



Your Lodgement Buddy

February 2020

Pretoria Processing Times

- Subclass 600 visitor - 35 Days
- Subclass 600 business - 20 days

Please note that we are trying to process all on hand applications to enable applicants to travel. We make no guarantees.

Advice Regarding the Novel Coronavirus

The Home Affairs website has published advice for clients who wish to enter Australia and who have passed through any part of mainland China since 1 February 2020. [Click here](#) for more guidance from the Department.

If you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, and you are **not** an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or an immediate family member (spouse, minor dependent or legal guardian) of an Australian citizen or permanent resident, **do not travel to Australia at this time.**

- If you attempt to travel to Australia, either directly or indirectly, your airline will not allow you to board the flight.
- If you do arrive in Australia and it is determined you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, your visa will be cancelled and you will be placed in an alternative place of detention for a quarantine period.
- **Please do not attempt to travel to Australia unless you are an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or an immediate family member (spouse, minor dependent or legal guardian), until these measures are lifted.**

Inside this issue:

Coronavirus **1**

Visa Fees **1**

Visa Scams **2**

Working together **3**

Information Sources **4**

Visa Fee Updates

AS OF 1 JANUARY 2020 THE FOLLOWING VISA APPLICATION CHARGES APPLY—

S/C 600—Business and Tourist visitor	AUD 145	ZAR 1,540
S/C 500 Student	AUD 620	approx. ZAR 6,590
S/C 400 Temporary Work (Short Stay	AUD 310	approx. ZAR 3,300
S/C 408 Temporary Activity—sporting	AUD 310	approx. ZAR 3,300

Please remember to factor in credit card surcharges and the forex conversion rates when paying on line using your credit card. Only S/C 600 applications can be paid in ZAR and only when lodging a paper application. All online applications are charged in AUD.

SPOTLIGHT — Visa Scams

Remember the old adage—"If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is". There are warning signs which you should think about before committing to a "once in a lifetime" opportunity in Australia.

Warning Signs

Offers for a 'guaranteed' Australian visa.

- Unsolicited offers via email, post, over the phone, on a website or even face-to-face.
- Claims of 'once in a lifetime opportunity', or your 'only' chance to travel or migrate to Australia.
- You are asked to pay the scammer upfront to 'register' your interest in getting a visa. The scammer asks you to pay them directly rather than paying the Government Department and claims that only they can pay the Department's fees.
- The scammer claims to have a special relationship with the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs).
- They tell you they need to keep your original documents.

Remember:

There is only one official Australian Government provider of visas - the Department of Home Affairs. Home Affairs' official website is: <http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au>.

- If you receive an email from the Australian High Commission in Pretoria the email address must end in "@dfat.gov.au".
- Home Affairs charges a one-off fee at the time you lodge your visa application. You can pay the fee directly to the Department and do not require an agent to pay this fee on your behalf.

- No one can influence the outcome of a visa application or the visa decision making process. Only authorised officers from Home Affairs can issue you with a visa and only if you meet all the visa requirements.

- Apart from the Department's official service delivery partner in the Africa region, VFS Global, the Department does not have any special relationships with outside agencies and does not give preferential treatment to anyone.

Protect Yourself

If you wish to use an Australian migration agent, check that they are registered on the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority website (<https://www.mara.gov.au/>) or if they are operating outside Australia to check with the relevant Business Registration office that they are a legitimate business.

- Never give or send anyone your original identity documents. Government departments may wish to view your original documents in person or may ask for certified photocopies but should never ask to keep your original documents.
- Never provide your personal, credit card or banking details in an email or over the phone—scammers will use your details to commit identity fraud or steal your money.

If you think you have provided your bank account details to a scammer, contact your bank or financial institution immediately.

Report

People with information about migration scams or illegal operators should contact the Department's Dob-In line. See: [Border Watch - Report something suspicious](#)

How we can work better together.

Welcome to 2020.

This is an opportune moment to remind agents and applicants about a few important issues.

- The 'auto response' is a response from us—please check the list of topics at the top of the reply. If your questions is listed we will not respond.
- Please do not ask us to expedite an application because someone has purchased a ticket—this is not a visa requirement and so does not warrant special treatment. If the application is within the post's processing time frame we will not respond.
- Only compassionate/compelling circumstances (such as documented medical emergencies or a death in the family) will be expedited. Please lodge online and organise medicals if the applicant will be entering a medical facility. This is a mandatory requirement for anyone planning to enter a medical facility, to ensure that vulnerable people are not inadvertently exposed to viruses or communicable diseases. Once done please forward the application details to us for action.
- We may consider expediting a business application in the interests of Australia .To facilitate this we will require evidence from the Australian business/contractor to support your request.
- Remember the 14 day requirement for biometrics to be provided for all applications. If you cannot make an appointment within the 14 days it is your responsibility to let us know. VFS Global send us weekly reports about available biometric appointments. There are available appointments within the two week period.
- Please use the checklists when assisting clients to upload required information. A Case officer is not required to request information that has not been loaded. They are able to make a decision based on what is on the application when they assess it.
- Home Affairs are not able to advise clients on appropriate visa subclasses to apply for. Due to liability issues with providing advice on partial information we do not make recommendations. We will not respond to a enquiry about appropriate subclasses to apply for.
- Please stress to all clients that they must keep their visa information safe. We no longer respond to clients requests regarding validity of their visa if the initial application was an online application. This information is available to clients through VEVO but the client will need to have access to a TRN number, visa evidence number or their visa grant number.
- Please do not ask us to look up a clients details if you are not registered to receive information on their behalf. If their previous visas were registered by another visa lodgement company on their company ImmiAccount we cannot pass on information. The Privacy Laws that apply to client information will only permit us to correspond with an authorised recipient.

Where can you find more information

There are a number of options available to search for specific information.

Websites—Listed below are links to various pages on the immigration website as well as to the Australian High Commission's website and that of our lodgement/biometrics agent. The three websites provide enough information to lodge a valid application.

Our Auto response—This is a response and does provide information and links in a more targeted manner. Please make use of this information as we will not duplicate this information in a response.

Facebook and Twitter—Pretoria post intends to make use of Twitter and Facebook to put out specific information that is of immediate interest. We intend to confirm Pretoria post's processing times on a regular basis. The times published on the immigration website are a global average and do not reflect the processing times relevant to the cases we process in South Africa. We will also use these pages to warn of upcoming changes.

TWITTER ACCOUNT—Gita Kamath, Australian High Commissioner @AHCSouthAfrica

FACEBOOK ACCOUNT—



Australian High Commission in South Africa ✓

Page

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CONTACT



Listed below are a number of web links, email addresses and contact numbers to assist locating commonly needed information or for general assistance.

[Department of Home Affairs](#)

Tempentry.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

[Australian High Commission, Pretoria](#)

Students.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

[VFS Global](#)

Immigration.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

[Panel Physicians](#)

Global Service Centre—+61 2 6196 0196

[ImmiAccount Technical Assistance](#)

[My Health Declaration](#)

[Visa finder](#)

Follow the Australian High Commission on Facebook and Twitter

[MARA Approved Migration Agents](#)

[Departmental Forms](#)