

Immigration Tourism Update

June 2026

High level messages

- Immigration supports the Government's economic growth agenda, and Immigration New Zealand (INZ) works to ensure visa processing supports New Zealand's visitor economy.
- INZ aims to provide a trusted and effective immigration service and is committed to making timely and good quality visa decisions.
- China and India are important markets for our tourism sector, and INZ has been working hard to ensure the immigration process is as quick and easy as possible for these visitors through strengthened engagement and ongoing improvements in processing performance.
- INZ is committed to working closely with the tourism sector to ensure that we are in a good position to support the sector to grow.
- Between **1 January and 31 May 2026**, a total of **684,686** New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA) requests were approved, along with **166,110** visitor visas. A total of **887,236** people visited New Zealand during that period.
- Working Holiday makers also make a valuable contribution to the tourism sector and between **1 January and 31 May 2026** a total of **14,513** Working Holiday Visas (WHVs) were approved across all schemes with an approval rate of **98%**. **During that same period, 13,720** WHV holders arrived in New Zealand.
- The China/Pacific visa waiver pilot is delivering strong growth in Chinese visitor numbers, generating significant new demand and economic value while operating with stable border settings.

China/Pacific visa waiver pilot: Key insights

- The China/Pacific visa waiver pilot is driving strong growth in Chinese visitor demand, with arrivals estimated to be 40-50% higher than they otherwise would have been. Around one-third of all Chinese visitors during the period travelled via the pilot.
- The policy is generating new demand rather than shifting existing travellers, with particularly strong uptake among travellers going through Australia.
- As at 30 April 2026, 71,550 arrivals have been facilitated through NZeTA approvals under the pilot, with a high conversion to travel (82%).
- Visitor flows are well distributed across key gateways, with Christchurch (40%), Auckland (31%), and Queenstown (27%) seeing the highest arrival volumes.
- Travel patterns show shorter, more frequent stays, with Chinese visitors under the pilot staying an average of six days, compared with nine days via traditional pathways.
- The pilot is delivering meaningful economic impact, generating an estimated \$214 million in additional visitor spend and over 433,000 visitor nights in its first six months.
- Border performance remains stable, with low offload rates (5%) indicating that integrity risks are being effectively managed.

- There will be a full evaluation after the 12-month trial to inform future decisions on the scheme's direction and potential expansion.

China

Snapshot

- China remains a key tourism market for New Zealand, and INZ continues to strengthen our engagement with this important market, while also ensuring the immigration process is quick and easy.
- Between 1 January and 31 May 2026, a total of 149,820 Chinese visitors arrived in New Zealand on an NZeTA or visitor visa. During that same period, 74,390 visitor visas were approved with an approval rate of 97% and 78,928 NZeTA requests were approved with an approval rate of 99.9%.
- Most Chinese visitors are issued a five-year multiple-entry visitor visa.
- Visa processing times have improved year on year. The average processing time in the first five 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, and as at 31 May 2026 we have received 90,216 requests and 79,078 travellers have arrived since the trial began on 3 November 2025.
- In the month of May 2026 alone, we received 7,545 requests. 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.
- We have simplified Chinese online guidance to support applicants, including: [Visitor Visa application guide for citizens of China : Immigration New Zealand](#).
- INZ and Tourism New Zealand have an updated Memorandum of Understanding with selected Chinese travel agents under the ADS and Free and Independent Traveller (FIT) scheme, including a 5-day turnaround commitment.

Transit update

- Since the transit changes to allow Chinese nationals to transit New Zealand on an NZeTA came into effect on 27 October 2025, as at 31 May 2026 we have received 10,400 requests for a transit NZeTA from Chinese nationals, and 7,184 of these have transited through 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 May 2026, 28,196 visitor visas were approved with an approval rate of 83% and 35,174 Indian visitors arrived in New Zealand.
- Visa processing times have improved year on year. The average processing time in the first five months of this year was 7 working days, compared with 8 days 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 May 2026)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Arrivals	Average processing time (working days)
Total	180,621	188,259	166,110	20,265	183,239	5

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

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Arrivals	Average processing time (working days)
Total	186,307	196,088	173,221	20,970	182,350	6

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

Nationality	Approved	Average processing time (working days)	Nationality	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
China	74,390	4	India	5,272	7
India	28,197	7	Pakistan	2,817	11
Philippines	12,132	5	China	2,405	4
Thailand	7,266	5	Nigeria	1,124	11
Indonesia	6,432	4	Fiji	973	7

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

Nationality	Approved	Average processing time (working days)	Nationality	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
China	87,934	5	India	5,781	8
India	25,536	8	China	3,404	5
Philippines	10,542	4	Pakistan	1,897	17
Thailand	7,223	5	Fiji	1,048	11
Fiji	5,837	11	Philippines	869	4

China

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

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	73,589	77,071	74,390	97%	89,947
General Visitor Visa	39,604	42,291	39,888	94%	63,154
Business Visitor Visa	15,557	15,869	15,761	99%	2,412
Group Visitor Visas	16,245	16,695	16,677	100%	22,618
Other	2,183	2,216	2,064	93	1,763
NZeTA	78,834	78,988	78,928	99.9%	59,879
Total	152,423	156,059	153,318	97.15%	149,826

China Visitor Visas (01 January – 31 May 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	86,490	91,607	87,934	96%	95,432
General Visitor Visa	47,006	50,392	47,043	93%	65,870
Business Visitor Visa	20,189	21,003	20,802	99%	2,672
Group Visitor Visas	17,551	18,402	18,374	100%	25,309
Other	1,744	1,810	1,715	95%	1,581
Total	86,490	91,607	87,934	96%	95,432

India

India Visitor Visas (01 January – 31 May 2026)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	33,063	33,939	28,197	83%	35,174
General Visitor Visa	25,712	26,926	21,909	81%	29,548
Business Visitor Visa	1,626	1,642	1,511	92%	829
Group Visitor Visas	1,681	1,688	1,632	97%	1,890
Other	4,044	3,683	3,145	85%	2,907
Total	33,063	33,939	28,197	83%	35,174

India Visitor Visas (01 January – 31 May 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	30,203	31,823	25,536	80%	31,915
General Visitor Visa	24,646	26,636	20,977	79%	27,773
Business Visitor Visa	1,580	1,637	1,520	93%	896
Group Visitor Visas	298	296	237	80%	278
Other	3,679	3,254	2,802	86%	2,968
Total	30,203	31,823	25,536	80%	31,915