

I believe you should honour and value the input of migrants who have stuck it out in NZ during the worldwide Covid epidemic - essential workers, nurses, teachers, carers, workers in all professions; all of those who have put NZers needs first, even when worried about their own families back home.

Workers who are currently onshore, and have been for 2 years or more have proven they are invested financially, and emotionally committed to NZ, and this improves the well-being of all NZers. This should be taken into account.

These migrants have strong community connections and are entwined with the lives of NZ citizens, and providing certainty and pathways to residency for them will enhance community well-being as well as economic interests of their employers.

As an example, I am a migrant teacher who studied here in NZ, and my 2 children are at school here - with various sporting, cultural and other community ties. We have been here for nearly 3 years. I am valued by my employer and by the families of my students, but I can offer them no certainty of whether I will receive a new work visa, or residency, despite there being a need for teachers, despite being on-shore, despite having enough points to currently qualify for residency, and despite my own family's integration into NZ society.

Migrants all over NZ are having honest conversations with their friends, employers, colleagues and other acquaintances about their situation, and many NZers are realising how difficult the current immigration system is for the staff that they hire. Employers don't want to have a migrant in for 2 years, then have them leave and get a new migrant in - generally they want a permanent staff member who can add value to their business, and not be plagued with worries about whether they can stay another year. This kind of mental strain on migrants can affect their work performance adversely, as they are not able to put everything into their current job, if they are constantly worried about having to leave and to set up a life in another new country, and making back-up plans that allow for this.

Without certainty or clarity, or a sense of being valued by the current government, many highly skilled migrants are leaving NZ - to Australia, Canada, UK, or back to their home countries. NZ is on the verge of losing many talented migrants - plus all the community connections they have built up. NZ also risks losing the support and goodwill of employers and local people who cannot understand why the family down the road, who helped out so much during the Covid crisis, and is a solid member of the local community, could no longer stay in NZ and had to leave.