

Frequently asked questions - 408 Pandemic Event visa discontinuation

What is happening to the Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa?

- The Pandemic Event visa will be closed out – in a staged manner. From 2 September 2023, the Pandemic Event visa will only be open to applications from existing Pandemic Event visa holders (with an A\$405 visa application charge). The visa will close to all applicants on 1 February 2024.
- Pandemic Event visas will expire gradually over the next 12 months, allowing visa holders and employers to plan for the departure of Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme workers on the Pandemic Event visa and recruit new workers. Closure of the Pandemic Event visa will enable the PALM scheme to return to its original intent to support circular labour mobility.
- From 2 September 2023, only Pandemic Event visa holders with 28 days or less validity on their Pandemic Event visa are eligible to apply for a further visa. Visa holders must still have a job or job offer to make a further application.
- For more information, visit the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).

I am a PALM scheme employer. What does the Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa closure mean for my business?

- If you are an employer, you should plan for the departure of PALM scheme workers who currently hold a [Temporary Activity visa \(subclass 408\) Australian Government endorsed events \(COVID-19 Pandemic event\)](#) (the Pandemic Event visa).
- We recommend you find out what your workers' plans are and support workers to return home and reconnect with their family and community before their visa expires. After their mandatory offshore period, you can support these workers to apply for a Temporary Work (International Relations) visa - PALM stream (subclass 403) to return to work in the PALM scheme. Alternatively, you can recruit new PALM scheme workers from the work-ready pool of more than 37,000 pre-screened applicants.
- We note that it typically takes a minimum of 8 weeks for workers to arrive in Australia following the submission of an 'approval ready' recruitment plan - we encourage you to factor this into your planning.

I am a PALM scheme worker with a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa which expires before February 2024. What does this mean for me?

- If your Pandemic Event visa expires before February 2024 and you would like to extend your visa, please discuss this with your employer well before February 2024. A visa application charge (A\$405) applies from 2 September 2023.

I am a PALM scheme worker with a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa which expires before 1 February 2024.

What do I need to do to extend this visa?

- If your Pandemic Event visa expires before 1 February 2024, you will be eligible to apply for a 6-month extension before visa expiry. You will need your employer to support you to continue to stay and participate in the program. Your employer may be able to help you with your application. A visa application charge (A\$405) applies from 2 September 2023.
- If your Pandemic Event visa expires after February 2024, you will not be eligible to make a further application for another Pandemic Event visa.

I am a PALM scheme worker with a visa which expires before 1 February 2024. What happens if I do not apply for an extension?

- If you do not apply for an extension of your Pandemic Event visa, it will expire on the original date of expiry. You will have to return home once your visa expires. After your mandatory offshore period, you may be eligible to apply for a Temporary Work (International Relations) visa - PALM stream (subclass 403) to return to work in the PALM scheme.

I am a PALM scheme worker on a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa. Can I apply for a PALM visa (subclass 403) instead?

- Workers holding a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) or another non-PALM visa must return home to apply for a Temporary Work (International Relations) - PALM stream (subclass 403) visa.

I am a PALM scheme worker but I do not hold a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa. Can I still apply for that visa?

- From 2 September 2023, the Pandemic Event visa will only be open to applications from existing Pandemic Event visa holders (with an A\$405 visa application charge).
- All other visa holders will be ineligible to apply for the Pandemic Event visa from 2 September 2023.

I am a PALM scheme worker on the Temporary Work (International Relations) visa - PALM stream (subclass 403) visa. How do the changes to the Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa affect me?

- The changes to the Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa do not affect you if you do not have that visa.