

Immigration Policy

For those who would like to come to live in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Green Party will ensure that the process of selecting immigrants is fair, reasonable and flexible, and that immigrants are treated with dignity and respect, including, for example, through family reunification and fair employment conditions. The Green Party believes that Aotearoa New Zealand should remain firm in our commitment and humanitarian responsibilities towards international refugees and asylum seekers.

Vision

A progressive immigration system that is humane, fair, practical, sustainable, and sensitive to the requirements and concerns of all migrants as well as tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti.

Values and Principles

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: The right for non-Māori to live in Aotearoa New Zealand derives from Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Māori, as tangata whenua, should have a partnership role in determining Aotearoa New Zealand's immigration policies.
- *Ecological Wisdom*: Immigration policy should consider the environmental impacts of population changes and support climate goals.
- *Social Responsibility*: All immigration applicants, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, should be treated with dignity, compassion and respect in accordance with international conventions on human rights.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: Immigration processes should be open, accountable and responsive. Local communities should be involved in policy decision-making and implementation.
- *Non-Violence*: All migrants and refugees should be welcomed and included in Aotearoa New Zealand society, such that they feel a sense of belonging. Tolerance, acceptance and understanding is important in a diverse and multicultural society.
- *Responsibility*: Aotearoa New Zealand should act as a responsible member of the international community. Aotearoa New Zealand is a Pacific nation with a Pacific history and its immigration policies and practices should reflect that.
- *Distributed benefits*: The positive contributions that migrants make to the social, cultural and economic life of Aotearoa New Zealand should be shared across all regions, not just in the main centres.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

"As a Party we strive to create a more connected, compassionate and equal Aotearoa, free from structural biases that discriminate against groups and individuals.

“Comprehensive support for communities and individuals affected (...) by the impacts of climate change within New Zealand and the Pacific will be well established.”

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- Actively support Māori aspirations for a Tiriti-based immigration system (...). (1.1)
- Advocate for a Pacific Passport to allow for free movement between the islands and Aotearoa. (2.1.1)
- Make specific provision in immigration legislation for people displaced by climate change, based on need. (2.1.2)
- Ensure that immigration policies do not discriminate based on applicants' countries of origin, ethnicities, cultures, age, gender, sexual orientation, and all other prohibited grounds of discrimination. (3.1)
- Increase our refugee quota and the resources required to provide adequate refugee services. (4.1.2)
- Require employers to pay temporary workers no less than local workers, and to provide them with the same working conditions as local workers. (6.9.1)

Connected Policies

Refugees are part of our Pacific-oriented and [Human Rights](#)-based approach to [Global Affairs](#) and [Climate Change](#). Migrant workers are part of our [Workforce](#) and contribute to [Business](#) success. Migrants, including international students, must be well-supported in [Education](#) and by other public services, such as [Health](#) and public [Housing](#).

Policy Positions

1. [Immigration and Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#)

Issues

The presence of non-Māori peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand is a result of Te Tiriti o Waitangi but immigration systems do not reflect this.

Actions

- 1.1. Actively support Māori aspirations for a Tiriti-based immigration system, including by:
 - 1.1.1. Devolving resources to whānau, hapū, and iwi to strengthen traditional whanaungatanga connections with Pasifika communities;
 - 1.1.2. Initiating a Tiriti-based negotiation with tangata whenua to determine how Māori want to work with the Crown on immigration decisions and reviews;
 - 1.1.3. Provide an initial orientation and ongoing education to all new immigrants that includes information about Aotearoa New Zealand civics, culture, and environment, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and Māori-led content; and
 - 1.1.4. Support collaboration between resettlement programmes and interested tangata whenua.
- 1.2. Ensure that the immigration system recognises the unique status of Māori as tangata whenua, by:

- 1.2.1. Guaranteeing Aotearoa New Zealand citizenship to all individuals with Māori whakapapa living or born overseas; and
- 1.2.2. Establishing a tikanga pathway to citizenship that allows for hapū and iwi to assess whakapapa evidence, as recommended in Waitangi Tribunal's "He Tangata, he Whenua: The Citizenship Report" (Wai 3513).

2. Aotearoa New Zealand in the Pacific Region

Issues

Aotearoa New Zealand's policies and practices have perpetuated injustices in its inequitable relationships with other Pacific nations.

Actions

- 2.1. Adopt an equitable, Pacific-oriented approach to immigration by:
 - 2.1.1. Advocating for a Pacific Passport to allow for free movement between the islands and Aotearoa New Zealand; and
 - 2.1.2. Making specific provision in immigration legislation for people displaced by climate change, based on need.

3. Immigration Applications and Selection

Issues

The process of selecting migrants is not always fair, reasonable, and flexible. This can influence migrants' decisions about whether to live and work here, diminishing the potential benefits migrants bring. It can also contribute to social exclusion and perpetuate xenophobia and other forms of discrimination.

Actions

- 3.1. Ensure that immigration policies do not discriminate based on applicants' countries of origin, ethnicities, cultures, age, gender, sexual orientation, and all other prohibited grounds of discrimination.
- 3.2. Ensure that INZ achieves a non-discriminatory, transparent, consistent, and expeditious application process, including in its overseas activities, by:
 - 3.2.1. Requiring INZ to refund fees and levies to anyone who had an expression of interest in any pool that is no longer available;
 - 3.2.2. Ensuring that migrant and refugee applicants do not have crucial information relating to their claim withheld from them on the basis that it is deemed to be "classified"; and
 - 3.2.3. Requiring applications from people with disabilities to be assessed on the evidence of what they can contribute in skills, rather than on a perception of the cost to health services that they may or may not access.
- 3.3. Ensure that the immigration consultancy industry acts in the best interest of migrants, by:

- 3.3.1. Extending regulation of the immigration advice industry so that all those providing advice, including education advice, fall within the regulatory framework, regardless of their location; and
- 3.3.2. Requiring and resourcing the Immigration Advisers Authority to regulate and monitor overseas-based immigration advisers to protect prospective immigrants from fraud and misinformation.

4. Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Issues

Many refugee families have been separated due to social destabilisation caused by civil wars or by oppressive regimes. Hence, many refugees arrive without spouses, children, parents, or other close relatives. Some people arrive without the required documents or visas. Current practice and funding for asylum-seekers are inadequate to address these issues.

Actions

- 4.1. Uphold Aotearoa New Zealand's humanitarian responsibilities to assist refugees and people seeking asylum by:
 - 4.1.1. Protecting the right of asylum seekers to claim asylum in Aotearoa New Zealand; and
 - 4.1.2. Increasing our refugee quota and the resources required to provide adequate refugee services.
- 4.2. Ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers are treated humanely, with fairness, dignity, and compassion, including by:
 - 4.2.1. Limiting detention of asylum seekers to exceptional cases in which a genuine security risk can be identified;
 - 4.2.2. Abiding by the provisions of the 1951 Refugee Convention and related international agreements;
 - 4.2.3. Supporting equitable leadership by refugees and migrants in all settings;
 - 4.2.4. Facilitating cross-cultural education, interaction, and understanding across Aotearoa New Zealand; and
 - 4.2.5. Resourcing the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner to carry out its functions in relation to refugees.
- 4.3. Enable refugees to access natural justice and rights of appeal, by:
 - 4.3.1. Resourcing the Immigration and Protection Tribunal to deal with all refugee cases;
 - 4.3.2. Requiring asylum seeker eligibility to be decided on a case-by-case basis, according to international law, using a transparent process, within three months; and

Preventing Ministers from denying accepted refugees based on a Security Risk Certificate.

- 4.4. Support refugee families separated due to social destabilisation to reunite by:
 - 4.4.1. Replacing caps on family reunification with clear criteria for family readiness and eligibility;

- 4.4.2. Recognising community support as a contributor to family readiness for reunification; and
- 4.4.3. Expanding the powers of the Immigration and Protection Tribunal to include consideration of family reunification cases.
- 4.5. Support the safety of asylum seekers by:
 - 4.5.1. Prohibiting the deportation of asylum seekers to a country where they may face torture or risks to their life, consistent with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the Convention Against Torture;
 - 4.5.2. To the greatest extent practicable, ensuring the safety and security of asylum seekers' families that remain abroad when researching/considering claims; and
 - 4.5.3. Ensure safety and security for asylum seekers and their families in Aotearoa New Zealand during their hearings.

5. Immigration for Work or Business

Issues

Aotearoa New Zealand often experiences skill shortages in the regulated professions, but migrant professionals can face considerable difficulty gaining registration. Migrants often find themselves victims of subtle forms of job discrimination, and many refugees have problems finding suitable employment.

Actions

- 5.1. Increase the number of registered skilled migrants, prioritising skills needed to build a low-carbon economy that lifts living standards, including by:
 - 5.1.1. Providing a visa pathway to registration and residence for those with internationally recognised qualifications through workplace supervision/probation, and resource professional bodies to enact it;
 - 5.1.2. Providing pre-employment and on-the-job language skills support for migrants in regulated professions; and
 - 5.1.3. Closely monitoring the labour market impact of skilled migrant workers and ensuring effective policy responses to any identified concerns.
- 5.2. Improve pathways for overseas-qualified professionals to fill long-term skills shortages by:
 - 5.2.1. Expanding the list of recognised overseas qualifications, prioritising Pacific nations and long-term skill shortages; and
 - 5.2.2. Increasing the availability of bridging courses for these professions and providing student loans for relevant migrants to complete them.
- 5.3. Support visas that enable productive investment in Aotearoa New Zealand, by:
 - 5.3.1. When considering investor visas, prioritising productive investment and deprioritising property-based investment;
 - 5.3.2. Auditing investor visas for viability, sustainability, desirability, and human rights compliance; and

- 5.3.3. Replacing investment visas that function as 'pay-for-citizenship' or 'pay-for-residency' with a monitored entrepreneurial work visa

6. Positive Immigration Experiences

Migrants can struggle with culture shock and, especially people of colour, can be made to feel unwelcome in their new communities. Language can be a major barrier to participation for people who do not speak English fluently. Migrants also face challenges when separated from families still in their countries of origin.

Actions

- 6.1. Ensure resettlement support and crucial social services are accessible to all refugees and asylum seekers across the country, including by:
 - 6.1.1. Providing specialised services for refugees, such as the Refugees as Survivors Clinics across Aotearoa New Zealand;
 - 6.1.2. Increasing the level and accessibility of resources available to migrants for their resettlement, and providing additional resources to meet additional needs, such as those of children and disabled people;
 - 6.1.3. Funding the expansion of Refugee and Migrant Services' Refugee Resettlement to more urban centres;
 - 6.1.4. Assist migrants to obtain adequate housing and health services, including giving priority to refugees for public housing; and
 - 6.1.5. Increasing funding for diverse community centres, Refugee and Migrant Centres, and ethnic and multicultural associations throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to cater for the needs of refugee communities and build intercultural relationships.
- 6.2. Ensure that language barriers do not prevent migrants from accessing public services, by:
 - 6.2.1. Resource translation services across Aotearoa New Zealand and online.
- 6.3. Support migrants to learn Aotearoa New Zealand's official languages – including Te Reo Maori and New Zealand Sign Language - by:
 - 6.3.1. Offering accessible adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses; and
 - 6.3.2. Funding the Volunteer ESOL Home Tutor scheme to attract and train sufficient volunteers.
- 6.4. Support immigrants with disabilities to participate in society to the fullest extent possible by, for example, ensuring access to information, services, education, and employment.
- 6.5. Support the wellbeing of women and people of minority genders entering Aotearoa New Zealand by:
 - 6.5.1. Resourcing educational, workplace, and mentoring opportunities for refugee and migrant women;
 - 6.5.2. Providing separate spaces in settlement centres for women and gender minority refugees and migrants;

- 6.5.3. Ensuring the immigration status of refugee and migrant women and their children is independent of the immigration status of their partner; and
- 6.5.4. Facilitating the financial independence of refugee and migrant women from their partners, if desired.
- 6.6. Make it easier for overseas-based partners and immediate family members (including parents and children) of New Zealanders to become residents, including by:
 - 6.6.1. Issuing overseas-based partners of New Zealanders with provisional residency status, including de facto partners;
 - 6.6.2. Relaxing health assessments to enable disabled people to be reunited with family; and
 - 6.6.3. Ensuring investigations into relationships for a foreign national partner of a New Zealand citizen or resident are non-intrusive and culturally sensitive.
- 6.7. Support migrants and refugees to find employment, by:
 - 6.7.1. Funding specialist employment services to find appropriate work for refugees and migrants living in Aotearoa New Zealand; and
 - 6.7.2. Raising awareness amongst employers about the benefits of employing migrants and refugees living in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 6.8. Uphold the rights of migrant workers by:
 - 6.8.1. Enacting laws to implement the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
 - 6.8.2. Informing all migrants who are eligible to work in Aotearoa New Zealand of their employment rights, their employer's obligations, and basic support services that are available to them if they have an employment-related issue or dispute;
 - 6.8.3. Resourcing and empowering relevant Government agencies to investigate cases of employers abusing or exploiting immigrant workers; and
 - 6.8.4. Enabling work visas to be extended during investigations of migrant exploitation.
- 6.9. Ensure that migrants holding temporary work permits are treated fairly by:
 - 6.9.1. Requiring employers to pay temporary workers no less than local workers, and to provide them with the same working conditions as local workers;
 - 6.9.2. Requiring and resource INZ to frequently and appropriately monitor worksites where migrants holding temporary work permits are employed;
 - 6.9.3. Creating opportunities for temporary workers who possess skills required for the needs of local communities and in various industries, or demonstrate prolonged settlement, to apply for residency status in Aotearoa New Zealand; and
 - 6.9.4. Putting employment guidelines in place to ensure that job applicants who are migrants or refugees are not discriminated against.
- 6.10. Protect immigrants from persecution or punitive actions by their former government.
- 6.11. Ensure that INZ's compliance and enforcement activities uphold human rights by:
 - 6.11.1. Opposing granting immigration officers increased search and detention powers in the absence of evidence that restrictions imposed on their current powers unduly affect their ability to perform their role; and

- 6.11.2. Creating a broad Amnesty Programme for people who overstay.
- 6.12. Ensure immigration policy supports sustainable development while meeting the needs of refugees, tangata whenua, and communities, by:
 - 6.12.1. Reviewing immigration policy and its implementation regularly, using an evidence-based approach; and
 - 6.12.2. Identifying, managing and addressing the impacts of a changing population on the environment, communities, the economy, and infrastructure.