

**CHANGES ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

The immigration program for 2009-10, commencing 1 July 2009, has been announced by the Australian Government. It is comforting that immigration remains an important factor in the government's planning.

The total number of places will be 168,700, a reduction on the previous program, but still a high number compared to previous annual intakes.

For skilled migration, tradespersons will require a score of 6 points (in the four components of reading, writing, listening and speaking) on the English test scale (IELTS), except visa applicants holding passports of the UK, USA, Canada, Republic of Ireland and New Zealand, and excepting other applicants eligible for exemption.

More opportunities for family reunion are provided by an increase in family migration to a total of 60,300 places, including an increase of 2,500 for partners, 1,000 for contributory parents and 300 for child visas.

Despite the economic downturn, there are still critical skill shortages in a number of sectors. In the March quarter the skills most in demand were: chefs, metal tradespersons, hairdressers, health professionals, food tradespersons, science professionals, computer professionals, wood tradespersons, building and engineering professionals and automotive tradespersons.

The Minister for Immigration, Senator Chris Evans, made the point that the government remains committed to a strong migration program. The Critical Skills Shortage List, which determines priority in processing visas and applies to the Skilled Migration Scheme, includes mainly information technology professionals, engineers and medical professionals. State and Territory governments can nominate applicants in a range of occupations, in areas where there are considered to be a skills shortage. Occupations on the Critical Skills List and occupations sponsored by State and Territory governments are currently given priority.

**People who wish to migrate to Australia are encouraged to make early applications – the earlier the application, the earlier the decision.**

**For more information or assistance with your migration needs, contact**

**aml | australian migration lawyers on +61 7 5597 8888 or**

**[info@migrationlawyers.com.au](mailto:info@migrationlawyers.com.au)**

At **aml**, we understand the importance of your migration requirements. We offer immigration services and specialist knowledge of Australian migration laws, policy and procedures to ensure accurate advice and preparation of all migration documents.



As a leading industry player with a strong focus on skilled employees, our current program involves regular trips to the UK and South Africa to meet clients, conduct migration seminars and attend migration expos to link Australian employers with skilled migrants.