

## In This Issue

- Latest on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)
- New Zealand doctors no longer to be classified as 'overseas trained'
- Flexible Work Arrangements under subclass 457 visa
- Aster Medical Services - service with a difference
- Featured Australian destination: Hunter Valley NSW

## Useful links

[National Registration and Accreditation Scheme  
www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp](http://www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp)

[Bills before Parliament  
www.apf.gov.au/bills/index.htm](http://www.apf.gov.au/bills/index.htm)



## National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

### **What is it and what will it do?**

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) will create a single national registration and accreditation system for ten health professions: chiropractors, dentists, medical practitioners, nurses and midwives, optometrists, osteopaths, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and psychologists.

The NRAS will promote a more flexible and responsive health workforce as it will enable health professionals to practice in multiple locations around Australia with greater ease. In the case of medical practitioners, at present each State and Territory enforces their own requirements for medical registration. Consequently, it is not unusual for a doctor to be registered in more than one State or Territory.

Under the scheme, a health practitioner will only have to register once. This single registration will be recognised throughout Australia, ending the current red tape situation.

Professional standards will continue to be developed by the individual professions to ensure that Australia continues to have a world class health system that is based on safety and quality.

### **When will the changes commence?**

The *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (Act B) received Royal Assent on 3 November 2009 and will take effect on 1 July 2010.

For more information on the NRAS, please visit the National Health Workforce Taskforce website at [www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp](http://www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp).

## New Zealand doctors will no longer be 'overseas trained'

### **Bit of background...**

Overseas trained doctors (OTD) (or International Medical Graduates (IMGs)) who were first recognised after 1 January 1997 are restricted from providing professional services that attract Medicare benefits for a period of 10 years. This restriction is enforced under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* and is commonly called the '10-year moratorium'. Exemptions to the restrictions can be granted if the OTD works in a district of workforce shortage.

Since the introduction of the legislation in 1996, New Zealand citizens and permanent resident doctors practising in Australia who were first registered by a State or Territory medical board after 1 January 1997 have been subject to the restriction.

The Health Insurance Amendment (New Zealand Overseas Trained Doctors) Bill 2009 was introduced in Parliament in October 2009 to rectify this situation.

### **What's in it for New Zealand doctors?**

The Bill will remove the 10-year moratorium restrictions on New Zealand citizen and permanent resident doctors trained at Australian Medical Council accredited New Zealand or Australian medical schools.

The change effectively removes these doctors from the classification of 'overseas trained doctor' and 'former overseas medical student' in the Health Insurance Act. This means these New Zealand doctors will no longer be bound to work in districts of workforce shortage in order to obtain a Medicare provider number, thus making it more attractive for these doctors to relocate to Australia.

### ***When will the change commence?***

The Bill is expected to pass through Parliament in the Autumn 2010 Parliamentary sitting periods. The changes will commence on 1 April 2010 or on Royal Assent, whichever is the later date.

For more information on the Health Insurance Amendment (New Zealand Overseas Trained Doctors) Bill, please visit the Bill's homepage at: [http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=;group=;holdingType=;id=;orderBy=priority,title;page=;query=Dataset%3AbillsCurBef%20SearchCategory\\_Phrase%3A%22bills%20and%20legislation%22%20Dataset\\_Phrase%3A%22billhome%22%20Portfolio\\_Phrase%3A%22health%20and%20ageing%22;querytype=;rec=4;resCount=.](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=;group=;holdingType=;id=;orderBy=priority,title;page=;query=Dataset%3AbillsCurBef%20SearchCategory_Phrase%3A%22bills%20and%20legislation%22%20Dataset_Phrase%3A%22billhome%22%20Portfolio_Phrase%3A%22health%20and%20ageing%22;querytype=;rec=4;resCount=)

## **Useful links**

[Visa options for doctors  
www.immi.gov.au/skilled/medical-practitioners/visa-options-doctors.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/medical-practitioners/visa-options-doctors.htm)

[DoctorConnect  
www.doctorconnect.gov.au](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au)



## **Flexible Work Arrangements now apply to the 457 visa**

The streamlined processing arrangements for the Temporary Business (Long Stay) Subclass 457 visa make it the preferred temporary visa pathway for doctors entering Australia.

The visa allows:

- employers and doctors to use a special online application form
- one sponsorship agreement to cover multiple doctors, nurses and other staff employed by the same employer
- employers to nominate doctors through a simplified nomination application rather than a full sponsorship application, once a sponsorship agreement has been approved.

The Subclass 457 visa will now be even more streamlined as it adopts flexible working arrangements that were previously available only under the Medical Practitioner Subclass 422 visa.

### ***When did the change commence and what's in it for doctors?***

From 14 September 2009, doctors holding a Subclass 457 visa may work for multiple unrelated employers or as an independent contractor while being sponsored by the one sponsor. These arrangements will simplify the pathway for sponsoring IMGs.

For further details about these changes, please visit the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website at: [www.immi.gov.au/skilled/medical-practitioners/visa-options-doctors.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/medical-practitioners/visa-options-doctors.htm).

## **Aster Medical Services - service with a difference**

We at Aster Medical Services believe it is important to be 'lifestyle agents' to our clients and not just recruitment and migration agents.

*What do we mean by this?* We want to introduce our clients to a lifestyle in Australia, rather than to just a job as a health professional. We understand that while a job is the primary consideration when deciding to relocate to Australia, doctors generally weigh up other important factors such as housing for the family, employment for their spouse, education for their children and childcare if required. At Aster Medical Services, we take a holistic approach to your relocation and will search information for you and even link you with valuable contacts at your destination. This is because we want to make sure you benefit from the life-changing decision you make to move to Australia. We want you and your family to call Australia home within the shortest possible time!

With this in mind, we will be featuring fabulous Australian destinations for the benefit of those doctors who are considering relocating to Australia.

## **Australian destination: Hunter Valley NSW**

In this edition, we are pleased to feature the Hunter Valley region in New South Wales.

The Hunter region is about 160 kilometres (two hour drive) north of Sydney, with a population of around 700,000. Population has grown steadily during the decade with people relocating to the region from other parts of Australia.

## **Hunter Valley - useful links**

[www.winecountry.com.au/](http://www.winecountry.com.au/)  
[www.huntertourism.com](http://www.huntertourism.com)  
[www.visitmaitland.com.au/p](http://www.visitmaitland.com.au/p)

[ages/maitland-hunter-valley/](#)

[www.hunterprospectus.com/Hunter\\_Snapshot/](http://www.hunterprospectus.com/Hunter_Snapshot/)



[GP Access](#)

[www.gpaccess.com.au/](http://www.gpaccess.com.au/)

Around 80% of the population live in the Lower Hunter, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Port Stephens and Maitland.

The Hunter Valley is one of Australia's most famous wine growing regions and is the oldest. Owing to this reputation, the region is an extremely popular holiday destination for the wine and food enthusiast, with some 80 world class wineries and over 100 restaurants serving the finest cuisine spread across the picturesque valley.

The Hunter Valley wine country is a very large area of 12,000 square kilometers and is made up of several regions. Cessnock is the southern gateway to the Hunter Valley wine region, while Pokolbin, west of Cessnock, is the major centre of the region and is surrounded by resorts and guesthouses. Barrington Tops National Park is approximately an hour and a half drive from Pokolbin and features pristine rainforests and hiking trails with native animals and birds.

Visit the links (at the left) to find out more information about the Hunter Valley region.

Email us at [services@astermedical.com.au](mailto:services@astermedical.com.au) to nominate an area!

**Contact Aster Medical, the medical recruitment and visa experts -  
the place to find quality medical candidates.**

Jenny Ingloff, Registered Migration Agent MARN 0601267

37 Carnegie Crescent, Narrabundah ACT 2604 Ph: 6260 8893 Mobile: 0488 349 608; 0450 961 249

Email enquiries: [services@astermedical.com.au](mailto:services@astermedical.com.au)

Website: [www.astermedical.com.au](http://www.astermedical.com.au)