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Dear Client,

As many of you may have been aware, in late 2008 the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship announced that there would be changes in the processing of visa applications. We have now received some clarity from DIAC on how these changes are to be implemented.

As of 1 January 2009, DIAC is radically altering the way it prioritises the processing of all visa applications, including those applications already lodged.

Previously, DIAC had been working through applications in chronological order. This is now changed to a priority system.

The new priority system will work as follows, with applications being processed in the following order:

1. Applications with a successful State & Territory Nomination (until all applications have been allocated); and then
2. Applications where the nominated occupation is on the [Critical Skills List](#) (until all applications have been allocated); then
3. Applications where the nominated occupation is on the [Migration Occupations in Demand List](#) (until all applications have been allocated); then
4. All other remaining applications

DAIC hopes to have case officers appointed to all the category 1 applicants by 13 February 2009. Only then will DAIC start to appoint case officers to the category 2 applicants.

As this is a new system, it will take some time to see exactly how long visa processing will now take for all visas lodged to date. At the end of 2008, we were receiving visa grants for applications submitted approximately 9 to 12 months prior. I think it is fair to say that while the changes will alter the order in which visas are processed, there will be further delays which could extend beyond 12 months.

However, it is clear that anyone with a State Sponsorship will get immediate priority.

If you feel that you would like to dramatically speed up the processing of your visa application, please contact us so that we can discuss the options and cost of acquiring a State Sponsorship for you and converting your application from a subclass 175 application to a subclass 176 application. The only requirement of a State Sponsorship, is that you agree to live in the sponsoring state for the first 2 years, otherwise you will have all the benefits of the subclass 175.

Please also remember that your medicals and police clearances are only valid for 12 months, and that if for whatever reason the processing of your visa application extends in excess of 12 months, you need to contact us so that we can discuss your options for redoing your medicals and police clearances.

If you want any more information on the new visa processing system or you have any other questions please feel free to contact us.

Cheers

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