

Frequently asked questions - 408 Pandemic Event visa discontinuation

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

- The [Temporary Activity visa \(subclass 408\) Australian Government endorsed events \(COVID-19 Pandemic event\)](#) (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 a A\$405 visa application charge. A subsequent temporary application charge (STAC) of A\$700 will also be applied where the applicant is applying for an additional onshore visa and has already had an onshore visa granted). 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 visa are eligible to apply for a further Pandemic Event visa. Visa holders must still have a job or job offer to make a further application.
- For more information, please visit the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).

PALM scheme employers

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 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 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 have workers on Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visas that expire in early February. Can they extend their visas?

- Yes. As your workers hold a visa that is due to expire within 28 days of 1 February 2024, they can apply for a 6-month extension.
- They must lodge their application before 1 February 2024 and pay a visa application charge of \$A405. As long as the application is lodged before 1 February 2024, it will be processed.

I have workers on Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visas that expire in mid-March. Can they extend their visas?

- No. Pandemic Event visa holders can only apply for an extension if they have 28 days or less remaining on their visas as of 1 February 2024. As more than 28 days would be remaining on your workers' visas, they are ineligible to apply for an extension.

One of my PALM scheme workers can only book a flight a week after their visa expires. What should they do?

- Employers should be aware when their workers' visas expire and help their workers depart Australia before visa expiry.
- If a worker is at risk of overstaying their visa, employers are encouraged to support their workers to contact the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible at www.homeaffairs.gov.au/csrs or phone 131 881 (Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm).

PALM scheme workers

What do I need to do to extend this visa?

- If your Pandemic Event visa is due to expire within 28 days of 1 February 2024, you are eligible to apply for a 6-month extension. You will need your employer to support you to continue to stay and participate in the scheme. Your employer may be able to help you with your application. A visa application charge (\$A405) applies from 2 September 2023.
- If your Pandemic Event visa expires after 1 February 2024, you will not be able to apply for another Pandemic Event visa.

My Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa expires before 1 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 because you will need your employer to support you to continue to stay and participate in the scheme.
- 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.
- A visa application charge (A\$405) applies from 2 September 2023. You may need to pay a subsequent temporary application charge (STAC) of A\$700 if you are applying for an additional onshore visa and you have previously had an onshore visa granted.

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

- No. If you hold a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) or another non-PALM visa, you must return home before you can apply for a Temporary Work (International Relations) - PALM stream (subclass 403) visa.

I do not hold a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa. Can I still apply for that visa?

- No. From 2 September 2023, the Pandemic Event visa will only be open to applications from existing Pandemic Event visa holders.
- All other visa holders will be ineligible to apply for the Pandemic Event visa from 2 September 2023.

I am 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 hold that visa.

I have a Pandemic Event (subclass 408) visa, but I have already returned home. How do I get this visa ended as soon as possible so I can access my superannuation?

- If you hold a temporary visa with more than 6 months' validity, you may ask that your visa is cancelled through [ImmiAccount](https://immiaccount.gov.au). Only you as the visa holder or an authorised agent may make a request.
- If you are leaving Australia permanently, you may be eligible to receive your superannuation entitlements as a departing Australia superannuation payment (DASP). Information on how to apply for a DASP is on the Australian Taxation Office website: [Returning to your home country | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](https://ato.gov.au/Returning-to-your-home-country).