

New minimum salaries for temporary overseas skilled workers

The minimum salary that employers must pay temporary skilled workers in Australia has been increased,' Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Amanda Vanstone, announced today.

'The new minimum salary level for most professions will be \$41, 850, an increase of more than 7 per cent from last year's level,' Senator Vanstone said.

'The minimum salary requirements do not override requirements that workers are paid in accordance with Australian standards and conditions of employment (including awards, workplace agreements, superannuation and taxation.) If awards or workplace agreements demand a higher salary, then that higher salary must be paid over the employer risks losing the right to sponsor overseas temporary workers.

'These measures ensure foreign skilled workers are paid salaries reflecting their skills. The new minimum applies from 3 May 2006.'

The Minister said she believed the vast majority of employers were in fact paying well above the minimum salaries.

'In fact, the average salary of business long stay visa holders – commonly referred to as 457 visas – is currently \$65,000,' the Minister said.

'This reflects the fact that overseas workers are sought to fill genuine skill shortages in Australia and that, as a consequence of that shortage, wages in those trades and professions are being driven up.'

Minimum salary levels have been reviewed annually by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations since being introduced in 2001 to deter employers from recruiting unskilled and low-paid overseas workers to the detriment of Australian workers.

In the information technology sector, the minimum salary level for workers would be \$57,300 – an increase of 12.9 per cent,' the Minister said.

'This level was set following consultation with the ICT industry.

'For highly skilled senior manager positions applying for permanent migration, which does not require an assessment of skills, the minimum salary will be increased to \$165,000 a year.'

The Minister also announced the Government would make changes to regional concessions allowed under the 457 visa scheme, including setting an absolute limit for salaries in regional areas of at least 90 per cent of the standard minimum level.

For further information on the salary changes contact Immigration One.