponsored	44,000	Subclass 186 (drawing on CSOL-eligible nominations)
State / Territory Nominated	33,000	Subclass 190
Regional	33,000	Subclass 491 & 494
Skilled Independent	16,900	Subclass 189
Talent & Innovation	4,300	New consolidated Talent/Innovation & National Innovation categories
Business Innovation & Investment	1,000	Subclass 188 family

Planning levels are ceilings that guide processing priorities, not guaranteed grant numbers, and are set annually by the Australian Government.

04 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY - WHAT WE CHECK FIRST

 SKILLS ASSESSMENT A positive assessment from the relevant authority for the nominated occupation, valid at time of invitation.	 AGE UNDER 45 Applicant must be under 45 years of age at the time of invitation to apply.	 COMPETENT ENGLISH (MIN.) At least Competent English, verified by an approved test taken within the validity window.	 HEALTH & CHARACTER Satisfactory medical examination and police clearances for all included applicants.	 EOI & INVITATION VALIDITY An EOI remains active for 2 years; an invitation to apply must be actioned within 60 days.
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05 THE THREE PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT RESIDENCE

PERMANENT Subclass 189 Skilled Independent SPONSORSHIP None - points only, no state or family nomination OCCUPATION Must sit on the relevant Skilled Occupation List at invitation JUNE 2026 ROUND 10,000 invitations issued; pass marks 65–100 pts by occupation BEST SUITED TO High-scoring, in-demand occupations able to compete nationally	PERMANENT Subclass 190 Skilled Nominated SPONSORSHIP State or territory government nomination (+5 points) OCCUPATION Must appear on the nominating state's occupation list TYPICAL SCORES 70–85 pts including the nomination bonus BEST SUITED TO Applicants targeting a specific state with genuine demand	PROVISIONAL · 5 YRS Subclass 491 Skilled Work Regional SPONSORSHIP State/territory nomination or eligible regional family sponsor (+15 pts) CONDITION Must live, work and study only in a designated regional area TYPICAL SCORES 65–80 pts including the regional bonus PR PATHWAY Eligible for Subclass 191 after 3 years (see page 3)
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Indicative score bands reflect occupation-level outcomes from the SkillSelect round of 4 June 2026 and published guidance current at the time of writing; actual invitation rounds vary by programme year, occupation ceiling and applicant pool.

06 THE 2026 POINTS TEST

AGE (AT INVITATION)	POINTS	QUALIFICATIONS & OTHER FACTORS	POINTS
18–24 years	25	Doctorate (relevant field)	20
25–32 years	30	Bachelor / Masters (or comparable)	15
33–39 years	25	Diploma or trade qualification	10
40–44 years	15	Australian study requirement	5
45 years and over	Ineligible	Specialist STEM PhD/Masters (Australian)	10
		Credentialed community language (NAATI)	5
		Study in regional Australia	5
		Partner skills (single / partner is citizen or PR / partner Competent English)	10
		State nomination (Subclass 190)	5
		Regional nomination (Subclass 491)	15

ENGLISH ABILITY	POINTS
Competent	0
Proficient	10
Superior	20

SKILLED EMPLOYMENT	POINTS
Overseas — 8+ years	15
Australian — 8+ years	20

(Scales down by years of experience; overseas and Australian experience are assessed on separate scales.)

Minimum to submit an EOI: 65 points. In practice, invited scores in 2025–26 have ranged from 65 (select trade occupations) to 100 (highly competitive professions) - see indicative pathway scores above.



BEYOND PR — THE PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

Once permanent residence is secured via the 189, 190 or 191, clients are generally eligible to apply for Australian citizenship by conferral after four years' lawful residence, including at least the 12 months immediately before applying as a permanent resident, subject to standard absence limits and the residence requirement in force at the time. We factor this into the long-term roadmap we build with every client from day one.

07 ENGLISH LANGUAGE & OCCUPATION REQUIREMENTS

LEVEL	POINTS	IELTS (EACH BAND)	PTE ACADEMIC (EACH COMPONENT, MIN.)
Competent	0	6.0	L47 · R48 · W51 · S54
Proficient	10	7.0	L58 · R59 · W69 · S76
Superior	20	8.0	L69 · R70 · W85 · S88

Each component score must individually clear the stated minimum for the level claimed - an averaged or overall score is not sufficient. On the occupation side, the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) has, since December 2024, replaced the former MLTSSL/STSOL for employer-sponsored pathways (Subclasses 482 and 186), while points-tested GSM occupations continue to be drawn from the relevant Skilled Occupation List and each state or territory's own nominated occupation list - both refreshed against the Government's National Occupation Shortage List findings, which reported shortages in roughly 29% of assessed occupations, concentrated in health, education, construction and regional trades. We verify each client's specific occupation against the current list at engagement.

08 PROCESSING & INDICATIVE GOVERNMENT CHARGES

VISA	POST-LODGE (75TH %ILE)	90TH %ILE	SUBCLASS 189 CHARGE (FROM 1 JUL 2026)	AUD
Subclass 189	5–6 months	9–11 months	Primary applicant	6,135
Subclass 190	7–9 months	13–16 months	Additional applicant (18+)	3,070
Subclass 491	6–8 months	10–14 months	Additional applicant (under 18)	1,540

Figures exclude time spent in the SkillSelect pool awaiting invitation, which is often the longer wait.

Base charges for 190 and 491 are broadly comparable; all charges are indexed annually and confirmed at the time of lodgement.

09 REGIONAL PATHWAY TO PERMANENT RESIDENCE - 491 → 191

Subclass 491 holders become eligible for the Subclass 191 (Permanent Residence – Skilled Regional) visa after at least three years on a qualifying regional visa, provided they have lived and worked in a designated regional area throughout and can independently demonstrate minimum taxable income of approximately **AUD 53,900** in each of those three years, sourced from regional employment (income from a partner or passive sources does not qualify). Evidence typically includes individual tax returns, payslips and proof of regional address for the full period.



ON THE HORIZON — POINTS TEST REFORM TARGETED FOR 1 JULY 2027

Following consultation through mid-2026 and draft legislation expected by December 2026, the Government has flagged a redesigned points test: tighter, more heavily weighted age bands; a wider gap between Competent and Superior English; a new salary-linked points category (benchmarked near AUD 146,717); enhanced weighting for trade qualifications; partner points likely removed or restricted to partners meeting their own skills/English threshold; reduced weighting for regional study; and a minimum EOI threshold proposed to rise from 65 to 70 points. Invitations issued before 1 July 2027 are expected to be honored under current rules. We are tracking this reform closely and will brief affected clients as settings are finalized.

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This factsheet summarizes publicly available Australian Government migration settings as at August 2026 and is provided for general information purposes only. It does not constitute migration assistance, legal advice, or a guarantee of visa outcomes, and should not be relied upon as a substitute for individual assessment. Points test values, occupation lists, invitation outcomes, processing times and fees are set and revised by the Australian Department of Home Affairs and by state and territory governments and are subject to change without notice. The Veritas House recommends clients obtain current, personalized advice before lodging an Expression of Interest or visa application. © 2026 The Veritas House Private Limited. All rights reserved.