

Immigration Tourism Update

October 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 30 September 2026, more than 1.1 million New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA) requests and over 300,000 visitor visas were approved. During that same period, more than 1.2 million people visited New Zealand.
- Working holiday makers also make a valuable contribution to the tourism sector and between 1 January and 30 September 2026, a total of 30,177 Working Holiday Visas (WHVs) were approved with an approval rate of 98%. A total of 24,369 people arrived in New Zealand on a working holiday visa. This is down 7.8% compared to the same period last year (26,711 arrivals).
- 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 in November last year, total Chinese arrivals have increased by 47% compared with the previous corresponding period. 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).
- 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.

Visitor Visa peak

- We are currently in the visitor visa summer peak period, when application volumes typically increase ahead of the Christmas and New Year travel season. INZ has undertaken pre-summer communications encouraging travellers to apply early.
- Last summer, we received around 284,000 visitor visa applications between September and March which shows a high demand for travel to New Zealand during the peak holiday season.
- From 1 October 2026, applications for most visitor visas must be submitted through Enhanced Immigration Online, otherwise known as ADEPT, and paper application forms are no longer accepted for these visa categories.
- For Approved Destination Status (ADS) group applications should continue to be submitted through ADEPT. These applications will continue to be managed under existing ADS processing arrangements and agreed timeframes.

China

- 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 30 September 2026, a total of 137,349 visitor visas were approved, and 102,303 NZeTA requests were approved with an approval rate of 97% and 99.9% respectively. During that same period, a total of 240,176 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 nine 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 30 September 2026 we have received 133,449 requests from Chinese visitors since the trial began and 117,245 travellers have arrived.
- In the month of September 2026 alone, we approved 13,766 NZeTA requests from Chinese visitors. This is an increase of 37.8% from the previous month. Monthly stats can be found here: [Background on the NZeTA: Why it was introduced and key statistics :: Immigration New Zealand](#).
- INZ has 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

- India is a priority visitor market for New Zealand and INZ continues to strengthen our engagement with this important market.
- Between 1 January and 30 September 2026, 50,999 visitor visas were approved with an approval rate of 83% and 54,190 Indian visitors arrived in New Zealand.
- Visa processing times have improved year on year. The average processing time in first nine months of this year was 5 working days, compared with 6 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.
- 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 – 30 September 2026)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Arrivals	Average processing time (working days)
Total	344,550	346,290	306,705	36,941	301,764	5

Total Visitor Visa applications and Visitor Visa arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 30 September 2025)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Arrivals	Average processing time (working days)
Total	347,465	352,102	312,445	36,355	302,731	5

Visitor Visas applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and declined (01 January – 30 September 2026)

Nationality	Approved	Average processing time (working days)	Nationality	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
China	137,349	4	India	9,516	5
India	50,999	5	Pakistan	5,623	9
Philippines	22,818	5	China	4,458	4
Thailand	12,353	4	Nigeria	1,757	9
Indonesia	11,933	4	Fiji	1,719	6

Visitor Visas applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and declined (01 January – 30 September 2025)

Nationality	Approved	Average processing time (working days)	Nationality	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
China	154,765	5	India	10,204	6
India	46,337	6	China	5,356	5
Philippines	19,804	4	Pakistan	3,427	12
Thailand	12,291	4	Fiji	1,736	6
Fiji	11,313	6	Philippines	1,506	4

Working Holiday Visas

Total Working Holiday Visa applications and arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 30 September 2026)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Arrived (Submitted Offshore)	Not Arrived (Submitted Offshore)
Total	32,735	30,850	30,177	374	23,215	15,939

Total Working Holiday Visa applications and arrivals from all nationalities (01 January – 30 September 2025)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Arrived (Submitted Offshore)	Not Arrived (Submitted Offshore)
Total	34,783	33,856	33,180	399	25,082	3,047

Working Holiday Visa applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and arrived (01 January – 30 September 2026)

Nationality	Approved	Nationality	Arrived (Submitted Offshore)	Nationality	Not Arrived (Submitted Offshore)
Great Britain	5,498	France	4,138	France	2,430
France	4,816	Great Britain	3,356	Great Britain	2,057
Germany	3,420	Germany	2,735	Germany	1,646
Japan	3,041	Japan	2,474	Japan	1,421
United States of America	1,848	United States of America	1,396	United States of America	1,000

Working Holiday Visa applications – Top 5 nationalities approved and arrived (01 January – 30 September 2025)

Nationality	Approved	Nationality	Arrived (Submitted Offshore)	Nationality	Not Arrived (Submitted Offshore)
Great Britain	6,047	France	4,657	United States of America	394
France	5,515	Great Britain	3,705	Japan	343
Germany	4,031	Germany	3,120	France	330
Japan	2,962	Japan	2,621	Spain	310
United States of America	2,146	United States of America	1,482	Great Britain	282

China

China Visitor Visas and NZeTA (01 January – 30 September 2026)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	139,330	142,260	137,349	97%	142,804
General Visitor Visa	79,919	82,101	77,713	95%	102,444
Business Visitor Visa	30,102	30,487	30,269	99%	4,305
Group Visitor Visas	25,638	25,889	25,862	100%	33,034
Other	3,671	3,783	3,505	93%	3,021
NZeTA	102,534	102,374	102,303	99.9%	93,372
Total	241,864	244,634	239,652	97%	236,176

China Visitor Visas (01 January – 30 September 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	156,433	160,622	154,765	96%	154,699
General Visitor Visa	86,731	90,400	85,097	94%	109,769
Business Visitor Visa	38,479	38,736	38,415	99%	5,026
Group Visitor Visas	28,293	28,524	28,480	100%	37,251
Other	2,930	2,962	2,773	94%	2,653
Total	156,433	160,622	154,765	97%	154,699

India

India Visitor Visas (01 January – 30 September 2026)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	62,108	61,338	50,999	83%	54,190
General Visitor Visa	49,226	49,344	40,303	82%	44,860
Business Visitor Visa	3,152	3,118	2,860	92%	1,768
Group Visitor Visas	2,474	2,382	2,267	95%	2,387
Other	7,256	6,494	5,569	86%	5,175
Total	62,108	61,338	50,999	88%	54,190

India Visitor Visas (01 January – 30 September 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals
All Visitor Visas	56,782	57,476	46,337	81%	51,201
General Visitor Visa	46,260	47,781	37,829	79%	43,341
Business Visitor Visa	3,020	3,022	2,802	93%	1,762
Group Visitor Visas	984	770	673	87%	809
Other	6,518	5,903	5,033	85%	5,289
Total	56,782	54,476	46,337	85%	51,201