

# Immigration Tourism Update

September 2026

## High level messages

- Immigration New Zealand (INZ) aims to provide a trusted and effective immigration service that enables New Zealand's economic growth.
- INZ is committed to making timely and good quality visa decisions.
- INZ works closely with the tourism sector to ensure that we are in a good position to support the sector to grow.
- We are doing this by strengthening our presence in key visitor markets through dedicated in-market resources, regular engagement with travel agents and tourism partners, and targeted initiatives that support visitor growth.
- Between [1 January and 31 August 2026](#), a total of [996,555](#) New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA) requests and [267,022](#) visitor visas were approved. During that same period, [1,112,753](#) people visited New Zealand.
- Working holiday makers also make a valuable contribution to the tourism sector and between [1 January and 31 August 2026](#), a total of [24,966](#) Working Holiday Visas (WHVs) were approved with an approval rate of [98%](#). [Around 19,253 people](#) arrived in New Zealand on a working holiday visa. [This is down 9.1% from around 21,181 people arriving in the same period last year.](#)
- [Analysis of WHV arrival trends over the last three years indicates that arrivals typically peak between September and November, reflecting the seasonal pattern of Working Holiday Visa holders travelling to New Zealand.](#)
- The China visa waiver pilot continues to deliver strong growth in Chinese visitor numbers.
- [Since the introduction of the policy, total Chinese arrivals have increased by 47% compared with the same period last year. In addition, the policy accounted for 34% of Chinese visitors.](#)
- [The most popular disembarkation ports continue to be Christchurch \(40 percent\), Auckland \(32 percent\), and Queenstown \(27 percent\).](#)
- [Based on insights from the pilot to date there has been a total tourism spend of \\$289 million since the pilot began.](#)
- A review of the visa waiver pilot will commence in November this year, once it has been in place for 12 months. The existing pilot arrangements will remain in place throughout the review period while its effectiveness and outcomes are assessed.
- [Group and Tour Escort Visitor Visas went live on ADEPT on 24 August 2026.](#)
- [From 1 October 2026, applications for selected visitor and transit visas must be submitted through ADEPT, and paper forms will no longer be accepted from this date.](#)

## China

### Snapshot

- China remains a key tourism market for New Zealand, and INZ continues to strengthen our engagement with this important market, while facilitating a quick and easy immigration process.
- Chinese visitors can be granted a multiple-entry Visitor Visa or Business Visitor visa valid for up to 5 years, making future trips easier to plan.
- Between 1 January and 31 August 2026, a total of 120,185 visitor visas were approved, and 88,537 NZeTA requests were approved with an approval rate of 97% and 99% respectively. During that same period, a total of 208,529 Chinese visitors arrived in New Zealand on a visitor visa or NZeTA.
- Visa processing times have improved year on year. The average processing time in the first eight months of this year was 4 working days, compared with 5 days in the same period last year.
- There has been a strong uptake in the NZeTA trial from Australia since it began on 3 November 2025. As at 31 August 2026 we have received 119,544 requests from Chinese visitors and 104,073 travellers have arrived, officially surpassing 100k Chinese visitors arriving under this policy.
- In the month of August 2026 alone, we approved 9,991 requests from Chinese visitors. Monthly stats can be found here: [Background on the NZeTA: Why it was introduced and key statistics :: Immigration New Zealand](#).

### Support & engagement

- We have dedicated staff in China to ensure we are well connected to the market and provide support to our tourism customers, including Approved Destination Status (ADS) agents.
- Simplified Chinese guidance is available on the INZ website to support applicants: [Visitor Visa application guide for citizens of China : Immigration New Zealand](#).

## India

### Snapshot

- India is a priority visitor market for New Zealand and INZ continues to strengthen our engagement with this important market.
- Between 1 January and 31 August 2026, 43,740 visitor visas were approved with an approval rate of 83% and 48,838 Indian visitors arrived in New Zealand.
- Visa processing times have remained steady for the first eight months of this year at 6 working days. This is the same as it was in the same period last year.
- INZ continues to work with the market to encourage more complete applications, which has contributed to faster processing and higher approval rates.

### Support & engagement

- INZ has strengthened in-market support through a dedicated role in New Delhi to work directly with, and provide support to our tourism customers, including travel agents.

## Appendix A – Data

### Visitor Visas

#### **Total Visitor Visa applications and Visitor Visa arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 31 August 2026)**

|              | Submitted | Decided | Approved | Declined | Arrivals | Average processing time (working days) |
|--------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | 299,581   | 301,844 | 267,022  | 32,062   | 265,838  | 5                                      |

#### **Total Visitor Visa applications and Visitor Visa arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 31 August 2025)**

|              | Submitted | Decided | Approved | Declined | Arrivals | Average processing time (working days) |
|--------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | 303,544   | 309,987 | 274,835  | 32,196   | 268,721  | 5                                      |

#### **Visitor Visas applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and declined (01 January – 31 August 2026)**

| Nationality | Approved | Average processing time (working days) | Nationality | Declined | Average processing time (working days) |
|-------------|----------|----------------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------------------------------------|
| China       | 120,185  | 4                                      | India       | 8,209    | 7                                      |
| India       | 43,740   | 6                                      | Pakistan    | 4,996    | 9                                      |
| Philippines | 20,314   | 5                                      | China       | 3,906    | 9                                      |
| Thailand    | 11,117   | 4                                      | Nigeria     | 1,643    | 9                                      |
| Indonesia   | 10,667   | 4                                      | Fiji        | 1,496    | 9                                      |

#### **Visitor Visas applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and declined (01 January – 31 August 2025)**

| Nationality | Approved | Average processing time (working days) | Nationality | Declined | Average processing time (working days) |
|-------------|----------|----------------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------------------------------------|
| China       | 138,255  | 5                                      | India       | 9,137    | 8                                      |
| India       | 40,113   | 6                                      | China       | 4,867    | 9                                      |
| Philippines | 17,252   | 4                                      | Pakistan    | 2,933    | 12                                     |
| Thailand    | 10,953   | 4                                      | Fiji        | 1,540    | 22                                     |
| Fiji        | 9,424    | 7                                      | Philippines | 1,316    | 11                                     |

## Working Holiday Visas

### Total Working Holiday Visa applications and arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 31 August 2026)

|              | Submitted | Decided | Approved | Declined | Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) | Not Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) |
|--------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | 27,138    | 25,557  | 24,966   | 324      | 18,256                          | 14,367                              |

### Total Working Holiday Visa applications and arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 31 August 2025)

|              | Submitted | Decided | Approved | Declined | Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) | Not Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) |
|--------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | 29,664    | 28,731  | 28,163   | 325      | 19,767                          | 2,655                               |

### Working Holiday Visa applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and arrived (01 January – 31 August 2026)

| Nationality              | Approved | Nationality              | Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) | Nationality   | Not Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Great Britain            | 4,618    | France                   | 3,249                           | France        | 2,301                               |
| France                   | 3,947    | Great Britain            | 2,626                           | Great Britain | 1,929                               |
| Germany                  | 2,802    | Japan                    | 2,013                           | Germany       | 1,646                               |
| Japan                    | 2,551    | Germany                  | 1,969                           | Japan         | 1,248                               |
| United States of America | 1,596    | United States of America | 1,202                           | Malaysia      | 914                                 |

### Working Holiday Visa applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and arrived (01 January – 31 August 2025)

| Nationality              | Approved | Nationality              | Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) | Nationality              | Not Arrived<br>(Submitted Offshore) |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Great Britain            | 5,180    | France                   | 3,517                           | United States of America | 352                                 |
| France                   | 4,620    | Great Britain            | 2,948                           | Japan                    | 310                                 |
| Germany                  | 3,387    | Japan                    | 2,313                           | France                   | 279                                 |
| Japan                    | 2,650    | Germany                  | 2,259                           | Spain                    | 278                                 |
| United States of America | 1,880    | United States of America | 1,266                           | Great Britain            | 247                                 |

## China

### China Visitor Visas and NZeTA (01 January – 31 August 2026)

| Category              | Submitted (applications) | Decided (applications) | Approved (applications) | Approval rate | Arrivals       |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| All Visitor Visas     | 122,102                  | 124,499                | 120,185                 | 97%           | 124,412        |
| General Visitor Visa  | 69,498                   | 71,471                 | 67,627                  | 95%           | 88,612         |
| Business Visitor Visa | 26,726                   | 26,748                 | 26,554                  | 99%           | 3,894          |
| Group Visitor Visas   | 22,559                   | 22,876                 | 22,849                  | 100%          | 29,159         |
| Other                 | 3,319                    | 3,404                  | 3,155                   | 93%           | 2,747          |
| NZeTA                 | 88,629                   | 88,599                 | 88,537                  | 99%           | 84,117         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>210,731</b>           | <b>213,098</b>         | <b>208,722</b>          | <b>97%</b>    | <b>208,529</b> |

### China Visitor Visas (01 January – 31 August 2025)

| Category              | Submitted (applications) | Decided (applications) | Approved (applications) | Approval rate | Arrivals       |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| All Visitor Visas     | 138,759                  | 143,567                | 138,255                 | 96%           | 137,546        |
| General Visitor Visa  | 77,476                   | 80,685                 | 75,879                  | 94%           | 97,353         |
| Business Visitor Visa | 34,303                   | 35,149                 | 34,845                  | 99%           | 4,331          |
| Group Visitor Visas   | 24,369                   | 25,019                 | 24,981                  | 100%          | 33,433         |
| Other                 | 2,611                    | 2,714                  | 2,550                   | 94%           | 2,429          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>138,759</b>           | <b>143,567</b>         | <b>138,255</b>          | <b>97%</b>    | <b>137,546</b> |

## India

### India Visitor Visas (01 January – 31 August 2026)

| Category              | Submitted (applications) | Decided (applications) | Approved (applications) | Approval rate | Arrivals      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| All Visitor Visas     | 53,263                   | 52,673                 | 43,740                  | 83%           | 48,838        |
| General Visitor Visa  | 41,792                   | 42,087                 | 34,280                  | 81%           | 40,510        |
| Business Visitor Visa | 2,760                    | 2,713                  | 2,498                   | 92%           | 1,576         |
| Group Visitor Visas   | 2,192                    | 2,132                  | 2,055                   | 96%           | 2,122         |
| Other                 | 6,519                    | 5,741                  | 4,907                   | 85%           | 4,630         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>53,263</b>            | <b>52,673</b>          | <b>43,740</b>           | <b>87%</b>    | <b>48,838</b> |

### India Visitor Visas (01 January – 31 August 2025)

| Category              | Submitted (applications) | Decided (applications) | Approved (applications) | Approval rate | Arrivals      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| All Visitor Visas     | 49,125                   | 50,077                 | 40,113                  | 80%           | 45,434        |
| General Visitor Visa  | 39,911                   | 41,455                 | 32,542                  | 78%           | 38,558        |
| Business Visitor Visa | 2,596                    | 2,641                  | 2,446                   | 93%           | 1,520         |
| Group Visitor Visas   | 831                      | 668                    | 582                     | 87%           | 608           |
| Other                 | 5,787                    | 5,313                  | 4,543                   | 86%           | 4,748         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>49,125</b>            | <b>50,077</b>          | <b>40,113</b>           | <b>85%</b>    | <b>45,434</b> |