

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Social Services

Social Security Act 1991

*Social Security (Class of Visas – Qualification for Special Benefit) Amendment
Determination 2015*

Purpose

The purpose of this Determination is to grant qualification for special benefit under subparagraph 729(2)(f)(v) of the *Social Security Act 1991* (the Act) to holders of a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa.

Background

In broad terms, a person may be qualified for special benefit under the Act if they are:

- in severe financial hardship;
- unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for themselves and dependants due to reasons beyond their control;
- not qualified for any other income support payment; and
- an Australian resident or the holder of a temporary visa in a class of visas determined by the Minister for the purposes of subparagraph 729(2)(f)(v) of the Act.

The *Social Security (Class of Visas – Qualification for Special Benefit) Determination 2015 (No. 2)* (the 2015 Determination) determines a number of different visa classes for the purposes of subparagraph 729(2)(f)(v) of the Act. This Determination amends the 2015 Determination to add Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa to the 2015 Determination.

From 1 January 2016, changes will be made to the Human Trafficking Visa Framework. As part of those changes, Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa has been redesigned and that visa will be granted exclusively to suspected victims of trafficking in persons, slavery or slavery-like practices.

Before these changes, victims of human trafficking were granted criminal justice stay visas (CJSVs) while assisting authorities with a criminal justice process. The 2015 Determination determines CJSVs as a class of visa for the purposes of subparagraph 729(2)(f)(v) of the Act if the visa was granted for the purpose of assisting in the administration of criminal justice in relation to an offence of trafficking in persons, slavery or slavery-like practices. CJSVs will continue to be determined in the 2015 Determination but it is intended the holders of those visas who are the victims of human trafficking will be gradually transferred to a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa.

Under subsection 33(3) of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*, where an Act confers a power to make any instrument of a legislative or administrative character, the power shall be construed as including a power exercisable in the like manner and subject to the like conditions (if any) to amend such instrument.

Commencement

This Determination commences on 1 January 2016.

Consultation

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection was consulted and they provided guidance on the new Human Trafficking Visa Framework.

Public consultation was considered unnecessary because this Determination is administrative in nature to recognise that victims of trafficking in persons, slavery and slavery-like practices will now be granted Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visas, not CJSVs, while assisting authorities with a criminal justice process.

Regulation Impact Statement (RIS)

This Determination does not require a Regulation Impact Statement because the Determination is not regulatory in nature, will not impact on business activity and will have no or minimal compliance costs or competition impact.

Explanation of the provisions

Section 1

This section provides how the Determination is to be cited, that is, as the *Social Security (Class of Visas – Qualification for Special Benefit) Amendment Determination 2015*.

Section 2

This section provides that the Determination commences on 1 January 2016.

Section 3

Section 3 provides that Schedule 1 amends the 2015 Determination.

Schedule 1

Schedule 1 amends the 2015 Determination by inserting a new paragraph 4(1)(aa). New paragraph 4(1)(aa) contains a reference to Subclass 060 (Bridging F) in the 2015 Determination. The effect of this is that Subclass 060 (Bridging F) is a class of visa for the purposes of subparagraph 729(2)(f)(v) of the Act. This means that a holder, or former holder, of a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa is qualified for special benefit if the other qualification requirements are met.

Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights

Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011

Social Security (Class of Visas – Qualification for Special Benefit) Amendment Determination 2015

The *Social Security (Class of Visas – Qualification for Special Benefit) Amendment Determination 2015* is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

Overview of the Legislative Instrument

The *Social Security (Class of Visas – Qualification for Special Benefit) Amendment Determination 2015* is made under subparagraph 729(2)(f)(v) of the *Social Security Act 1991*.

The purpose of the Determination is to allow the holders of a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa to qualify for Special Benefit, and consequently, a suite of ancillary social security and family payments such as Family Tax Benefit, Education Entry Payment, Rent Assistance, Health Care Card and Pharmaceutical Allowance.

Human rights implications

This Determination engages or gives effect to the following human rights:

- the right to social security contained in Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Articles 11(1)(e) and 14(2)(c) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); and
- the right to an adequate standard of living contained in Article 11(1) of the ICESCR, Article 14(2)(h) of the CEDAW and Article 28 of the CRPD.

The Determination will assist Australia to meet its international obligations under the ICESCR, the CEDAW and the CRPD by providing that holders of a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa meet the residence requirements for qualification for Special Benefit. The Determination will also promote an adequate standard of living for those who are granted a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa.

Conclusion

This Determination is compatible with human rights as it promotes the right to social security and an adequate standard of living for holders of a Subclass 060 (Bridging F) visa.

The Hon Christian Porter MP, Minister for Social Services