



PO Box 2336
Suite M2a, Mezzanine Level, The Pier
Cairns Qld 4870

T 07 4031 1838 | F 07 4031 0883
E dama@cairnschamber.com.au
W www.cairnschamber.com.au

Far North Queensland Designated Area Migration Agreement (FNQ DAMA)

INFORMATION GUIDE

(effective 22 March 2025)

(Document Version 11.4 – Updated 19 March 2026 in respect of Child Care Worker, Child Care Group Leader and Out of School Hours Care Worker)

THIS DOCUMENT IS IN THREE PARTS:

PART 1 - THE FNQ DAMA AND HOW IT WORKS

PART 2 - INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A FNQ DAMA ENDORSEMENT REQUEST

PART 3 - TECHNICAL AND RELEVANT MATTERS RELATING TO THE FNQ DAMA

YOU SHOULD REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH:

- A. THE CURRENT FNQ DAMA OCCUPATION & CONCESSIONS LIST
- B. THE CURRENT FNQ DAMA REQUEST FOR ENDORSEMENT FORM
- C. THE CURRENT FNQ DAMA ENDORSEMENT SUBMISSION GUIDE

AS AVAILABLE IN THE CAIRNS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE [WEBSITE](#)



PART 1 – THE FNQ DAMA AND HOW IT WORKS

The Cairns Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the Designated Area Representative (“DAR”) for the Far North Queensland Designated Area Migration Agreement (FNQ DAMA).

You should first read and ensure you understand the information in the Cairns Chamber of Commerce [website](#) and in this document (Parts 1-3) regarding the FNQ DAMA, its purpose, how it works, and whether it meets your needs.

By making a request to the DAR, you are seeking endorsement to be able to:

- access the **FNQ DAMA**; and
- request to enter into a Labour Agreement with the Commonwealth of Australia (**the Commonwealth**).

You can only access a Labour Agreement under the FNQ DAMA if you have first been endorsed by the DAR, to do so. You understand and accept that the DAR is under no obligation to endorse you to access a Labour Agreement.

The DAR cannot require the Commonwealth to agree to enter into a Labour Agreement with you and will not be a party to any such Labour Agreement.

Purpose of a Labour Agreement under the FNQ DAMA

A Labour Agreement under the FNQ DAMA is a legally binding agreement made between you and the Commonwealth aimed at allowing you to sponsor overseas workers under the following visa programs:

- [Skills in Demand \(SID\) Subclass 482 visa](#); [‘SID visa’]
- [Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional \(Provisional\) \(SESR\) Subclass 494 visa](#); [SESR visa’]
- [Employer Nomination Scheme \(ENS\) Subclass 186 visa](#) . [‘ENS visa’]

Note that accessing a Labour Agreement under the FNQ DAMA is for circumstances where:

- there is a genuine, significant demand for workers in particular occupation(s) that cannot be met from within the Australian labour market; and
- the Overseas Worker/s could not otherwise be sponsored under standard skilled visa arrangements or apply for another type of visa.

Further information regarding other visa options can be found in the [Department of Home Affairs website](#) and in Item 1.10 in Part 3 of this guide.

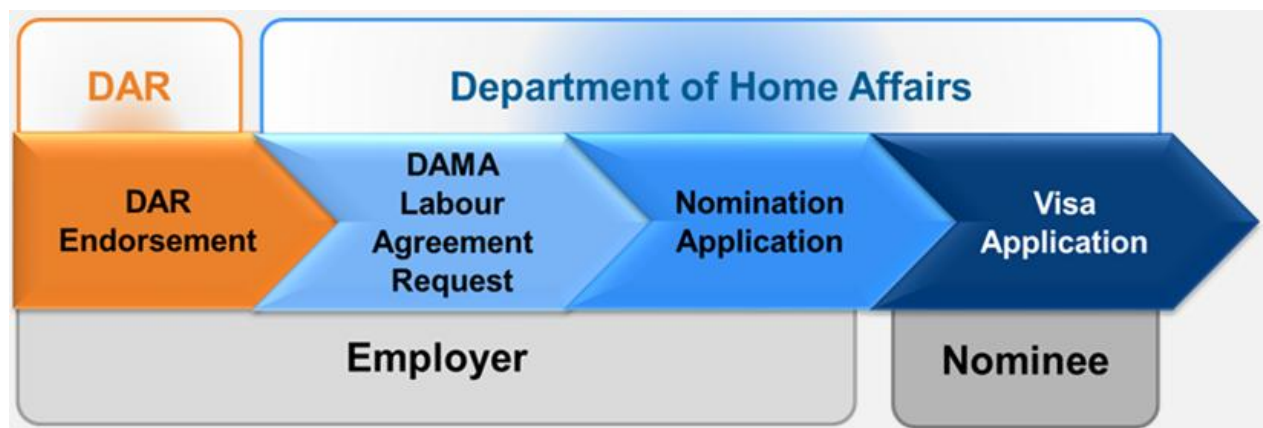
Important concepts unique to the FNQ DAMA

The FNQ DAMA operates in a different way to standard skilled migration programs, using a **labour agreement** framework. This means:

- An employer can obtain their own labour agreement, usually valid for five years, that includes:
 - Pre-approval for one or more occupations and positions in a broad range of skilled and semi-skilled occupations in the FNQ DAMA Occupations and Concessions List, many of which are not available in standard programs;
 - Access to concessions that provide incentives to attract and retain overseas workers to those positions, such as age, English, salary and/or work experience concessions, and well-defined permanent visa pathways, among others.
- An employer does **not** need to have identified the prospective worker/s to request access an FNQ DAMA labour agreement:
 - The employer may nominate ('sponsor') overseas workers already in their employ; or
 - Attract suitably skilled and experienced overseas workers by having occupations and positions pre-approved, with concessions, in an FNQ DAMA labour agreement.
- Employers can also request to vary an existing FNQ DAMA labour agreement to accommodate changing needs of a business, such as adding additional or new occupations and positions or adding further concessions that are available.

Stages in accessing Overseas Workers through the FNQ DAMA

Accessing an FNQ DAMA labour agreement is a two-step process. Nominating individual workers and seeking a visa against pre-approved occupations and positions under the FNQ DAMA labour agreement involves a further two steps. The following diagram shows these four steps and who is responsible for each.



Stage 1 – DAR endorsement.

The employer requests endorsement from the Cairns Chamber of Commerce (as the Designated Area Representative or DAR) to access the FNQ DAMA. Fully documented and well-presented endorsement requests are generally finalised by the DAR within ten working days. Poorly prepared or incomplete endorsement requests will take longer. Endorsement involves paying an endorsement fee, which is per position being sought.

Further information is available in the Cairns Chamber of Commerce website FNQ DAMA page, in this document, and also in the FNQ DAMA Endorsement Submission Guide (with step-by-step instructions on how to prepare an endorsement request submission) (also available in the website).

Stage 2 – Requesting a Labour Agreement with the Department of Home Affairs.

The employer then requests an FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement online through the Department of Home Affairs' *ImmiAccount* system, using the endorsement letter from the DAR.

As of writing, a Labour Agreement request does not attract a fee or charge. Requesting a Labour Agreement includes meeting mandatory legislative requirements as at the date the employer submits that request online.

A Labour Agreement, once signed, is usually valid for up to five years, and specifies how many occupation/s and position/s the employer can nominate in each year of the agreement.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Steps 1 and 2 above are about the business need for the occupation/s and position/s, and not about prospective individual overseas workers even if they are already employed on another visa type.

There is provision to vary and update/add to a Labour Agreement throughout its life. If this involves adding or changing occupation/ and/or/position/s then that will entail the employer seeking DAR endorsement for those additions or changes. Refer to the section on varying a Labour Agreement in Part 2 of this Information Guide.

Stage 3 – Nominating individual Overseas Worker/s.

The employer can then nominate** specific individual Overseas Workers against the occupation/s and position/s stated in the Labour Agreement, up to the cap/s and within the year specified in that agreement.

Nominations are lodged with the Department of Home Affairs and attract fees/charges. See the individual visa links in Item 1.10 on Page 21 of this document for details.

Note that the [prescribed Labour Market Testing \(LMT\)](#) undertaken for the Labour Agreement Stage also needs to be current when an associated nomination application is lodged. Note also that for nominations and visa applications the 'Labour Agreement Stream' is the appropriate stream.

Stage 4 – Individual Nominee/s apply for their visa/s.

This is the final stage when the nominated individual/s apply for their visa**, undergo police checks, medical checks, and assessment against other criteria specific to them.

***Once an initial FNQ DAMA labour agreement request has been submitted in ImmiAccount, the employer is generally able to nominate overseas workers for endorsed occupations and positions, and then submit their visa applications, **before** the FNQ DAMA labour agreement is finalised (noting that they cannot be approved until the labour agreement is approved and executed). Overseas workers who are already lawfully in Australia may then be eligible for a bridging visa in the interim, depending on their individual circumstances. Employers should obtain professional advice or check with the Department of Home Affairs, as an individual Overseas Worker's immigration status or circumstances may, in some cases, prevent a successful nomination or access to a bridging visa in these circumstances. The Cairns Chamber of Commerce is not involved in any considerations around the individuals, their nominations and/or visa applications.*

Existing FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement holders

If an employer has an FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement in place before commencement of the variations detailed in this FNQ DAMA Information Guide (effective 22 March 2025), note that these new variations do not change the requirements listed in that existing labour agreement.

However, the employer can seek endorsement from the DAR to vary their existing labour agreement in respect of any new occupations or concessions that came into effect from 22 March 2025 (for example, to add occupations and/or concessions that were not included in the FNQ DAMA at the time the employer was approved for the existing FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement).

Objectives of the FNQ DAMA

The objectives of the FNQ DAMA are to complement existing Australian Government initiatives to address skills and labour shortages by:

- Providing the FNQ Designated Area with a flexible mechanism to address workforce shortages and support workforce planning.
- Enabling employers in the FNQ Designated Area, who are unable to recruit appropriately qualified Australians, to supplement their workforce with access to Overseas Workers.
- Enhancing the economic performance of FNQ Designated Area employers who enter into associated FNQ DAMA Labour Agreements.
- Ensuring that Overseas Workers sponsored through FNQ DAMA Labour Agreements receive terms and conditions that meet applicable Australian workplace Law and are no less favourable than those provided to Australian workers.
- Promoting the training of Australians by employers entering into a FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement.

PART 2 - SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR ENDORSEMENT TO THE CAIRNS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (DAR), TO ENTER INTO OR VARY AN FNQ DAMA LABOUR AGREEMENT

Under the head agreement with government, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, in its role as the DAR, is required to consider a range of relevant matters in deciding whether or not to endorse an employer's access to enter into a Labour Agreement under the FNQ DAMA. Those relevant matters are outlined in [Part 3](#) of this document.

NOTE: Employers or agents should refer to the comprehensive step-by-step FNQ DAMA Endorsement Submission Guide accessible in the Cairns Chamber of Commerce [website](#). All forms are available in the same webpage under the 'Resources' section.

All information should be submitted as PDF attachments (or a single attachment - other than the Credit Card Authority form) by email to the DAR at dama@cairnchamber.com.au. The Credit Card Authority form **must** be a separate attachment on its own.

Requests for endorsement to enter into an initial FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement

Follow the [FNQ DAMA Endorsement Submission Guide](#).

Requests for endorsement to vary an existing FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement

Employers with an existing FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement can submit a request for endorsement to vary their agreement. Variations are usually for:

- Additional occupations and/or positions;
- 'Rolling over' unused positions from one year of their labour agreement to the next;
- Addition of concessions not previously requested, or new concessions not previously available;
- Changes of visa category.

Requesting variations is a similar process to that for an initial FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement, with the exception of:

- A submission would focus more on what has changed (if anything) since the previous endorsement submission, rather than repeating it;
- The endorsement letter issued by the DAR triggers the variation process with the Department of Home Affairs (there is no need to submit a further request in *ImmiAccount* to vary the existing agreement);
- Note that with variations, nominations and associated visa applications for the additional occupations/positions cannot be submitted until the varied labour agreement has been executed (signed). In exceptional circumstances this may be expedited.

Refer to the [FNQ DAMA Endorsement Submission Guide](#) (noting instructions therein that refer to 'variations').

Important points to note

Note that DAR is required to send **all** supporting information that is submitted with an endorsement request, to the Department of Home Affairs along with the endorsement letter. Note that the DAR, in its absolute discretion:

- May request further evidence and information from the employer that it considers necessary and relevant to assess a request for endorsement; and
- May call or email the business' principal or contact person (or the employer's registered migration agent if one is authorised), or any other relevant party, to verify or discuss aspects of the request for endorsement.

For more detailed information about what the DAR considers when assessing an endorsement request, and the types of additional information it may request, refer to [Part 3](#) of this document. For FNQ DAMA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), [click here](#).

DAR Request for Endorsement fee

The **endorsement** request fee (per position) is payable in full at time of requesting endorsement. The FNQ DAMA **standard endorsement** request fee is:

- \$885 (GST incl) – per position (Cairns Chamber of Commerce members*)
- \$985 (GST incl) – per position (non-members)

Requests to vary a concession/s to existing endorsed or approved occupation/s and position/s:

- \$275 (GST incl) – per occupation (flat fee).

Requests to 'roll over' existing previously endorsed but unused position/s from one year of an existing agreement to the next:

- \$275 (GST incl) – 'roll over' fee per position.

**Membership must be held by the employing entity (not their agent), must be current and be annual membership or held for at least 12 months as at date of seeking endorsement.*

The Cairns Chamber of Commerce has zero tolerance for false or misleading information, statements or documents submitted with FNQ DAMA endorsement requests, whether from the employer/business or their migration agent.

False or misleading information will result in the endorsement request being declined.

PART 3 - TECHNICAL AND RELEVANT MATTERS RELATING TO THE FNQ DAMA

This part includes technical and relevant matters under the FNQ DAMA, and what an employer may be asked to demonstrate as part of a request for endorsement.

REMINDER: use the *FNQ DAMA Endorsement Submission Guide* to determine what to include in your endorsement request, and suggested way to format the request.

Throughout Part 3 of this Information Guide:

- “DAR” means the Cairns Chamber of Commerce in its role as Designated Area Representative (DAR);
- “FNQ DAMA” means the Far North Queensland Designated Area Migration Agreement;
- “FNQ DAMA Occupation List” and “FNQ DAMA Occupation & Concessions List” refer to the FNQ DAMA Occupation and Concessions List (version 7.0 or later) in effect from 22 March 2025;
- “SID visa” means the [Skills in Demand \(SID\) Subclass 482 visa](#);
- “SESR visa” means the [Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional \(Provisional\) \(SESR\) Subclass 494 visa](#);
- “ENS visa” means the [Employer Nomination Scheme \(ENS\) Subclass 186 visa](#) .

1.1 FNQ DAMA Designated Area

Prior to 22 March 2025, the FNQ DAMA Designated Area was determined by a mix of Local Government Areas and postcodes, some of which did not align.

From 22 March 2025, the FNQ DAMA Designated Area is determined solely by the following Local Government Areas:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • Cairns Regional Council | • Croydon Shire Council |
| • Douglas Shire Council | • Etheridge Shire Council |
| • Mareeba Shire Council | • Torres Shire Council |
| • Tablelands Regional Council | • Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council |
| • Cassowary Coast Regional Council | • Weipa Town Authority |
| • Cook Shire Council | |

To check which Local Government Area an address is in, you can [search here](#). When searching be sure to select “Local Government’ and not “State Government’.

The DAR will consider:

Whether the business is operating within the Designated Area and has been doing so for at least 12 months (unless exceptional circumstances exist).

You should provide evidence that the business is operating within the Designated Area for a period of at least twelve months (unless exceptional circumstances exist).

The DAR will consider whether the position/s to be filled (as opposed to the business) will be located in the Designated Area.

The Overseas Worker may be able to travel outside the area for work-related reasons for short periods of time where this is consistent with the declared duties of the position. Note that you must seek the agreement of the Department of Home Affairs if the Overseas Worker will be outside of area for more than three out of twelve months.

1.2 Occupations

Occupations available under the FNQ DAMA under the agreement in place as of 22 March 2025 are those in the FNQ DAMA Occupation & Concessions List (v7.0) in the Cairns Chamber of Commerce [website](#).

Occupations available under the FNQ DAMA fall into three broad categories:

- ANZSCO occupations available in standard skilled migration programs but also available under the FNQ DAMA, with concessions;
- ANZSCO occupations not available in standard skilled migration programs (eg. not on the skilled occupation lists);
- Occupations not covered by ANZSCO, that have been designed specifically to address the needs of Far North Queensland – the position descriptions for these ‘non-ANZSCO’ occupations are available in the Cairns Chamber of Commerce [website](#).

Some occupations in standard skilled occupation lists, as used in standard skilled visa programs, are subject to caveats. The FNQ DAMA includes the following provision that removes all caveats from occupations in the FNQ DAMA Occupation & Concessions List.

‘Caveats not to apply’

None of the matters specified in an instrument made under sub regulation 2.72(9) of the Migration Regulations, for the purpose of determining whether an occupation applies to a nominee, (called ‘caveats’ in Departmental policy instructions) applies to any occupation specified in this Agreement.

1.3 Financially Viable & Good Corporate Citizen

The DAR will consider:

Whether the business has been actively operating for at least twelve months and is financially viable. You should provide business documents, including for associated entities (if applicable), such as:

- *Business Registration Certificate;*
- *Australian Business Number (ABN);*
- *Australian Company Number (ACN) (if applicable);*
- *Trust Deed (if applicable); and*

Depending on the age and size of the business, you may be asked to provide:

- *a letter of support from a registered Chartered Accountant or a Certified Practising Accountant confirming that you have been actively operating for at least twelve months and have the financial capacity to meet the migration obligations for the workers you wish to sponsor, for the proposed period that they will be employed by you. The letter must include the key financial data i.e. your turnover, net assets and profit/loss for the most recent financial year; and/or*
- *recent financial accounts or BAS statements.*

If the business has been subject to any relevant investigations or audits, resulting in an adverse finding to the business or any associated entities (including previously associated entities) in the last five years by bodies such as:

- *the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman, or former authority with this function, or relevant State or Territory government authority in relation to compliance with workplace relations provisions;*
- *the relevant State or Territory government authority in relation to compliance with occupational health and safety provisions; and*
- *The Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) in relation to compliance with migration provisions;*

then you will need to provide information about any such investigations or audits with the endorsement request. Any other relevant adverse information should also be declared.

1.4 Genuine Business Need & Vacancies

The DAR will consider:

Whether there is a genuine business need for the occupation/s and number of position/s being requested, and whether there are genuine vacancies. You should provide:

- *Evidence of trading hours, business expansion and business structure;*
- *Position description/s;*
- *Sample of employment contract/s;*
- *Description of the need for the occupation/s and position/s being requested, including whether they are pre-existing or new.*

1.5 Labour Market Testing (LMT)

The DAR will consider:

Whether genuine attempts have been made to fill the position/s from the Australian labour market (called Labour Market Testing or LMT). You should provide:

- *Evidence of advertising the position/s within Australia, and the outcome of those attempts;*
- *A description of the history of attempts to recruit to the position/s.*

As well as at endorsement stage, evidence of Labour Market Testing (LMT) must accompany FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement requests to the Department of Home Affairs as well as SID or SESR nominations lodged in accordance with a FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement. Note that while LMT for ENS positions and nominations is not a legislative requirement, both the DAR and Home Affairs may request that it be provided as a matter of policy.

The LMT must have been conducted in accordance with the requirements in the DAMA Fact Sheet – Labour Market Testing, available in the resources area of the DAR [website](#). When reading that information, note that Far North Queensland is a **Category 3** location.

As the LMT requirements are specified in Migration Legislation, they are not flexible or negotiable. An employer will not be able to enter into a Labour Agreement in accordance with the FNQ DAMA if the LMT requirements are not met.

Important Note: While there is no legislative requirement to demonstrate LMT for endorsement stage, the DAR must also be satisfied that there are no Australian citizens or permanent residents available for the occupations/positions requested and will be looking for a similar level of genuine LMT attempts and evidence.

1.6 Salary and conditions

The DAR will consider:

Whether the proposed salary for the occupation/s and position/s is reasonable and justifiable for the FNQ Region, taking into account the market salary rate for the occupation, and that the terms and conditions of employment must be no less than would be provided to an Australian citizen or permanent resident in an equivalent position. You should provide evidence of how the proposed salary was determined, such as:

- *Details as to how the proposed salary for the occupation/s and position/s were determined;*
- *Copy of or information about relevant awards or Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (if any);*
- *Evidence of the salary paid to Australian citizens or permanent residents in equivalent position/s in the business (if any);*
- *Data from reputable industry remuneration surveys (usually conducted by peak industry bodies or professional associations);*
- *Australian Bureau of Statistics earnings data; and*
- *Job vacancy advertisements for similar positions in FNQ or a similar regional area.*

Whether the salary, as well as being equivalent to or higher than the base rate of pay (usually based on a 38-hour week unless varied by an award), is also equal to or higher than the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) or Core Skills Income Threshold (CSIT), unless a concession has been negotiated (see Item 1.7 following). The TSMIT is subject to CPI increases every 1 July. The current TSMIT/CSIT is available [in this link](#).

Whether overseas workers will be engaged in accordance with applicable Australian workplace laws.

Whether the overseas worker(s) will be employed on a full-time basis as a direct employee and paid at least fortnightly. You may be asked to provide:

- *Copy of proposed employment contract/s;*
- *Copy of Enterprise Agreement/s (if applicable).*

See also the [Department of Home Affairs' webpage](#) on how to determine the Annual Market Salary Rate (AMSR).

1.7 Skills, qualifications, experience, and employment background requirements

The DAR will consider:

Whether you acknowledge that Overseas Workers sponsored under the FNQ DAMA in the occupation/s requested will need to satisfy the minimum skills, qualifications, experience, and employment background requirements as outlined below in respect of the relevant occupations in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List, and where applicable, that a skills assessment is required.

The following skills, qualifications, experience** and employment background requirements in Groups 1-10 in this Item apply to the occupations listed in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List in relation to a SID visa, a SESR visa, and where eligible under the permanent residence pathway, an ENS visa.

The requirements are listed in this Item with the Group number corresponding with the Group numbers against each occupation in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List. These are the requirements that will be listed for each occupation respectively, in an employer FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement.

**Work experience

‘Work experience’ means:

- may be full-time or part-time pro-rata; and
- must be undertaken in the last five (5) years; and
- can be served concurrently with any work experience used to substitute for formal qualifications as per ANZSCO requirements, provided the work experience was at the same level.

Skills Assessments

Details of skills assessment requirements (including whether a skills assessment is required) are also included in each Group below. Note that applicants for occupations in Groups 1-2 may require a skills assessment, while applicants for all occupations in Groups 3-10 must undertake a skills assessment.

To find out which is the skills assessing authority for each occupation, refer to the FNQ DAMA Occupation List.

For occupations in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List for which VETASSESS is the skills assessing authority, [click here](#).

For occupations in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List that also appear on an eligible list of skilled occupations, information about the relevant skills assessing authority can be found in the Department of Home Affairs website at [this link](#) (if not listed in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List).

There are some occupations for which the skills assessing authority has recently changed, as per the following table (noting that not all occupations require a skills assessment):

ANZSCO or 6 digit Code	Occupation	ANZSCO Skill Level	Skills Assessing Authority
421111	Child Care Worker (Not Group Leader)	3	ACECQA
423211	Dental Assistant ^	4	ADC
423312	Nursing Support Worker ^	4	ANMAC
421114	Out of School Hours Care Worker	3	ACECQA
423313	Personal Care Assistant ^	4	ANMAC

^ From 1 July 2024 all new skills assessments will need to be issued by the relevant skills assessing authority as indicated in the table above. For applicants who hold a valid skills assessment for the ^ indicated occupations, issued by VETASSESS prior to 1 July 2024, these skills assessments will be accepted.

GROUP 1**FNQ DAMA occupations that are also on the combined list of eligible skilled occupations (Skilled Occupation List)**

For the occupations included in **Group 1**, which are also on the eligible lists of skilled occupations (the Short-term Skilled Occupation List, (STSOL), Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List, (MLTSSL), Regional Occupation List (ROL) or Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL)), any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa connected with these occupations must satisfy the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background requirements.

Skills Assessment

- For the SID and SESR visa programs (nominations/visas):
 - A skills assessment is only required where the applicant is part of a class of persons specified in the legislative instrument made under paragraph 1240(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Migration Regulations 1994.
- For the ENS visa program (nominations/visas):
 - if the overseas worker has not lived and worked in the designated area as the holder of a TSS/SID visa for 2 years in the nominated occupation, a skills assessment is required under the Labour Agreement Stream (under the FNQ DAMA) if it is required under the Direct Entry (DE) Stream;
 - if the overseas worker has lived and worked in the designated area as the holder of a TSS/SID visa for 2 years in the nominated occupation, a skills assessment is not required under the Labour Agreement Stream (under the FNQ DAMA) in line with the standard requirements under the Temporary Residence Transition (TRT) Stream.

Skills and Qualifications

Meet the skill level as defined in ANZSCO**; **and**

Work Experience

Meet the work experience requirements under the standard SID, SESR or ENS program; **or**

SID/SESR/ENS

- Have at least two (2) years (35 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa or two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa; **or**
- Where the relevant AQF qualification was obtained in Australia, only (1) year of relevant full-time work experience is required for the SID and SESR visa programs.

*(**IMPORTANT NOTE: For the occupations of **Child Care Worker** (Skill level 3), **Child Care Group Leader** (Skill level 2), and **Out of School Hours Care Worker** (Skill level 3), note that if a skills assessment is requested, the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), as the relevant skills assessing authority, may have different skills assessment requirements to those stated in ANZSCO following changes they made in July 2025. For the ACECQA skills assessment requirements, refer to their website [here](#). Note that the ACECQA skills assessment requirements are separate from the work experience requirement for nomination and visa purposes, stated below and in your FNQ DAMA labour agreement.)*

GROUP 2**Specified Skill Level 2 and 3 occupations on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL)**

For the Occupations included in **Group 2**, which are on the eligible lists of skilled occupations (the Short-term Skilled Occupation List, (STSOL), Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List, (MLTSSL), Regional Occupation List (ROL) or Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL)), any nomination for these Occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa connected with these Occupations, must satisfy the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background requirements.

Skills Assessment

- For the SID and SESR visa programs (nominations/visas):
 - A skills assessment is only required where the applicant is part of a class of persons specified in the legislative instrument made under paragraph 1240(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Migration Regulations 1994.
- For the ENS visa program (nominations/visas):
 - if the overseas worker has not lived and worked in the designated area as the holder of a TSS/SID visa for 2 years in the nominated occupation, a skills assessment is required under the Labour Agreement Stream (under the FNQ DAMA) if it is required under the Direct Entry (DE) Stream;
 - if the overseas worker has lived and worked in the designated area as the holder of a TSS/SID visa for 2 years in the nominated occupation, a skills assessment is not required under the Labour Agreement Stream (under the FNQ DAMA) in line with the standard requirements under the Temporary Residence Transition (TRT) Stream.

Skills and Qualifications

Meet the skill level as defined in ANZSCO; **and**

Work Experience

Meet the work experience requirements under the standard SID, SESR or ENS program; or

SID/SESR/ENS

- Have at least one and a half (1.5) years (20 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least one (1) year (35 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Where the relevant AQF qualification was obtained in Australia, only (1) year of relevant full-time work experience is required for the SID and SESR visa programs; **or**
- Have two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 3

Non-ANZSCO Skill Level 1 occupations

For occupations in **Group 3**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation.

Skills and Qualifications

Have at least a relevant Bachelor Degree or higher qualification; **and**

Work Experience

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Have at least one and a half (1.5) years (20 plus hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 4

Non-ANZSCO Skill Level 3 occupations

For occupations in **Group 4**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation.

Skills and Qualifications

- Have at least a relevant AQF or equivalent Certificate IV; **and**

Work Experience

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Have at least one (1) year (20 plus hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 5

Non-ANZSCO Skill Level 4 occupations

For occupations in **Group 5**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation.

Skills and Qualifications

- Have at least a relevant AQF or equivalent Certificate III; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years (35 hours per week) relevant work experience.

Work Experience

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Have at least one (1) year (20 plus hours per week) of relevant work experience as the holder of a relevant AQF or equivalent Certificate III if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years (35 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 6

General ANZSCO Skill Level 1-3 occupations

For occupations in **Group 6**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation (** see important note below).

Skills and Qualifications

Meet the skill level as defined in ANZSCO including where work experience can substitute the formal qualification.

Work Experience

Meet the work experience requirements under the standard SID, SESR or ENS program **or**;

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Have at least two (2) years (35 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa or two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa; **or**
- Where the relevant AQF qualification was obtained in Australia, only one (1) year of relevant full-time work experience is required for the SID and SESR visa programs.

****IMPORTANT NOTE:** For the occupation of **Out of School Hours Care Worker** (Skill level 3), note that The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), as the relevant skills assessing authority, may have different skills assessment requirements to those stated in ANZSCO and in your FNQ DAMA labour agreement, following changes they made in July 2025. For the ACECQA skills assessment requirements, refer to their website [here](#). Note that the ACECQA skills assessment requirements are separate from the work experience requirement for nomination and visa purposes, stated above and in your FNQ DAMA labour agreement.

GROUP 7

Specified ANZSCO Skill Level 3 and 4 occupations

For occupations in **Group 7**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation.

Skills and Qualifications

- Hold at least an AQF (or equivalent) Certificate III for Skill Level 4 occupations; **or**
- Hold at least an AQF (or equivalent) Certificate IV for Skill Level 3 occupations.

Work Experience

Meet the work experience requirements under the standard SID, SESR or ENS program; or

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Have at least one (1) year (specified at 20 hours per week) of relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; or
- Have at least two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 7A

[Obsolete for new FNQ DAMA Labour Agreements]

GROUP 8**General ANZSCO Skill Level 4 occupations**

For occupations in **Group 8**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation.

Skills and Qualifications

Meet the skill level as defined in ANZSCO including where work experience can substitute the formal qualification.

Work Experience

Meet the work experience requirements under the standard SID, SESR or ENS program; **or**

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Where a relevant AQF or equivalent Certificate II is held, have at least one and a half (1.5) years (20 plus hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Where a relevant AQF or equivalent Certificate III is held, have at least one (1) year (20 plus hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years (35 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; **or**
- Have at least two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 9

General ANZSCO Skill Level 5 occupations

For occupations in **Group 9**, the following skills, qualifications, experience and employment background criteria will apply to any nomination for these occupations or any application for a SID, SESR or ENS visa made under the Migration Legislation.

Skills Assessment

Hold a skills assessment by the relevant Skills Assessing Authority (as specified in the Labour Agreement) for the nominated occupation.

Skills and Qualifications

- Hold at least a relevant AQF (or equivalent) Certificate I; or
- Have at least one (1) year (specified at 35 hours per week) of relevant work experience.

Work Experience

Meet the work experience requirements under the standard SID, SESR or ENS program; or

SID/SESR/ENS:

- Have at least one (1) year (35 hours per week) relevant work experience if applying for a SID or SESR visa; or
- Have at least two (2) years full-time work experience if applying for an ENS visa.

GROUP 10

Occupations also included in an Industry Labour Agreement

For Occupations listed in **Group 10**, the skills, qualifications and experience requirements of the associated Industry Labour Agreement will apply. To avoid doubt, this also includes the relevant Skills Assessment requirements.

The only occupation in Group 10 is currently Ship's Master (ANZSCO 231213) which is in the *Fishing Industry Labour Agreement*.

1.8 Concession to the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT)/Core Skills Income Threshold (CSIT) ('salary' concessions)

As stated above, the current TSMIT/CSIT is available [in this link](#). The TSMIT/CSIT is subject to a CPI increase every 1 July. You should factor this into the timing of your FNQ DAMA endorsement requests.

For TSMIT/CSIT concession purposes, occupations in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List fall into two categories:

- **Concessional Occupations** – those that are eligible for a TSMIT/CSIT concession under the FNQ DAMA; and
- **Non-Concessional Occupations** – those which are not eligible for consideration for a TSMIT/CSIT concession.

Employers may seek endorsement from the DAR for access to a TSMIT/CSIT concession to be applied to one or more Concessional Occupations being requested. See the FNQ DAMA Occupation List to ascertain which occupations are 'Concessional Occupations' with access to a TSMIT/CSIT concession. Current non-Concessional Occupations are those at Skill Levels 1-2, while Concessional Occupations are those at Skill Levels 3-5.

In general, a TSMIT/CSIT concession for Concessional Occupations may amount to a reduction to 90% of TSMIT/CSIT (see details below).

Where requesting a TSMIT/CSIT concession, the request should be evidence-based and reasonable. There are two types of TSMIT/CSIT concession that may apply - **Type 1** and **Type 2**.

In accordance with the applicable concession type set out below, a nominating business must provide the Overseas Worker with an amount of Annual Earnings which is equal to or greater than:

- the Annual Market Salary Rate; *and*
- Reduced TSMIT/CSIT (for TSMIT/CSIT concession Type 1) or TSMIT/CSIT (for TSMIT concession Type 2).

'Reduced TSMIT/CSIT' means 90% of TSMIT/CSIT.

TSMIT/CSIT Concession types

	Type 1	Type 2
Monetary Earnings	At least Reduced TSMIT/CSIT	At least Reduced TSMIT/CSIT
Non-monetary earnings (Food and Board)		No more than 10% of TSMIT/CSIT
Total Annual Earnings	At least Reduced TSMIT/CSIT	At least TSMIT/CSIT

Concession Type 1: Reduced TSMIT/CSIT, and Earnings to include Guaranteed Overtime and Monetary Benefits

'Reduced TSMIT/CSIT' applies.

'Earnings' has the same meaning as in the Migration Regulations except that it also includes:

Guaranteed overtime where:

- The guaranteed overtime is consistent with standard industry practice within the sector;
- There are equivalent Australians performing equivalent work in the Third Party's workplace at the same location and whose arrangements have been guaranteed in an industrial arrangement for those workers; and
- At the time of nomination the Third Party provides evidence that the hours are guaranteed within the employment contract for the Overseas Worker, and confirms the hours are consistent with the National Employment Standards; and
- Application of the concession is subject to the Earnings being in line with applicable Industrial Awards or Enterprise Agreements and not below levels for Australian employees in comparable roles; and

When calculating an Overseas Worker's Annual Earnings, the value of monetary earnings cannot be less than Reduced TSMIT/CSIT.

Concession Type 2: TSMIT/CSIT, and Earnings to include Guaranteed Overtime and certain Non-Monetary and Monetary Benefits

'Earnings' has the same meaning as in the *Migration Regulations* except that it also includes:

1. Guaranteed overtime where:

- The guaranteed overtime is consistent with standard industry practice within the sector;
- There are equivalent Australians performing equivalent work in the Third Party's workplace at the same location and whose arrangements have been guaranteed in an industrial arrangement for those workers; and
- At the time of nomination the Third Party provides evidence that the hours are guaranteed within the employment contract for the Overseas Worker, and confirms the hours are consistent with the *National Employment Standards*; and
- Application of the concession is subject to the Earnings being in line with applicable

Industrial Awards or Enterprise Agreements and not below levels for Australian employees in comparable roles; and

2. Monetary and non-monetary benefits (food and board), where:

- The benefits support the living costs of the Overseas Worker;
- The Overseas Worker would have incurred that cost had it not been provided by the Third Party;
- The benefits are quantifiable;
- The benefits are consistent with the terms and conditions provided to existing Australians employed in a similar position;
- The benefits are guaranteed in the employment contract; and
- The benefits exclude contingent payments such as overtime (other than guaranteed overtime) bonuses and commissions.

When calculating an Overseas Worker's Annual Earnings, the value of monetary earnings cannot be less than Reduced TSMIT. The value of non-monetary earnings (food and board) cannot be more than 10% of TSMIT.

The DAR will consider:

Where you are requesting one of the TSMIT concessions, whether the concession is evidence-based and reasonable taking into account all the above factors. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request for the concession, as well as information regarding local living costs in the context of the Overseas Worker/s' ability to settle in the community.

Non-Concessional Occupations

In relation to an Overseas Worker who is nominated for a Non-Concessional Occupation in relation to a SID or SESR visa, the nominating Third Party must meet the legislative requirements relating to TSMIT/CSIT, Annual Market Salary Rate and Annual Earnings which would apply if the Overseas Worker were nominated in relation to the Core Skills stream or Specialist Skills stream in the standard SID visa program, or the Employer Sponsored stream in the standard SESR visa program.

In relation to an Overseas Worker who is identified for a Non-Concessional Occupation in relation to an ENS visa, the nominating Third Party must meet the legislative requirements relating to CSIT, Annual Market Salary Rate and Annual Earnings which would apply if the Overseas Worker were identified in relation to the Temporary Residence Transition stream or the Direct Entry stream in the standard ENS visa program.

'Earnings' has the same meaning as in the Migration Regulations.

1.9 English language concessions

Employers may seek endorsement from the DAR for the following English language concession to apply to a specific occupation for which that concession is available. See the FNQ DAMA Occupation List to ascertain which occupations may access an English language concession.

For any occupations that are not listed in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List as having access to an English language concession, the Overseas Worker is required to meet the minimum standard English language requirements applicable to the SID/SESR and ENS non-labour agreement visa streams under the *Migration Regulations*.

The English language concession available in the FNQ DAMA for concessional Occupations is as follows:

- **SID, SESR concession:** average score of IELTS 5.0 with no minimum component score (unless registration or licensing requires a higher level of English).
- **ENS concession:** average score of IELTS 5.0 with no component being less than IELTS 4.0 or equivalent (unless registration or licensing requires a higher level of English).

In this Item, “IELTS” means the International English Language Testing System or the equivalent in another accepted English language test. Other accepted English language tests are:

- Occupational English Test (OET);
- Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based test (TOEFL iBT);
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic test; or
- Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) test.

The English language requirements may be met if a visa applicant would be regarded as an ‘exempt applicant’ for the purpose of the legislative instruments applicable to SID/SESR and ENS visas.

The DAR will consider:

Where you are requesting the English language accessible in the FNQ DAMA, whether the concession is evidence-based and reasonable. You should provide:

- *evidence that you have considered workplace health and safety matters impacted by a lower level of English and how you plan to address them;*
- *information about the impact a lower English level may have on:*
 - *the Overseas Worker/s’ ability to conduct skills transfer with Australian employees;*
 - *the Overseas Worker/s’ ability to settle in the community.*

1.10 FNQ DAMA visa and pathway options

When requesting endorsement to access a labour agreement under the FNQ DAMA, and when requesting the labour agreement, the visa subclass must be specified (SID or SESR or ENS) for each occupation/position being requested. For multiple occupation/position requests, a combination of options may be requested.

The options are:

- The [SID \(temporary\) visa](#) (482):
 - Valid for up to four years**;
 - May lead to accessing an [ENS \(permanent\) visa](#) (186) under an FNQ DAMA labour agreement after two years (see Item 1.10); **or**
- The [SESR \(provisional\) visa](#) (494):
 - Valid for up to five years**;
 - May lead to accessing a [Permanent Residence \(Skilled Regional\) \(permanent\) visa](#) (191) after three years;
- An [ENS \(permanent\) visa](#)
 - Allows permanent stay;
 - Accessible when a temporary visa holder has worked in the FNQ DAMA Designated Area on an FNQ DAMA TSS or SID visa (or in some cases other non-DAMA visas allowing work rights) in the same occupation for at least two years.

Note that the SID 482, ENS 186, and SESR 494 visa options each require endorsement for inclusion in an employer's individual FNQ DAMA labour agreement, and nomination by the employer, while a Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) (permanent) (191) visa requires neither endorsement, nor employer nomination.

Permanent visa pathways are available through the FNQ DAMA for all occupations on the FNQ DAMA Occupation & Concessions List. As with most standard skilled migration pathways, under the FNQ DAMA an Overseas Worker would first have held a temporary visa or provisional visa for a specified period of time before they may have access to a permanent visa option. When deciding which visa option to specify for each occupation, the information and '[Important Notes](#)' in Item 1.11 of this guide should be taken into consideration.

The DAR cannot advise which visa option or pathway may suit an employer's circumstances or those of any prospective Overseas Worker/s. Information about each visa option can be accessed in the Department of Home Affairs website at the links above (be sure to view the 'Labour Agreement Stream' in each case).

***Note that the Department of Home Affairs may decide to only grant a visa with validity that aligns with the length of an overseas worker's employment contract. You should consider this when drafting employment contract/s.*

Employers should seek professional advice from a migration agent if unsure about which option is most appropriate.

1.11 Permanent Residence Pathway

A permanent residence pathway for Overseas Workers under the FNQ DAMA may be available via the SESR 494 visa program (in combination with the PESR 191 visa program), or through the ENS 186 visa program.

The following conditions will ordinarily be included in an FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement and will apply to any nomination for an ENS visa (in addition to the ENS requirements outlined in the Migration Legislation).

- (a) The ENS nomination identifies an occupation in the FNQ DAMA Occupation List.
- (b) The Overseas Worker has been employed in Australia, in the ENS nominated occupation, or a closely related occupation, for a period of:
 - i. At least two (2) years before the ENS nomination is made; or
 - ii. Part-time work equivalent to at least two (2) years full-time before the ENS nomination is made.
- (c) For the whole time that the Overseas Worker was employed in accordance with paragraph (b) they must have:
 - i. Lived and worked in the FNQ DAMA Designated Area outlined in this FNQ DAMA Information Guide; and
 - ii. Complied with the conditions of the visa held.
- (d) The Overseas Worker identified in the ENS nomination will be employed on a full-time basis in the position for at least two (2) years, and
- (e) The terms and conditions of employment of the Overseas Worker will not include an express exclusion of the possibility of extending the period of employment.

Age requirement

For occupations in **Skill Levels 1-4**, an Overseas Worker may be nominated for a SESR or ENS visa only if they have not turned **55** years of age at the time of the ENS nomination.

For occupations in **Skill Level 5**, an Overseas Worker may be nominated for a SESR or ENS visa only if they have not turned **50** years of age at the time of the ENS nomination.

Important Notes

Note that, in some circumstances, an employer may seek endorsement for a position/s directly for an ENS visa under the FNQ DAMA, depending on whether a proposed nominee/s already has work experience in the FNQ Designated Area in the same occupation on another visa with work rights, for the required period. You should seek professional advice regarding individual prospective nominees' circumstances in this regard, as the DAR does not assess individuals' circumstances.

Note that if accessing a direct pathway to ENS under the FNQ DAMA, a skills assessment may be required if one was not undertaken in respect of any temporary or provisional visa and one would have been required under standard programs. For details, refer to Item 1.7 and the relevant Group number for the occupation.

Previously Removed Occupations

For Overseas Workers holding a TSS visa on the basis of a previously removed occupation in the following table, access to the ENS pathway and any relevant concessions may still be available. Please contact the DAR for details.

Table of previously removed FNQ DAMA occupations still eligible for permanent residence pathway.

ANZSCO or 6 Digit Code	Occupation	Skill Level
311111	Agricultural Technician	2
134111	Child Care Centre Manager	1
252111	Chiropractor	1
121299	Crop Farmers (nec)	1
253911	Dermatologist	1
253315	Endocrinologist	1
070499	Farm Supervisor	3
851299	Food Trades Assistants (nec)	5
841211	Fruit or Nut Farm Worker	5
841212	Fruit or Nut Picker	5
253316	Gastroenterologist	1
234411	Geologist	1
311413	Life Science Technician	2
841611	Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Worker	5
253318	Neurologist	1
253914	Ophthalmologist	1
252112	Osteopath	1
253517	Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon	1
252611	Podiatrist	1
422115	Preschool Aide	4
322312	Pressure Welder	3
253918	Radiation Oncologist	1
253323	Rheumatologist	1
711611	Sewing Machinist	4
323215	Textile, Clothing and Footwear Mechanic	3
253324	Thoracic Medicine Specialist	1

1.12 Age Concession (SESR and ENS only)

As stated in Item 1.11, there are age requirements for the SESR and ENS visa options under the FNQ DAMA, namely 'must not have turned' 55 years of age for Skill Level 1-4 occupations and 50 years of age for Skill Level 5 occupations. These represent concessions to the lower age requirements for those visas in standard visa programs.

The age concession is also available for occupations previously removed from the FNQ DAMA Occupation List but still eligible for a permanent residence pathway (as listed in the table at Item 1.11 above).

The age concession is not available for the SID visa, because the SID visa does not have an age requirement.

The age concession can be requested in respect of occupations and positions using the SESR or ENS option when seeking endorsement to access the FNQ DAMA or when seeking variations to an existing FNQ FAMA Labour Agreement.

The DAR will consider:

The reasons why you are seeking access to the age concession, including:

- *whether the age concession is likely to broaden the potential pool of prospective Overseas Workers willing to move to the region;*
- *whether there is benefit in attracting and retaining more experienced Overseas Workers, and why;*
- *whether any known potential or existing Overseas Workers in your business are of an age that would benefit from access to the concession, and why.*

1.13 Settlement information

The DAR will consider:

Whether you agree to undertake to provide the overseas worker with settlement information:

- *prior to you engaging them, or*
- *if they are already working for you, prior to them lodging their TSS visa or SESR visa application, unless they have been living and working in the area for at least 12 months prior to them lodging their visa application.*

Employers can obtain a settlement information kit by emailing the Cairns Chamber of Commerce.

1.14 Sponsorship Obligations

The DAR will consider:

Whether you acknowledge that you have read and understood your sponsorship obligations should the Department of Home Affairs enter into a Labour Agreement with you. Your labour agreement will also detail your obligations as a sponsor.

The Department of Home Affairs website has detailed information about [sponsorship obligations](#).

For further information, see the [FAQ page](#) or contact the DAR at dama@cairnschamber.com.au

The Cairns Chamber of Commerce has zero tolerance for false or misleading information, statements or documents submitted with FNQ DAMA endorsement requests, whether from the employer/business or their migration agent.

FNQ DAMA Request for Endorsement Information Guide (Version 11.4 – Updated and re-issued 19 March 2026)