

Visa cancellations – enhanced border control measures

NeilWalker



The health and welfare of the Australian community is the Australian Government's highest priority. This includes all people in Australia of all nationalities, including citizens, permanent residents and temporary visa holders alike.

On the 1st of February 2020, the Government announced enhanced border measures to reduce the risk to the Australian community posed by the Novel Coronavirus.

The National Security Committee agreed to give the Australian Border Force Commissioner discretionary powers to make decisions in relation to the arrival in Australia of persons who were in transit when the announcement was made.

This arrangement was put in place in anticipation of the arrival of a limited number of flights carrying people who did not meet the new entry requirements, particularly during the initial period following the announcement.

A number of visas were cancelled upon arrival in Australia, as they were assessed to be ineligible to enter Australia under Australia's enhanced border control measures.

The Australian Border Force Commissioner has used his discretionary powers to provide border clearance to a number of individuals to allow them to enter Australia. For most people, this occurred at the airport. Others were placed in an alternative place of detention – serviced apartments – while their case was assessed.

All of these individuals undertook health screening and were counselled to self-isolate for a period of 14 days, in the same way as others who are exempt from the enhanced border control measures.

The ABF and the Department is working with impacted individuals to discuss future visa options.

The Commissioner will continue to exercise his discretion to ensure the enhanced border control measures are applied fairly and appropriately, in consultation with Australian Government and industry partners including the Departments of Education, Health and Agriculture.

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