

Immigration Policy

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Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand has a long history of migration since the first arrival of East Polynesians. We have little influence on the reasons for immigration, be they for freedom, opportunity, prosperity, or to escape oppression, poverty, or other limitations.

The Green Party believes that we need a progressive and humane immigration system in which these hopes and aspirations can thrive, while acknowledging the right to live in Aotearoa New Zealand derives from Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We encourage the reader to also consult our [Human Rights](#) and [Population](#) policies.

Definitions

Asylum seeker: An informal refugee who has lodged a claim for refugee or protection status upon arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand and is awaiting assessment.

People displaced by climate change: Those who are forced to leave their country of origin by circumstances arising out of the effects of climate change.

Quota refugees: Refugees who are identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as needing resettlement.

Refugee: The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a "refugee" as a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...". Essentially, a refugee is a person who is forced to flee their country of origin due to social or political injustice. Refugees may arrive at a border as asylum seekers or may be granted asylum prior to arrival by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Refugee Convention: the key United Nations legal document that defines the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of displaced people, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them. Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory to the Refugee Convention.

Refugee family reunification: The granting of permission to immigrate to close family members of refugees.

Tangata Tiriti: Generic term to describe people whose rights to live in Aotearoa New Zealand derive from Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the arrangements that the Crown has established under a common rule of law, as well as the equity provisions of Article 3 of Te Tiriti.

Temporary migrants: Those who have a temporary right to work or study in Aotearoa New Zealand, including international students, skilled workers, working holidaymakers, seasonal agricultural workers, or family members of other migrants.

Voluntary immigrants: Immigrants who choose to relocate to Aotearoa New Zealand under the skilled migrant, investor, entrepreneur, employee of relocating business, family reunion, and transnational marriage, civil union, or de facto domestic

partnership categories.

Vision

The Green Party envisions an Aotearoa New Zealand which offers an immigration system that:

- Is humane, practical, sustainable, and sensitive to the requirements and concerns of all migrants as well as tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti.
- Provides a positive resettlement experience for immigrants in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Encourages Aotearoa New Zealand to act as a responsible member of the international community.
- Provides open, accountable and responsive immigration processes.

Key Principles

The Green Party recognises the positive contributions migrants make to the social, cultural and economic life of Aotearoa New Zealand, and our immigration policy is guided by the following principles:

1. All migrants must be treated with dignity, compassion and respect in accordance with international conventions on human rights.
2. All migrants should be welcomed and included in Aotearoa New Zealand society, such that they feel a sense of belonging.
3. The importance of tolerance, acceptance and understanding in a diverse and multicultural society will be promoted.
4. Māori, as tangata whenua, have a partnership role in determining Aotearoa New Zealand's immigration policy.
5. Local communities will be involved in policy decision-making and implementation.
6. Immigration services should be available throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to encourage settlement outside of the main centres and share the benefits of immigration to all regions.
7. The effects of overall population growth on the environment, the economy and infrastructure need to be actively managed and planned for.

Specific Policy Points

1. Assisting Refugees

Aotearoa New Zealand takes seriously its humanitarian responsibilities to assist refugees and people seeking asylum.

As a member of the international community, the Green Party believes that Aotearoa New Zealand should remain firm in our commitment towards international refugees.

A. Human Rights and Refugees

In order to meet our humanitarian obligations, the Green Party will:

1. Increase our refugee quota and the resources required to provide adequate refugee services.
2. Ensure that the Immigration and Protection Tribunal has sufficient resources to:
 - a. Improve its capacity to deal with all refugee cases, so that refugees are not turned away unnecessarily and without just and reasonable cause; and

- b. Enable refugees to have greater access to natural justice and rights of appeal.
3. Resource the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner to carry out its functions in relation to refugees.
4. Support local councils to implement cross-cultural education, interaction and understanding across Aotearoa New Zealand.

B. Refugee Resettlement Services

Refugees require comprehensive assistance upon arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Green Party will:

1. Fund refugee resettlement programmes, such as provided by the Red Cross, to enable a high standard of service.
2. Continue the priority consideration for housing given to refugees by Housing New Zealand.
3. Ensure crucial social services are accessible to all refugees across the country.
4. Ensure the one-off resettlement grant administered for refugees by Work and Income provides meaningful assistance in setting up a new home.
5. Encourage collaboration between interested tangata whenua and refugee resettlement programmes to assist with resettlement.
6. Increase funding of community centres throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to cater for the needs of refugee communities.
7. Ensure the involvement of local Multicultural Councils in each region in aiding the resettlement of refugees.

C. Refugees and Family Reunification

Many refugee families have been separated due to social destabilisation caused by civil wars or by oppressive regimes. Hence, many refugees arrive in Aotearoa without spouses, children, parents, or other close relatives. The Green Party will:

1. Change the system for refugee family reunification from a lottery to one that is compassionate, fair, transparent, and certain, with clearly published priorities and standards of acceptance.
2. Expand the powers of the Immigration and Protection Tribunal to include consideration of family reunification cases.

D. Asylum Seekers

Some people arrive in Aotearoa New Zealand without the required documents or visas. Current practice and funding in regard to asylum-seekers is inadequate.

The Green Party will:

1. Protect the right for asylum seekers to claim asylum in Aotearoa New Zealand.
2. Require that asylum seekers be treated with fairness, dignity and compassion, and that their eligibility be decided on a case-by-case basis according to international law.
3. Commit to comprehensive resettlement support for asylum seekers, the same as that provided to refugees brought in under the refugee quota. Support should begin when the asylum seekers make their initial claim.
4. Set a target of three months for clearance of the adjudication of cases of those claiming refugee status.
5. Make the process for dealing with asylum-seekers more transparent.
6. Ensure that no asylum seekers are returned to a country where they may face torture or risks to their life, consistent with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the Convention Against Torture.
7. To the greatest extent possible, ensure the safety and security of asylum

- seeker's families that remain abroad when researching/considering claims.
8. Ensure safety and security for asylum seekers and their families in Aotearoa New Zealand during their hearings.

2. Immigration Due to Climate Change

Increasingly people are being forced to leave their country of origin due to the impacts of climate change. The Green Party will:

1. Ensure our immigration legislation makes provision for people displaced by climate change based on need.
2. Accept Aotearoa New Zealand's share of people from around the world with special regard to Pacific Island countries (see our [Population Policy](#)).
3. Provide support for climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries (see our [Climate Change Policy](#)).

3. Voluntary Immigration

People from other countries desire to live in Aotearoa New Zealand for many reasons. In order to ensure that the process of selecting voluntary immigrants is fair, reasonable and flexible, and to improve the process of acculturation of voluntary immigrants, the Green Party will:

1. Ensure that our policies on voluntary migration are impartial in regard to applicants' countries of origin, ethnicities, cultures, age, gender, sexual orientation, and all other prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in Section 21 of the Human Rights Act 1993.
2. Give priority to skills needed to build a low-carbon economy that lifts living standards.
3. Closely monitor the labour market impact of skilled migrant workers, and ensure effective policy responses to any identified concerns.
4. Tighten up the process around the investor visa category and ensure better oversight of business development promises from visa candidates. We will do this by:
 - a. Using a three-year provisional visa for investor migrants;
 - b. Prioritising investment into productive areas of the economy, rather than property investment;
 - c. Undertaking annual audits of investor businesses via extended case management, paid for by the business being audited; and
 - d. Ensuring that the audits include checks for viability, sustainability, and desirability, and human rights compliance, and are undertaken by immigration officials and other specialists as necessary.

4. General Family Reunification

The Green Party recognises that immigrants face challenges when separated from their families in their countries of origin, and family reunification should be a policy priority where possible. Trans-national marriages, civil unions, and de-facto partnership relationships require systems to facilitate family stability, whilst preventing victimisation through fraud and exploitation. In order to facilitate family reunification, the Green Party will:

1. Issue overseas partners of New Zealanders with provisional residency status so that the overseas partners can have the advantages of Aotearoa New Zealand residency while Immigration New Zealand is processing their application.
2. Make it easier for parents and immediate family members (including children) of immigrants to apply for residency in Aotearoa New Zealand, including relaxing

health assessments to enable disabled people to be reunited with family.

5. Temporary Migrants

Temporary migrant workers should be paid fair wages by Aotearoa New Zealand standards and have the benefit of Aotearoa New Zealand's social and health services. They should have all the employment relationship protection provided by the Employment Relations Act and other relevant legislation.

The Green Party will:

1. Grant temporary migrant workers full labour rights in Aotearoa New Zealand, including the right to switch employers to seek more equitable wages or better working conditions.
2. Require employers to pay temporary workers no less than local workers, and to provide them with the same working conditions as local workers.
3. Require and resource Immigration New Zealand to frequently monitor worksites, including fishing vessels, where migrants holding temporary work permits are employed.
4. Create opportunities for temporary workers who possess skills required for the needs of local communities and in various industries to apply for residency status in Aotearoa New Zealand.

6. Language Tuition for Immigrants

Language tuition for all immigrants should be affordable and accessible with a range of different options based on need, financial ability and skill levels.

The Green Party will:

1. Make adult English (ESOL) courses available outside Auckland and the other main centres.
2. Fund the Volunteer ESOL Home Tutor scheme sufficiently to attract and train volunteers for those in need of tutoring.
3. Provide adequate state assistance for all forms of ESOL tuition for immigrants.
4. Work towards making Aotearoa New Zealand's other official languages – Te Reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language – available to immigrants.
5. Adequately resource translation services across Aotearoa New Zealand and online to ensure that lack of language skills does not prevent immigrants from accessing public services.
6. Ensure that the Aotearoa New Zealand education system is equipped to cater for the education needs of new immigrants such that they:
 - a. Benefit to the fullest extent possible from the education system;
 - b. Are valued contributors to society; and
 - c. Develop adequate English language skills that will enhance their employment and social opportunities.

7. Te Tiriti Education and Introduction to Local Mana Whenua

Aotearoa New Zealand's history and Te Tiriti o Waitangi are unique. Te Tiriti is central to government policies and procedures. To assist immigrants to become active social and political citizens we should encourage an understanding of our nation's history and political foundations.

The Green Party will:

1. Ensure that iwi and hapū have the opportunity for input into Te Tiriti induction for new immigrants, and are adequately resourced by Government to do this.
2. Make learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi compulsory as part of the induction of

all new immigrants.

3. Ensure that Te Tiriti induction is delivered at appropriate times to maximise understanding, rather than just immediately upon arrival.

8. Positive Resettlement Experiences

The Green Party will:

1. Direct resources into providing all new immigrants of all categories with an orientation programme, including information about Aotearoa New Zealand civics, culture and environment.
2. Work towards a culture of acceptance in Aotearoa New Zealand so that new immigrants are able to participate in all aspects of society.
3. Support immigrants with disabilities to participate in society to the fullest extent possible, for example by ensuring access to information, services, education and employment (see our [Disability Policy](#)).

9. Employment

Immigrants often find themselves victims of subtle forms of job discrimination, and many refugees have problems finding suitable employment.

The Green Party will:

1. Inform all migrants who are eligible to work in Aotearoa New Zealand of their employment rights, their employer's obligations, and basic support services that are available to them if they have an employment-related issue or dispute.
2. Fund specialist employment services to find appropriate work for refugees and immigrants living in Aotearoa New Zealand.
3. Raise awareness amongst employers about the benefits of employing immigrants and refugees living in Aotearoa New Zealand.
4. Put employment guidelines in place to ensure that job applicants who are immigrants or refugees are not discriminated against.
5. Ensure that relevant Government agencies are sufficiently resourced and empowered to investigate cases of employers abusing or exploiting immigrant workers.

10. Adaptation Support for Immigrant Professionals

Aotearoa New Zealand often experiences skill shortages in the regulated professions, and immigrant professionals can face considerable difficulty gaining registration. Rigorous qualification is essential in many professional fields and Aotearoa New Zealand would benefit if we were better able to support those qualified and skilled immigrants to reach the necessary language and professional standards to practice.

The Green Party aims to increase the number of registered skilled immigrants by:

1. Providing funding and incentives to professional bodies to develop pathways to registration for skilled immigrants, such as work-place supervision/probation for those with internationally recognised qualifications. Professional bodies should use evidence-based criteria to assess the acceptability of overseas qualifications, and expand the use of mutual recognition arrangements to offer skilled immigrants with job opportunities that utilise their qualifications.
2. Increasing the availability of bridging courses for skilled immigrants in any regulated profession on the long-term skill shortage list.
3. Providing student loans for skilled migrants undertaking bridging courses for entry to any regulated profession on the long-term skill shortage list.
4. Providing a visa pathway for workplace supervision/probation of those with

- internationally recognised qualifications as a route to registration and residence.
5. Providing pre-employment and ongoing on-the-job language skills support for immigrants in regulated professions.
 6. Bonding immigrants for five years and requiring repayment of student loans where financial support has been provided to gain registration.

11. Immigration Consultancy Industry

The Green Party will:

1. Ensure all licensed advisers are regulated under Aotearoa New Zealand law, for instance by requiring them to be Australian or New Zealand citizens, or New Zealand permanent residents.
2. Extend regulation of the immigration advice industry so that all those providing advice - including education advice - fall within the regulatory framework.
3. Require the Immigration Advisers Authority to regulate and monitor overseas based immigration advisers to protect prospective immigrants from fraud and misinformation.

12. Immigration New Zealand Administration

Submitting an application to Immigration New Zealand is often the first experience a prospective immigrant will have with Aotearoa New Zealand and the government. Therefore, to ensure Aotearoa New Zealand's international reputation is maintained, Immigration New Zealand must operate in a way that is consistent and fair.

The Green Party will:

1. Ensure that Immigration New Zealand is adequately funded and administered to achieve a transparent, consistent and expeditious application process.
2. Initiate a negotiation with tangata whenua to determine how Māori want to work with the Crown on immigration decisions and reviews as a Te Tiriti based process.
3. Ensure that each application is processed in accordance with the relevant rules, policies and admissions targets or quotas in effect when that application was submitted.
4. Require applications from people with disabilities to be assessed on the evidence of what they can contribute in skills, rather than on a perception of the cost to health services that they may or may not access.
5. Ensure Immigration New Zealand refunds fees and levies to anyone who had an expression of interest in any pool, which would have been invited to apply under previous instructions, but cannot now be selected due to a change in instructions.
6. Require Immigration New Zealand to publish time-frames for each type of application and to allow applicants to request an update if these time-frames are exceeded.
7. Ensure that immigrant and refugee applicants do not have crucial information relating to their claim withheld from them on the basis that it is deemed to be "classified".
8. Oppose granting immigration officers increased search and detention powers in the absence of evidence that restrictions imposed on their current powers unduly affect their ability to perform their role.

13. Immigration Policy Review

The Green Party will take an evidence-based approach to regularly reviewing the government's immigration policy, and its implementation, to ensure it is meeting the

needs of immigrants, tangata whenua, and communities. In doing so, specific regard will be given to our [Population](#) Policy.