



Immigration INSIGHT

Official newsletter of the
Papua New Guinea Immigration & Citizenship Authority



Acting Deputy Chief Migration Officers



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Minister for Immigration and Border Security Hon. Westly Nukundj, MP (right) and Chief Migration Officer Mr. Stanis Hulahau (left).

Visa and Work Permit to merge

The Minister for Immigration and Border Security Hon. Westly Nukundj, MP has challenged the Immigration and Citizenship Authority (ICA) to implement the merger of Visa and Work Permit functions within two months after the respective legislations were approved in Parliament on the 22 of April, 2021.

"I am grateful to the Members of Parliament who supported and we passed the amended legislations on the Immigration and Citizenship Authority Act and the Employment of Non-Citizen's Act," says Minister Nukundj.

"The amendments made to this two piece of legislation now enables the transfer of Work Permit from DLIR to become a separate Division within ICA and overtime its systems and regulations will be integrated and streamlined with the Visa systems."

The proposal to merge Work Permit and Visa was part of the Alotau Accord in 2007 but progress has been slow since.

"But now the Marape Government has delivered on this reform which will not only provide much needed relief and removal of red tape for the legitimate business community but significantly improve our border security, compliance and enforcement capability," Mr Nukundj says.

The Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR) will continue to administer the legal framework in regard to the classification of occupations and reserved positions, with the Secretary for Labour to join the ICA Advisory Board.

Chief Migration Officer Mr Stanis Hulahau said office space has been identified and staff from both Agencies will work to fix administrative processes to facilitate the physical transfer within two month.

"This is a big achievement for me as the new CMO and I'd like to congratulate the Technical Working Group, the management team of ICA and DLIR, the Advisors and everyone who have contributed to the passage of the two bills that now enables us to merge the two functions," says Mr Hulahau.

Mr Hulahau said the ease of doing business in the country would significantly improve and non-citizens who secure a job in PNG can apply for a work and entry permit in just one application.

"This one-stop shop initiative cuts through many red tapes and we would look at introducing streamlined electronic processes to cut down on agents who charge significant amounts on our customers.



Mr. Stanis Hulahau
Chief Migration Officer

I am pleased to address you as the 3rd permanent Chief Migration Officer. My appointment by the NEC was gazetted on the 28 of January 2021 for the next four years.

Everything changes and so are we. From observing pandemic rules to 'new normal' workplace arrangements, changes are inevitable and sometimes rewarding too. We have seen changes in the senior management positions early this year and currently we are implementing the 392 organizational structure with the help of a professional recruitment firm, KPMG. We engage KPMG as an external partner to ensure we hire the best talent to fill both internal and external advertised positions. This will also avoid any claims of bias and favouritism in our recruitment drive.

I am pleased with the progress we have made in the last three months when I took office. Our performance has improved and I am particularly pleased with the tremendous efforts made by the officers in the Monitoring and Evaluation branch, Legal branch and the Senior Management Team for the outstanding task in amending the Immigration and Citizenship Service Authority Act and the Employment of Non-Citizen's Act. Their tireless efforts and the passage of the two amended Bills in Parliament this month now enables us to commence discussions administratively to merge Work Permit from the Department of Labour with our Visa system.

While our confidence is growing I am mindful of the increasing Covid-19 positive cases reported daily. Our counter officers and those working at the entry points are at greater risk of catching the virus and I would support initiatives that would allow us to deal with our clients remotely but more effectively.

With that, I am pleased to introduce our first issue of ICA monthly newsletter, *Immigration Insight*, and I encourage you to find time to read it. I will provide updates on ICA's achievements and activities through this medium for our staff and clients information.

Happy Reading

Stanis Hulahau takes office as Chief Migration Officer

A month into his new post as the Chief Migration Officer, Stanis Hulahau said his immediate concern is to bring back respect for the administrative processes and procedures in Immigration and Citizenship Authority (ICA), something senior staff members claimed that was lacking in the last year.

"I am aware of the issues and challenges that needs to be corrected administratively and my first step is to mend the holes that were created in the system so all of us must respect and learn to follow it," Mr Hulahau said when addressing the management team.

Taking office on the 27 January 2021, the new CMO wasted no time bringing forward a minor restructure and ordered cessation of over 20 staff who were engaged as casuals and interns who have not gone through the correct Public Service recruitment process.

"We have an increase of 22 new casuals in 2020 which was not only against the Department of Personnel Management advice but their engagements have breached Public Service General Order 3 on Selection and Appointment and ICA human resource policies and procedures.



MR. STANIS HULAHAU

Besides, the new CMO is considering reintroducing the Immigration Task Force to clamp down on unlawful non-citizens. The Task force team will continue operations around the country but under a new structure and reporting framework – a structure drastically different from other version operating last year.

Mr Hulahau is the 3rd permanent CMO since the establishment of the Authority in 2010. He was the Director, Office of the Security Coordination and Assessment at the Prime Minister's Department and later was appointed in 2018 as Deputy Chief Migration Officer Borders, Enforcement and Compliance Division.



New members of the Advisory Board (above) during the first Board meeting. Note. Mr Manning is not available in the photo.

New Advisory Board Members appointed

The CMO Mr Stanis Hulahau has congratulated new and existing members of the Immigration and Citizenship Service Authority Advisory Board and is pleased to announce the names of the new members.

The new Advisory Board members were appointed by the National Executive Council (NEC) and were sworn in at the Lamana Hotel in Port Moresby.

“I am pleased that the current ICA Advisory Board consists of individuals who have outstanding track record in their respective field of duties and I am certain they will provide strong leadership in strategic policy and advice to myself as Chief Migration Officer and the Minister for Immigration and Border Security,” said Mr Hulahau.

The board consist of five ex officio members by virtue of their appointment to the office they hold and four non-ex officio members who are appointed (2 by the Minister and other 2 representing the community, NGOs and the Business community).

The newly appointed Advisory Board members are:

1. Mr. David Manning - Commissioner of Police (ex-officio)
2. Mr. Elias Wohengu - Acting Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade (ex-officio) Deputy Chairman
3. Dr. Eric Kwa - Secretary, Department of Justice & Attorney General (ex-officio) Chairman
4. Mr. Stanis Hulahau - Chief Migration Officer (ex-officio)
5. Mr. Tess Wingi - Department of Prime Minister & NEC Nominee (ex-officio)

6. Mr. Ian Tarutia, OBE - Member representing PNG Chamber of Commerce & Industry (non-ex officio)
7. Mr. Thomas Jim Nori - Minister's Nominee (non-ex officio)
8. Mr. James Christopher Gissau - Minister's Nominee (non ex-officio)
9. Reverend Mwaosa Tutumla - Member representing NGO's and the Community (non-ex officio)

Mr Hulahau said the Advisory Board is now fully constituted and recognised by the NEC.

The Advisory Board provides strategic policy advice to the CMO and the Minister on key priority areas. The Board meets on a quarterly basis every year.

Mr Hulahau thanked former members of the Board who have contributed and supported the development and progress of ICA during their term.



Spot check operations starts as in-country visa renewal options made available to non-citizens

The Compliance and Enforcement Division has commenced its routine Spot check operations in Port Moresby and in Central province starting last month as renewed calls being made to non-citizens whose visa is nearing expiration or have expired to immediately visit ICA to renew their visas.

ICA reported an increasing number of non-citizens who are unable to depart the country to renew their visas due to Covid-19

restrictions on international flights. As a result, the Authority has introduced the in-country visa renewal incentive to allow foreigners to renew their visa whilst still in PNG.

Short term visa holders including all Tourists visa class and type, Business single entry, Restricted Employment Visa, Journalists and Reporters and Easy Visitor Permit holders whose visa nears expiration or have expired must pay the applicable



ICA Compliance Officer Nicholas Tokeimota checks the entry permit of foreign employees of a logging company in Abau district.
Photo by: Nigel Gerson/ICA



Migration Service Fee (MSF) to extend the visa. This will also include the late lodgement and over stayer fee.

CMO Mr Hulahau says the in-country visa extension incentive allows non-citizens to voluntarily visit ICA to renew visas instead of waiting for the Compliance officers to get them.

A key requirement under the Migration Regulation 1979 requires non-citizens to leave the country and reapply for a visa to come back. However, with the pandemic situation, ICA is providing pathways to assist non-citizens who cannot return to their country.

Since the introduction of this incentive, ICA realised that a number of companies in the mining and extractive industries are abusing it by reapplying for short term business visas and Restricted Employment Visas for twice or more.

"We are seeing companies taking advantage of this act of kindness and are abusing by applying for 3 or 4 extension.

"If your country allows entry and planes are flying to and from your country, you will not be allowed extension under this incentive. You have to depart and reapply to come back," says Mr Hulahau.

While this in-country visa extension incentive is available, Mr Hulahau says ICA will also run its Spot Check operations targeting foreign owned businesses and enterprises in the country to make sure unlawful non-citizens must pay up the penalty fee and the required MSF if they meet the requirement for in-country visa renewal.



Non-citizens in a logging camp in Abau district listens to Police and Immigration Officers. Photo by: Nigel Gerson/ICA

A week ago (April 20th-23rd) ICA led a joint agency operations with PNG Customs and Police targeting several logging camps and business houses in Rigo and Abau districts in Central province.

The team identified a significant number of non-citizens with discrepancies in their travel documents and charged them under the Migration Act.

Similar operations will be conducted around the country. The Chief Migration Officer is calling on companies who employ foreign employees to be responsible and allow them time to visit an Immigration office to pay up the MSF and renew their visas whilst in the country.

Covid-19 Vaccine

frequently asked questions and answers

1. Does Covid-19 vaccines contain a microchip?

There has been no evidence found to support the claims, circulating on social media, that the COVID-19 vaccine will contain a microchip and that this plan is being led by Bill Gates. The suggestion that Bill Gates was involved came from an interview in March 2020, when Gates detailed plans to develop novel means of digital health certificates. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is funding the development of a novel way of dying skin as a means of tracking whether people have been vaccinated (as a form of medical record), however this technology is still under development and will not be used with the COVID-19 vaccine. This technology does not make use of microchip technology and would not allow for someone to be tracked. In addition, the video circulating on social media that shows commentary from Bill and Melinda Gates and Jack Ma has been edited, with their comments selectively combined.

2. Will the vaccine alter my DNA?

All living beings have DNA and RNA – the genetic code or information needed to build and maintain a living being. There have been widespread claims on social media that the COVID-19 vaccine could somehow alter your DNA. This confusion might arise from the way in which some of the new COVID-19 vaccines work, where a fragment of the virus's genetic code is used in the vaccine. However, viral RNA and DNA does not have any effect on human DNA and is not taken up into the body's own DNA when injected. Instead, the viral RNA/DNA helps the human immune system recognise what the virus looks like and so mount a better defence response.

3. Is it safe? What are the side effects?

Yes, vaccines are put through a number of tests and trials to confirm that they are safe.

The side effects include pain at the site of the injection in the upper arm, feeling unwell, tired, feverish and headache. These side-effects do not mean that the vaccine is not safe. Rather these side-effects are signs that the body is responding to the vaccine by mounting an immune response. The technical term for this is reactogenicity. These side-effects tend to be worse one day after receiving the vaccine and resolve within 4-5 days. You can use paracetamol or an anti-inflammatory analgesic to ease symptoms.

4. How do the covid-19 vaccine work?

There are many different COVID-19 vaccines available and in development and they use different approaches to engaging your immune system. There is no live virus in any of the vaccines. These vaccines contain 'instructions' for the spike protein of the virus, which triggers the immune system to recognise the invading virus and also to produce antibodies to fight the virus. Your immune system is then able to either:

- »neutralise the real virus particles so effectively that you don't even know you have been infected and never develop symptoms,
- »or it partially neutralises virus so that you may feel symptoms but are very unlikely to develop severe disease.

5. Can I stop wearing mask and social distancing after getting the vaccine?

No, you should continue to use general COVID-19 protection measures (such as wearing a mask, practising social distancing & sanitising hands and frequently touched objects regularly) after being vaccinated. Vaccine studies have only produced enough data to show that being vaccinated is safe and can protect people from getting sick, particularly severe COVID, and dying from COVID-19. We still need evidence to show that vaccinated people do not spread the virus to others. It remains possible that a vaccinated person could spread the virus to others, even if they are not showing any symptoms.

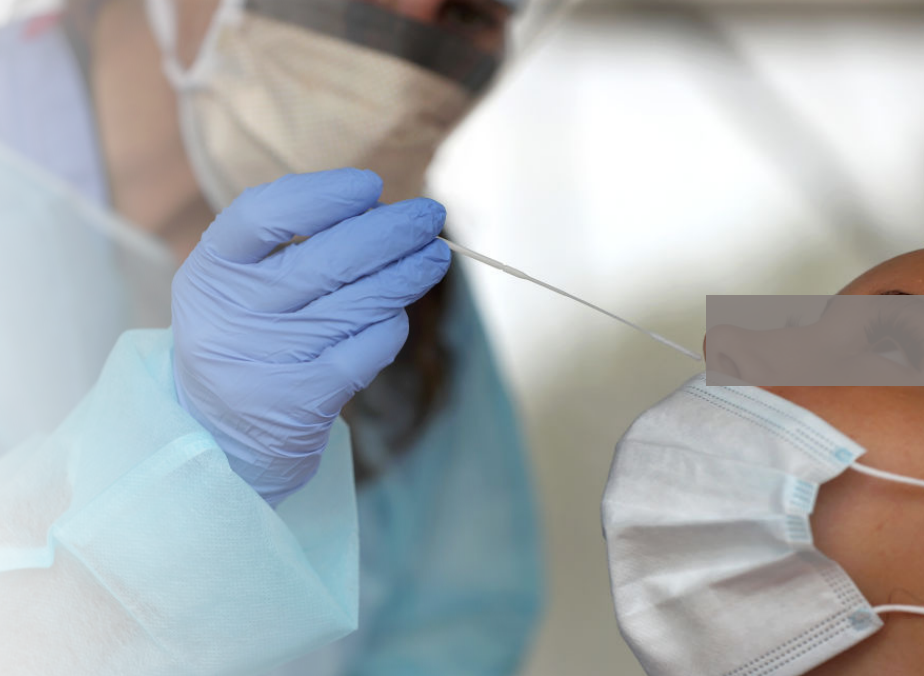
Note: Contents are copied directly from a number of trusted web pages and pasted here for the purpose of information sharing to ICA officers. It is not an approved statement from the PNG National Control Centre or the PNG National Health Department.

Source: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/health/COVID-19/covid-19_vaccination_fact_sheet.pdf | www.who.gov.pg | www.gavi.org

ICA staff gets Covid swabs after positive case identified

All staff members of government departments and private companies housed inside the Central Government Office (CGO) building including immigration officers were tested for coronavirus on March 10 -11 after a occupant of the building was tested positive.

The Covid-19 swabs were carried out by medical practitioners. All ICA staff members at the headquarters, Jacksons International airport and the Bomana Immigration Centre were tested and all results returned negative.



Refugee branch runs covid-19 awareness with RRA cohorts



Officer John Apas and some of the refugees in Port Moresby. Photo: Terry Mape/ICA

Staff of the Refugee branch with support from the Compliance and Enforcement Division conducted an awareness drive in Port Moresby to inform refugees and non-refugees about the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions and laws imposed by the government and the Controller.

Terry Mape, Acting Refugee Settlement Manager said the awareness targets RRA cohorts.

"The response was overwhelming and we received direct feedback from the refugees and were able to listen to their concerns too," said Mr Mape.

Mr Mape is concerned about local residents blaming refugees for spreading Covid-19 and hope that more awareness can be done to educate people about the virus and allow refugees to avoid humiliations.

Migration Act review nears completion

The Chief Migration Officer has welcomed the news that the review of the Migration Act legislation is near completion and he thanked everyone who have been involved in the review.

"I extend my sincere appreciation to the legal branch and our senior staff as well as our partners and State legal officers in contributing ideas and bringing this legislation to its final internal review," said CMO Mr Hulahau.

Work on the Migration Act review started in 2018 and have gone through various consultations both internal and external reviews.

"I am glad that we have made big progress internally to have it ready early in the year."

The Migration Act bill will now go through the final vetting before the Minister presents it to the National Executive Council to be presented as a Bill in the National Parliament.



ICA Executive Management Team and legal officers from Department of Justice and Attorney General at the final internal review workshop at Gateway Hotel early this year. Photo supplied by ICA legal team.



ANY QUERIES? Contact the
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AVOID COVID-19

Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in 7 STEPS

- 01 Wash your hands frequently
- 02 Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth
- 03 Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue
- 04 Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough
- 05 Stay at home if you feel unwell
- 06 If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early - but call first the COVID tollfree #
- 07 Get information from trusted sources

Source: World Health Organization



Andrew Edgar (L) of Australian High Commission and CMO Mr Hulahau (R) displays the video conferencing tool.

New video conferencing tools brings outstations closer, CMO Hulahau says

The Chief Migration Officer Mr Stanis Hulahau says virtual communication and video conferencing tools are becoming a necessity in all workplace during the pandemic and ICA will be utilising online meeting platforms going forward.

Mr Hulahau made this comments when receiving on behalf of the Authority a set of virtual communication and video conferencing tool provided by the Australian Home Affairs Department.

The video conferencing facility will assist the CMO and the Senior Management Team (SMT) to have live face-to-face meetings and conferences with partners both domestic and international.

"I can now sit in my office and have live video conference with my sister agencies in PNG, my Provincial staff and staff at the Border Posts.

"This facility now allows me to have video conference and meetings with my Australian Home Affairs counterpart and other regional partners," Mr Hulahau says.

My staff on field operations can provide live updates through their mobile phones and I can watch them live in my office.

Coronavirus has disrupted domestic and international travels for meetings and conferences but at the same time it has challenged us to look at innovation in technology.

"We will continue to invest in IT technology and improve the way we do business.

"I am grateful to the Home Affairs and the Australian Government for the support. ICA has a strong working relationship with Home Affairs Department on matters of mutual interests.