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Executive summary



Visa costs and processes can have a major impact on the number of visitors to a country. On the one hand, visas are an instrument that all governments, and the Australian Government in this case, use to control who can enter their country for various reasons, more so to ensure security where undesirable foreign nationals are screened and prevented from entering. On the other hand, visas are also perceived as a revenue raising device for many destinations where the politically safer option of “tax exporting” is preferred. Thus, it is imperative to strike a balance between these purposes, as the visa fees and the processes play a significant role in determining a country’s competitiveness in the global tourism market. It is on these bases that this report examines Australia’s visa schemes for six important Asian source markets – China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan – in comparison with our key competing destinations, namely New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen countries.

Given wide differences in individual visa schemes of all destinations, the report classifies those schemes into four broad visitor visa types for side-by-side comparisons. These are Approved Destination Status (ADS) visitor visa; standard visitor visa; transit visa; and working holiday visa.

As the Taiwanese Government has reached visa waiver agreements with most destination countries in this study, Taiwanese visitors enjoy the easiest processing of their visa applications to enter all countries, and to some extent they can travel without visas. The application processes for visitors from China, India and Indonesia are slightly more difficult in terms of processing time (2 to 30 days), but in many cases potential visitors are not required to submit biometrics. In contrast, visitors from Thailand and Vietnam face the most difficult visa processing procedures and the highest costs, with strict biometric requirements put in place by most of the destinations under examination (except New Zealand). Furthermore, the processing time is lengthy, potentially up to 87 days for Vietnam and 107 days for Thailand.

The collection of biometrics in general adds more costs to the processes for many applicants, as they would have to take time off work to travel (sometimes across regions) to the collection centres. This is not only inconvenient for applicants, but also potentially prolongs the visa application processes, as biometrics are a prerequisite requirement before applications can commence. Unfortunately, the exact

costs associated with these factors cannot be quantified. It can vary significantly, depending on the locations of visitors in a country.

From a processing point of view, a perceived minor drawback for Australian visa application has been sudden changes of processing time, depending on the peak/off-peak periods, that does not provide visitors with certainty for trip planning. Australia is the only country that requires Taiwanese passport holders to apply for Electronic Traveller Authority (ETA) visas on the basis of paper-based applications. Also, Australia only offers a paper-based option for transit visas to Chinese, Indians, Indonesians, and Vietnamese passport holders, even though the online option could be made available, as already practiced in a few other countries. Furthermore, Australia requires passport holders from Thailand and Vietnam to submit biometrics in most cases, yet there are very limited locations for these services, only two locations in Thailand and three locations in Vietnam for biometric services. Finally, Australia often offers relatively short lengths of stay compared with other destinations.

Overall, whilst not being the best, Australia is amongst the most competitive destinations from the *processing perspective*. In particular, Australia ranks:

- First for ADS visitor visas (together with New Zealand);
- Second for Standard visitor visas (together with Canada, both behind New Zealand);
- Second for transit visas (behind the Schengen); and,
- Second for working holiday visas, behind New Zealand.

Apart from the explicit visa fees, the real costs of visas include other fees such as biometric fees, Visa Application Centre (VAC) fees, courier fees for paper-based applications, and Passenger Movement Charges (PMC) – a substitute for departure taxes. These are often overlooked. On the basis of the visa fee alone, Australia is not one of the most expensive countries. However, when taking into account all fees, including the PMC, Australia is amongst three countries that have the most expensive visa costs, namely the UK, the US and Australia. This raises a concern that visa policies in Australia probably have other objectives than just a means to provide security and border protection. The high cost will, no doubt, adversely affect the overall perception of visitors from overseas countries of Australia's competitiveness.

A number of recommendations that can improve the competitiveness of Australia's visa programs for policy makers to consider include:

- Reduce visitor visa fees;
- Revise and reduce PMC;
- Extend visa validity;
- Offer online application option to all visitor visa categories;
- Commit to a fixed global standard processing time, or fixed country-specific processing times to provide more certainty to visitors' travel planning;
- Increase the inclusion of more countries under visa waiver agreements and transit-visa exemption;
- Increase the number of locations where applicants can submit biometrics; and,
- Allow Taiwanese passport holders to apply for ETA visas online instead of the paper-based option.



Background



Visa fees and visa processing can have a major impact on the number of visitors to a country. On the one hand, visas are an instrument that all governments, and the Australian Government in this case, use to control who can enter their country for various reasons, more so to ensure security where undesirable foreign nationals are screened and prevented from entering. On the other hand, visas function as a revenue-raising device for many destinations where the politically safer option of “tax exporting” is preferred. Thus, it is imperative to strike a balance between these purposes, as the fees and the processes to approval visas play a significant role in determining a country’s competitiveness in the global tourism market (Artal-Tur, Pallardó-López & Requena-Silvente, 2016). It is on these bases that this report compares Australia’s visa schemes with our key competitors for a few important Asian markets.

Through the availability of Electronic Traveller Authority (ETA) visas (subclass 601) and eVisitor visas (subclass 651) to many source markets, *typically online*, Australia is competitive, in terms of both fees and processes, amongst other destinations such as New Zealand, United Kingdom, USA, Canada and the Schengen countries. The online ETA visa subclass 601 is available for a cost of \$20 to passport holders from Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, the United States and Canada. The average processing time is less than one day. The online eVisitor visa subclass 651 is available free of charge to passport holders from the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Scandinavia, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland. A majority (75 per cent) of applications are processed within one day.

Despite accounting for more than 20 per cent of visitors to Australia, tourists from China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam do not have access to either of these 601 or 651 visa schemes. These visitors only have access to the Visitor visa subclass 600, which costs applicants a minimum charge of AUD 140 and involves a lengthy application processing time of 4 to 42 days for 75 per cent of applications, depending on the visa streams. Hence, an in-depth analysis is warranted to determine whether Australia is competitive from the perspective of cost and processing time for these important markets.

This report sources information mainly from the websites of the Immigration Department and the Embassy of each destination country. It provides a detailed comparison of four broad visitor visa types provided by Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen group to passport holders from six Asian source markets - China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan. These visitor visa types include:

1. Approved destination status (ADS) visitor visa;
2. Standard visitor visa;
3. Transit visa; and,
4. Working holiday visa; or, Work and Holiday visa

It is important to note that the ADS visitor visas are also part of the general visa programs that all destinations in this report offer their visitors for a broader range of travel purposes. The ADS visas are special agreements between the destination countries and the People's Republic of China to facilitate outbound Chinese group travel, thus Chinese applicants can enjoy easier and faster visa processing. For a direct comparison of costs and processes across destination countries, this particular ADS type is presented separately from other streams of the general Visitor visa schemes. For all visa types, costs and processes are assessed for each scheme. *Visa cost* is a comprehensive measure including the explicit visa fees announced by each destinations *plus* any other associated extra costs payable by applicants.

To put visa competitiveness into perspective amongst all destination countries, it would be ideal to rank destinations based on their performance. However, this is not an easy task, as there are many criteria interacting with each other; it is not always straight forward to rank one higher than the others clearly sometimes. The analysis in sections below will *attempt* to present destination countries in a *relative* order, descending *from best to least* in each type of visas, thus sections will not have a uniform order.

Approved Destination Status (ADS) visitor visa

Overview of China's ADS scheme



The ADS scheme was introduced by the Chinese Government in the early 1990s to facilitate and regulate outbound travel. Through bilateral government agreements with overseas destinations, ADS guarantees safe and reliable tourism services for tourist groups handled by assigned local Chinese travel agencies, whilst avoiding possible illegal immigration through tourism channels.¹ Initially granting to destinations in Southeast Asia only, ADS has been extended to cover many other countries all over the world, and as of 2017 there are 125 countries with ADS, contributing to the rapid increase of outbound Chinese tourists.²

In a chronological order, Australia and New Zealand obtained ADS much earlier than all other countries under this review. Table 1 lists specific visa names and related subclasses across destinations.

Table 1: Chronological order of visa schemes in the ADS agreements

Australia	1999	Visitor visa (subclass 600) - ADS stream
New Zealand	1999	Group visitor visa - ADS
The Schengen	2004	Short-term visa (C category) - ADS
The UK	2004	Standard visitor visa - ADS
The US	2008	Tourism and visit visa B-2
Canada	2010	Visitor visa - ADS

¹ <http://www.chinacontact.org/en/what-is-ads-policy/>

² http://www.cnta.gov.cn/ztwz/cjyzt/gltl/201507/t20150708_723265.shtml

Table 2 below provides a summary of visa fees and processes, including method of lodgement, average processing time, length of visa validity and whether biometrics or interviews are required or not.

Visa costs

New Zealand's ADS visa fee is the lowest at NZD 60 (or AUD 54³), just less than half of Australia's AUD 140 per applicant (Table 2). Chinese tourists with ADS visas to the Schengen pay the second lowest visa fee of EUR 60 (AUD 93) for all applicants over 12 years of age, EUR 35 (AUD 54) for children between the ages of 6-12, and free for children under 6 years old. Canada offers the third most competitive visa fee of CAD 100 (AUD 103).

Whilst Chinese tourists to Australia can apply for visas online without any VAC service fees, Chinese visitors to New Zealand and Canada have to pay additional VAC fees of CNY⁴ 210 (AUD 41) and CAD 46.11 (AUD 48) respectively ^{5,6}. The Schengen countries explicitly require all visitors to pay and provide evidence of travel insurance upfront in the application. The costs of insurance are approximately EUR 30 to EUR 80 (or AUD 47 to AUD 124) depending on the length of travel. However, the insurance costs will *not* be incorporated in the comparison of visa fees in this report, as visitors to other countries also pay for their travel insurance, even though they are not officially required by other destinations. Furthermore, the costs of insurance are not clearly known, depending on which insurance companies visitors go with. Thus, a comparison is difficult.

When adding them up the extra VAC fee, the effective ADS visa cost to New Zealand is now (AUD101) higher than the fee charged by the Schengen countries but still lower than Australia's fee (AUD140). However, the effective ADS visa fee to Canada (AUD 151) is slightly higher than that to Australia. This reduces the competitiveness of the country in comparison to that of Australia.

The US has a fixed and relatively high visa fee of USD 160 (AUD 209), including a fee for biometrics, for all applicants. The US's key attraction is that the visas can be valid up to 10 years.

The United Kingdom effectively has the highest ADS visa fee, GBP 89 (or AUD 157). In addition, there is another charge of GBP 55 (AUD 97) for passport and biometric collection fees by some VACs. The UK has introduced a range of additional user-pay services to improve its processing time, including the 3-to-5 day priority visa service (GBP 184 or AUD 323), the 24 hours super priority visa service (GBP 919 or AUD 1615), and the mobile biometric service for up to 10 people (GBP 750⁷ or AUD 1318). For ADS visa processing within a comparable time frame of 4 days and with the convenience of mobile service of biometrics, the visa fee per applicant charged by the UK would be three times (AUD 455⁸) more expensive than the fee charged by the Australian Government (AUD 140).

³ All exchange rates used in this report are extracted on 5th December 2017 from <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=NZD&To=AUD>

⁴ New Zealand uses local Chinese currency in this case for VAC fees and transit visa fees.

⁵ http://www.vfsglobal.cn/Newzealand/China/visitor_visa.html

⁶ https://www.vfsglobal.ca/canada/China/english/Service_and_Service_Charge.html

⁷ <http://www.vfsglobal.co.uk/China/english/index.html>

⁸ AUD 455 = AUD 323 + 0.1*AUD 1318

Table 2: ADS visa fees and processes – a comparative analysis

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
Cost	AUD140	NZD60 (AUD54) visa fee + CNY210 (AUD41) Chinese VAC service fee	GBP89 (AUD157) processing fee Optional GBP 184 (AUD323) fast track or GBP919 (AUD1615) for super priority visa service Some VAC charges a fee of GBP 55 (AUD97) for passport and biometric collection. GBP 750 (AUD1318) for mobile biometrics service (up to 10 people)	USD160 (AUD209), biometrics fees are already included in visa cost	CAD100 (AUD103) individual or CAD500 (AUD517) /family + CAD46.11 (AUD48) VAC services fees for paper-based application	EUR60 (AUD93) EUR 35 (AUD54) for children between the age of 6 to below 12 Fee waiver for children under 6 years old
Processes						
Verify information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo and Passport biodata page • A copy of household registration book and identity card • Tour itinerary • List of all participants • For applicants aged 75 years or older: Evidence of health insurance to cover length of stay in Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leader must complete a Group Visa Application: list of participants, including identifying details and itinerary • Each group member must complete an individual visitor visa including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo, passport biodata pages • A copy of household registration book and identity card • Meet health and character requirements • Document to show you are a genuine visitor • Evidence of sufficient funds and onward travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport • Tour itinerary • List of all participants (minimum 5 people) • Evidence of current employment or studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo & passport valid for 6 months from planned departure • Document to show you are a genuine visitor and intention to return • Evidence of sufficient fund • Evidence of current employment status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo, passport biodata pages • Evidence of sufficient fund • Documents detailing purpose of travel • Document to show you are a genuine visitor and intention to return • Meet health and character requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo & passport valid for 3 months upon planned departure • A copy of household registration book and identity card (with translation in the language of the country receiving the application or in English) • Meet character requirement • Evidence of travel insurance covering a minimum of €30,000 coverage for the entire Schengen area and for the duration of stay • Evidence of sufficient fund • Evidence of current employment status • Tour itinerary, including flight and accommodation details • List of all participants • Flight reservation with confirmation for the China-Europe-China round trip from the airlines • Name and contact details of the designated partner tour operator in Europe.
Processing time	4-5 days	Within 4 working days	Most are processed within 15 days 3-5 day priority visa service Within 24 working-day hours Super priority visa service	Appointment wait time: 2-7 calendar days Processing time: 1-3 working days	19 days, not including transit time between the VAC and IRCC office	2-15 days depending on the jurisdiction
Method of Lodgement	Online (Chinese/English) - lodged by approved ADS travel agents	Paper-based (Chinese/ English), lodged by approved ADS travel agent (31 locations)	Online - lodged by approved ADS travel agents, and required biometrics (15 locations + mobile biometrics service)	Online + Interview in person and provide biometrics (5 locations). A travel coordinator can schedule appointments for all group members	Paper-based - Lodge by approved ADS travel agent via VAC centers (11 locations)	Paper-based, lodged by ADS-accredited travel agency and provide biometrics
Length of validity	Period of stay determined by tour arrangements	Up to 1 month	Up to 30 days	Up to 6 months/visit. Visa validity can be up to 10 years	Up to 6 months	Visas are valid for the pre-determined itinerary as submitted at the time of application, maximum 30 days
Single/Multiple entry	Generally single entry unless the tour involves departure and re-entry to Australia	Single entry	Single or double entry	Multiple entry	Single entry	Single entry

Visa process

Table 2 applies colour coding to differentiate three different levels of difficulty among countries in processing the ADS visas. This colour coding will be applied throughout this report in other visa types, in terms of processes only.

- White group – easy: online or fast processed paper-based applications, no biometrics required.
- Blue code – mid-level: paper-based applications, with average processing time. Biometrics may be required, multiple locations of visa processing centres available for lodgement and even mobile biometrics service
- Yellow – difficult: application processes with either mandatory interviews or biometrics, or both, with limited locations for visa processing centres.

The collection of biometrics could add travelling costs and potentially incur a loss of income to visitors for taking time off work to attend in person at the VAC locations. In some cases, where there are only a limited number of VAC locations, visitors might have to travel across regions which will incur significant travelling costs. This is not only inconvenient for applicants, but also potentially prolongs the visa application processes as biometrics are a prerequisite requirement before applications can commence. Unfortunately, the exact costs associated with these factors cannot be quantified as it varies significantly, depending on the distance between visitors' home town and the VAC locations in a country.

Whilst ADS visa applications are lodged by approved ADS travel agents for all destinations, some countries, such as the US and the UK, require individual visitors for interviews at VACs.

Most effective group: New Zealand and Australia

Australia and New Zealand both offer Chinese tour groups the most efficient ADS visa processes among key destinations. Chinese tour groups can have their visa applications lodged by the approved ADS travel agents either online (Australia) or paper-based (New Zealand, 31 locations). Applications can be in either English or the Chinese language. The required documentation is simple and applicants do not have to visit the Visa Application Centres (VAC) in person for interviews nor for biometrics. Their ADS visas can be processed much faster than most other countries, just within 4 to 5 days from Australia, and 4 working days from New Zealand.

Middle group: UK and Canada

Canada and the UK are slightly less efficient in ADS visa processes. Canada requires the approved ADS travel agents to lodge paper-based applications via its VACs, but there are only 11 locations throughout China. The UK accepts online applications but requires Chinese tourists to provide biometrics in person at 5 locations. The standard processing time is average, within 15 days for the UK using the online option, and 19 days for Canada, not including the transit time for applications from VACs to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

The most difficult group: The Schengen countries and the US

The US and the Schengen countries have the most demanding ADS visa processes. These destinations only allow paper-based applications and applicants are asked to provide additional evidence beyond the general identifying documentation, for example evidence of travel insurance with a minimum coverage of

€30,000 (AUD 46,574) for the entire Schengen area. Importantly, all Chinese tourists applying for ADS visa need to provide biometrics, which include 10 fingerprints and photos. The US also requires all applicants to attend interviews in person. The Schengen group makes it relatively easier for Chinese visitors by allowing them to provide biometrics at VACs and embassies/consulates of any member countries that are part of their planned tours, as compared to only five VAC locations, offered by the US, across the whole China.

The processing time for the ADS visa to the US is between 3 to 10 days⁹ on average and 2-15 days for the Schengen, depending on the jurisdiction. In an effort to attract more Chinese tourists, since January 2016 France has reduced the visa processing time for Chinese group tourists to 48 hours¹⁰. Overall, it is not a simple task to define, in absolute terms, which country is the least competitive regarding processing time (3-10 or 2-15), especially when all verifying information is taken into account, as both require very stringent measures such as evidence of employment status, recent photos and genuine tourist documents with return tickets and sufficient fund to cover the trip's expenses (e.g., recent bank account balance/savings of approximately EUR 40 to EUR 100 per day, depending on the countries for the Schengen visas¹¹, and around USD 5000 for the US). This fund is to cover expenses such as lodging, food, transport etc. There is no specific amount but usually the higher amount the better.

Comments and discussion

Although the US is amongst the most difficult countries to grant visa entry to Chinese visitors, the US' ADS visa scheme does have an attractive feature that could alleviate such negative aspects. It is the only country that offers multiple entry visas for up to ten years. Although visa validity to Canada can last for six months, Chinese visitors can only use it for one visit. Effectively, the long valid visas for Canada are not much different from visas offered by Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the Schengen group. All of them are single entry visas, which would become invalid after the first visit. As nearly 50 per cent of Chinese travellers are repeat visitors, and given the fact that Chinese visitors are highly responsive to income and price changes (Pham, Nghiem & Dwyer, 2017), the long term multiple entry option could benefit the US considerably, compared with other countries.

Recommendations for Australia's benefits

- Depending on the objective (to be discussed in the Standard Visitor Visa program), it is possible to upgrade from single entry to multiple entry and simultaneously increase to ten years.
- A reduced fee could attract more Chinese visitors to Australia to the extent that the loss of visa revenue can be over compensated by commodity tax revenue from more inbound Chinese visitors to Australia.
- As the risk of terrorist attack from Chinese visitors is extremely low, it is an attractive option to provide online fast track approval within 48 hours to facilitate more Chinese tourists to the country.

⁹ The above processing time for the US also includes waiting time to schedule an appointment

¹⁰ <https://www.thelocal.fr/20160112/france-chinese-tourists-visa-cuts>

¹¹ <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/schengen-visa-application-requirements/means-subsistence/>



Standard visitor visa for selected Asian markets



This group is the mainstream of visas available to all tourists from the selected Asian markets who would like to visit one of the destinations under review for holiday; visiting friends and relatives (VFR); and, business purposes. The names of this visa type vary widely across destination countries as seen in Table 3, and generally granted for a period from three months, to six months, or less commonly, 12 months each visit.

Table 3: Standard visitor visa schemes for selected Asian markets by destination countries

Australia	Visitor visa (Subclass 600) – Tourist, Business visitor, Sponsored family and Frequent traveller streams Electronic Travel Authority (subclass 601)
New Zealand	Visitor visa & Business visitor visa
The UK	Standard visitor visa
The US	Tourism and visit visa B-2
Canada	Visitor visa
The Schengen	Short-term visa (C category)

Being part of the visa waiver arrangements for all countries, Taiwanese passport holders travel visa-free or enjoy the easiest process for standard visitor visa. Taiwanese visitors can obtain visas on arrival in New Zealand, the UK and the Schengen. Canada and the US require visa waiver visitors to obtain Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA), which can be applied for online and usually receives approval within minutes. For Australia, quite similarly, Taiwanese visitors have to apply for the Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) subclass 601, which takes just one day for approval.

Visa costs

Table 4 provides a detailed summary of the Standard Visitor Visa processes and costs by Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen to six Asian markets. For each destination, the same fee is applied across all six Asian markets.

Among all Asian markets, Taiwanese passport holders are eligible for visa fee waiver by all destination countries, except for a charge of CAD 7 (AUD 7.25) by the Canadian Government for online Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA).

The Schengen

Giving visitors access to 26 countries, the Schengen group offers the lowest standard visitor visa fee, EUR 60 (AUD 93) for all applicants over 12 years of age, EUR 35 (AUD 54) for children between 6 to 12 years old, and free for those under 6 years old. The Schengen countries explicitly require all visitors to pay and provide evidence of travel insurance upfront in the application. The costs of insurance are approximately EUR 30-80 (or AUD 47-124) depending on the length of travel. Again, the insurance cost is not included in any comparison, as visitors to other countries would very likely pay for their travel insurance as well, even though travel insurance is not part of their visa requirement.

Canada

Canada reduced its standard visa fee significantly from CAD 150 to CAD 100 (or AUD 103) in 2014¹², bringing Canada to the second cheapest country among all destinations. Vietnamese passport holders, however, have to pay an additional fee of CAD 85 (or AUD 88) for biometric collection, making an expensive total cost of CAD 185 (AUD 191) for the Vietnamese visitors.

Australia

The generic visitor visa fee to Australia is AUD140, relatively more expensive than the fees from both the Schengen and Canada for all markets. Additional fees are further applied to Thai (THB 851 or AUD34) and Vietnamese visitors (VND 478,000 or AUD26) for biometric collection. For priority services of 48 hours processing, the visa fee goes up to AUD 1,000.

New Zealand

New Zealand's visa fee for online application of standard visitors is NZD 165 (AUD 148), broadly the same as Australia's fee but much higher than those from the Schengen countries and Canada. Since November 2016, New Zealand has increased the fee for paper-based applications to NZD 184 (AUD

¹² <http://rjrnewsonline.com/local/changes-to-canadian-visa-fees>

166)¹³. For the Chinese market, whilst most destinations apply the same fee for both the Standard visitor visas and the ADS visas, New Zealand is the only destination that differentiates the fees for visitors with ADS and standard visas; the former is 36 per cent cheaper.

The UK and the US

The UK has the second highest visa fee of GBP 89 (AUD 157). In addition, some VACs charge a fee of GBP 55 (AUD 97) for passport and biometric collection. The US has the highest visa fee of 160 USD (210 AUD, including biometric fee).

Similar to the ADS visitor visas, the collection of biometrics may significantly increase the costs for applicants, especially when they have to travel to the collection centres. This also delays the time required for visas to be issued, as the visa processes only start after the biometrics have been collected. Currently, the UK is the only country under review that offers mobile visa and biometric service for applicants in China and India. This service, for up to 10 people, costs GBP 750 (AUD 1318).¹⁴

¹³ <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/fee-increase-paper-visitor-visa-applications>

¹⁴ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Now-get-a-UK-visa-from-home/articleshow/51706105.cms>

Table 4: Standard visa schemes by destination - a comparative analysis

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (4 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 (75% cases)- 29 days (90% cases) for tourists 7 - 17 days for business visitors 40 - 54 days for sponsored family visitors 48 hours for priority service AUD140 or AUD1000 priority service Valid for 3,6 or 12 months Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (31 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 working days (online) 25 working days (paper-based) NZD165 (AUD148) online or NZD184 (AUD166) paper-based Length of stay: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months/visit and up to 9 months in an 18-month period for tourists. 3 months in any 12-month period for business visitors. Valid for up to 5 years Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (15 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard 3-5 days priority service 24 hours super priority service GBP89 (AUD157) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service or GBP919 (AUD1615) for super priority visa processing service. Optional GBP750 (AUD1318) for mobile biometrics service (up to 10 people) Valid for up to 6 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (5 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-7 days for scheduling interview 1-3 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (11 locations) Processing time: 19 days CAD100 (AUD103) (max family CAD500/AUD517) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only and provide biometrics, lodged at any embassy/consulate of member country Processing time: 2-15 days EUR60 (AUD93) or EUR 35 (AUD54) for children aged 6-12. Fee waiver for children under 6 years old Length of stay and validity: up to 90 days in any 180 days period Generally single entry
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (12 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 (75% cases)- 29 days (90% cases) for tourists 7 - 17 days for business visitors 40 - 54 days for sponsored family visitors 48 hours for priority service AUD140 or AUD1000 priority service Valid for 3,6 or 12 months Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (9 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 working days (online) 25 working days (paper-based) NZD165 (AUD148) online or NZD184 (AUD166) paper-based Length of stay and validity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months/visit and up to 9 months in an 18-month period for tourists. 3 months in any 12-month period for business visitors. Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (16 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard Priority service put applicant at the front of the processing queue, usually 5 days 24 hours super priority service GBP89 (AUD157) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service or GBP919 (AUD1615) for super priority visa processing service. Optional GBP750 (AUD1318) for mobile biometrics service (up to 10 people) Valid for up to 6 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (5 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-25 days for scheduling interview 2-3 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (10 locations) Processing time: 31 days CAD100 (AUD103) (max family CAD500/AUD517) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only and provide biometrics, lodged at any embassy/consulate of member country Processing time: 2-15 days EUR60 (AUD93) or EUR 35 (AUD54) for children aged 6-12. Fee waiver for children under 6 years old Length of stay and validity: up to 90 days in any 180 days period Generally single entry
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 (75% cases)- 29 days (90% cases) for tourists 7 - 17 days for business visitors 40 - 54 days for sponsored family visitors 48 hours for priority service AUD140 or AUD1000 priority service Valid for 3,6 or 12 months Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 working days (online) 25 working days (paper-based) NZD165 (AUD148) online or NZD184 (AUD166) paper-based Length of stay and validity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months/visit and up to 9 months in an 18-month period for tourists. 3 months in any 12-month period for business visitors. Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard Priority service put applicant at the front of the processing queue, usually 5 days No super priority service GBP89 (AUD157) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service Valid for up to 6 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 days for scheduling interview 2 working days for processing AUD209 Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 5 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (2 locations) Processing time: 6 days CAD100 (AUD103) or max CAD500 (AUD517) per family Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only and provide biometrics, lodged at any embassy/consulate of member country 2-15 days EUR60 (AUD93) or EUR 35 (AUD54) for children aged 6-12. Fee waiver for children under 6 years old Up to 90 days in any 180 days period Generally single entry

Table 4: Standard visa schemes by destination - a comparative analysis (continued)

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based and provide biometrics (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 (75% cases)- 29 days (90% cases) for tourists 7 - 17 days for business visitors 40 - 54 days for sponsored family visitors 48 hours for priority service AUD140 or AUD1000 priority service + additional AUD34 biometrics fee Valid for 3,6 or 12 months Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (1 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 working days (online) 25 working days (paper-based) NZD165 (AUD148) online or NZD184 (AUD166) paper-based Length of stay and validity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months/visit and up to 9 months in an 18-month period for tourists. 3 months in any 12-month period for business visitors. Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard Priority service put applicant at the front of the processing queue, usually 5 days 24 hours super priority service GBP89 (AUD157) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service or GBP919 (AUD1615) for super priority visa processing service. Optional GBP750 (AUD1318) for mobile biometrics service (up to 10 people) Valid for up to 6 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 days for scheduling interview 1-2 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (1 locations) Processing time: 108 days CAD100 (AUD103) (max family CAD500/AUD517) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only and provide biometrics, lodged at any embassy/consulate of member country 2-15 days EUR60 (AUD93) or EUR 35 (AUD54) for children aged 6-12. Fee waiver for children under 6 years old Up to 90 days in any 180 days period Generally single entry
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 (75% cases)- 29 days (90% cases) for tourists 7 - 17 days for business visitors 40 - 54 days for sponsored family visitors 48 hours for priority service AUD140 or AUD1000 priority service + additional AUD26 biometrics fee Valid for 3,6 or 12 months Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (1 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 working days (online) 25 working days (paper-based) NZD165 (AUD148) online or NZD184 (AUD166) paper-based Length of stay and validity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months/visit and up to 9 months in an 18-month period for tourists. 3 months in any 12-month period for business visitors. Single or multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard Priority service put applicant at the front of the processing queue, usually 5 days No super priority service GBP89 (AUD157) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service Valid for up to 6 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14-28 days for scheduling interview 1 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 1 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based and provide biometrics (2 locations) Processing time: 87 days CAD100 (AUD103) (max family CAD500 - AUD517) processing fee CAD85 (AUD88) (max family CAD170/AUD176 or CAD155/AUD264 group of artists of 3 or more) biometrics fee Length of stay up to 6 months/visit. Valid for up to 10 years Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only and provide biometrics, lodged at any embassy/consulate of member country 2-15 days EUR60 (AUD93) or EUR 35 (AUD54) for children aged 6-12. Fee waiver for children under 6 years old Up to 90 days in any 180 days period Generally single entry
Taiwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Electronic Travel Authority Paper-based, lodged in person or with airlines/travel agents Less than 1 day No fee for paper-based Length of stay 3 months/visit and valid for up to 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Length of stay up to 3 months/visit, no more than 6 months in any 12-month period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Length of stay up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) Online No fee Length of stay up to 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Granted on arrival if arrive by train, bus or boat Online Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) required if arrive by plane Most are approved within minutes CAD7 (AUD7.25) for ESTA Length of stay up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Length of stay up to 90 days in any 180 days period

Visa process

New Zealand

New Zealand's standard visitor visa process is arguably the most efficient. New Zealand provides applicants with both online and paper-based options, and does not require a blanket biometric collection for all visa applicants. The global standard processing time is within 20 working days for online applications and 25 working days for paper-based applications.

Since 2016, New Zealand also introduced streamlined visitor visa processing arrangements for citizens of China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines, who are elite members of seven major airlines and two banks (refer to website in footnote for the full list).¹⁵ Applicants eligible for the streamlined processing are not required to provide financial evidence and can receive their approval within five working days.

Australia and Canada

Overall, both Australia and Canada have relatively efficient visa processes. For Asian countries under review other than Taiwan, Australia and Canada offer online and paper-based applications. Whilst Australia collects biometrics from all Vietnamese and Thai applicants (three locations in Vietnam and two locations in Thailand), Canada only requires Vietnamese passport holders to provide biometrics (two locations).

Australia follows a global standard processing time that is *updated monthly* to reflect factors such as peak/off peak processing periods. In November 2017, seventy five per cent of visa applications of tourists were processed within the first 16 days, and approximately ninety per cent were processed within 29 days; for business visitors, the processing time was reduced to between 7 to 17 days. However, the processing time is quite lengthy, 40 to 54 days, for applicants sponsored by family members living in Australia (Visitor visa subclass 600 - sponsored family). The priority service with 48 hours processing is available at a high cost for those with urgent needs to travel.

Canada does not have a global standard processing time, depending on specific country of origin. As in November 2017, processing time for Asian countries under review vary widely from 6 days for Indonesians, to 19 and 31 days for Chinese and Indians respectively. Notably, the processing time for Vietnamese visitors is 87 days and for Thai visitors is 108 days. For these two visitor groups, Canada is ranked amongst the hard destinations.

The UK, the US and the Schengen

Visitors from Asian source markets other than Taiwan face rather difficult visa processes. Despite having options for online applications, the UK and the US require all visa applicants to provide biometrics. The Schengen countries only allow paper-based applications and also require biometrics, which can be lodged

¹⁵ <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/tools-and-information/general-information/special-visa-processing-arrangements>

Air China, Air New Zealand, China Eastern Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Philippines Airlines, Singapore Airlines, and Thai Airways; Bank of China and China Union Pay.

at any eligible offices of member countries. Apart from biometrics, all visitors to the US also need to attend interviews in person.

The UK and the Schengen have a similar global standard processing time, with most applications being processed within 15 days. In this aspect alone, the UK and the Schengen group are more efficient than Australia as their global processing time does not change frequently based on visa application volume. As mentioned in the previous section, France (a Schengen country) has committed to 48 hours visa processing service to improve its competitiveness. However, the requirement of biometrics and interview has a major counter effect in the assessment.

Similar to Canada, the US has no global standard processing time, depending on the specific country of origin. Combining waiting time for a scheduled interview and subsequent processing time, visitors from Thailand, Indonesia and China enjoy the fastest process of two to four, four, and three to ten days respectively. In contrast, it takes much longer for visitors from India (10 to 28 days) and Vietnam (15 to 29 days) to get their visas approved, predominantly due to the long waiting time for the interviews.

Comments and discussion

Coupled with a low visa fee, the extended visa validity of ten years and a six-month length of stay per visit make Canada the most *open* country to visitors from countries in this review. Although the US also offers six months per visit for most applicants, except visitors from Taiwan, visa validity to the US varies across countries of origin, ten years for China, India and Thailand; five years for Indonesia; and, only one year for Vietnam, despite the same process is applied for all countries.

Countries offer a short validity for visas include New Zealand (eighteen months), the UK (six months), and the Schengen (six months). The length of stay per visit is most limited in the Schengen (90 days), and rather generous in New Zealand (up to nine months).

Australia visa costs are amongst the cheap options with not so complicated processes for the Asian markets. However, Australia has no clear and upfront commitments with applicants about how long their visa lasts and how long visitors can stay in the country. It is very likely to be a single-entry visa, thus visitors can only visit Australia once, and visitors cannot stay longer than the length of time granted at the approval. The length of stay could be three months, six months, and maximum a year. Visitors need to apply for a new visa if they want to return to Australia. If visitors are granted multiple-entry visas, they can visit as many times as they want, but each time cannot be longer than the length of stay granted with the visas.

As China is a significant market to most destination countries, thus besides the ADS agreements, it is not surprising to see both Australia and New Zealand take an extra step to render more special consideration to Chinese tourists compared to other Asian source markets. Chinese applicants are allowed to complete online forms, either in English or simplified Chinese, for their applications to enter the two countries. Since May 2017, New Zealand also allows Chinese visitor applicants to be considered for visa validity of up to 5 years.¹⁶ Australia has introduced a trial of 10-year *Frequent Traveller* visitor visas for Chinese applicants since 2016. The Visitor visa (subclass 600) - Frequent Traveller stream complements the existing standard visitor visas and is suited for travellers from China who have committed to long-term

¹⁶ <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/five-year-multiple-entry-visa>

plans having frequent short-term visits to Australia. Visa holders will be allowed a stay of up to three months per visit and a cumulative stay of no more than 12 months in any 24-month period.¹⁷ Applicants can apply online and the visa process is quite efficient, taking only five to six days. However, this visa incurs a very high fee of AUD1020 and requires biometrics provided in person. Depending on personal circumstances, they may also be asked to conduct health examinations and provide police certificates.¹⁸

Given the high visa *processing fee* and complicated document requirements, Australia's Frequent Traveller stream is certainly an uncompetitive program when compared to visa schemes of other destination countries such as the US' and Canada's. Recent data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA, 2017) indicate that Chinese visitors' expenditure for holiday, visiting relatives and friends, and even for business purposes is between AUS 4,600 to AUD 5,300. The fee of the Frequent Traveller stream is approximately 25 per cent of the average trip spend for first time visitors. Thus, this option is highly unlikely to be taken by the average Chinese visitors when they only have to pay much smaller fees to obtain ten-year visas to Canada (AUD 103) and the US (AUD 209). This Frequent Traveller stream in fact appears to be a policy designed to select just the top-end group of Chinese visitors to form a high yield repeat visitor group whilst the ADS program continues to provide opportunities for all other Chinese visitors to travel to the country. The long-term self-selection process will automatically accumulate visitors with higher travel budget and with more luxury tastes that can result in more average spend per trip. The implication for the accommodation sector is likely to be an increased demand for more luxury hotels located in central areas with well-known brand name shops to suit expenditure patterns of the high-end Chinese visitors. However, the practicality of this *high yield visa policy* and its potential economic impacts are beyond the scope of this report, thus remain as future research.

Nevertheless, as New Zealand and Australia tend to be complementary destinations between each other (Lim & McAleer, 2001), it might also be logical for Australia to capture the potential spill-over benefits of more visitors travelling to New Zealand on the five-year visas by increasing the validity of Australia's visas to the same time frame. It remains a possible option for New Zealand and Australia to form an equivalent to the Schengen group: visitors with visas to one country could also enter the other country.

¹⁷ <http://china.embassy.gov.au/bjng/trialof10yearfrequenttravellervisa.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/frequent-traveller-stream>

Transit visa



Transit visas are required when travellers make a short stop-over in a country whilst travelling to another country, or passing through a country to join a ship as crew. This also includes people who do not go through immigration but remain in the transit lounge. Table 5 outlines the specific names for transit visas of the destinations under review.

Table 5: Transit visa scheme by country

Australia	Transit visa (Subclass 771)
New Zealand	Transit visa
The UK	Direct Airside Transit Visa, and Visitor in Transit Visa
The US	Transit visa
Canada	Transit visa, and China Transit program
The Schengen	Airport transit visa (A Category)

Visa costs

The Schengen

Among all six Asian markets, visitors from India are the only group that will have to pay the standard visitor visa fees if passing through Czech Republic, Germany and France. The fees are EUR 60 (AUD 93) for all visitors over 12 years of age, EUR 35 (AUD 54) for children between 6 to 12 years old, and free for those under 6 years old.^{19, 20, 21} For all other source markets, it is free to pass through the Schengen countries.

Australia and Canada

Apart from the Schengen countries, arguably Australia and Canada offer visitors *cost effective* transit visa programs. Transit visa fees are waived; that is there are no visa fees. However, applications for transit visas are required, either online or paper-based. Both options are available from Canada, only the paper-based is available from Australia. Effectively, this means many applicants will need to pay service fees, from AUD 25 to AUD 55, depending on the country, to the Australian VACs whilst visitors to Canada could avoid the fee by applying through the online option. However, for both destinations, Vietnamese passport holders need to pay an additional biometric fee of VND 428,000 (AUD 26) for Australia and CAD 85 (AUD 88) per applicant or CAD 170 (AUD 176) per family for Canada. Although Taiwanese visitor transit visas are waived, Canada still requires transit passengers to apply online for ESTA, which will cost Taiwanese visitors CAD 7 (AUD 7.25)

The UK

Amongst all six Asian markets, the UK government grants visa exemption, thus free, for visitors from Taiwan, Indonesia and Thailand who stay airside in transit through the airport. However, visitors from China, India and Vietnam have to pay either a fee of GBP 34 (AUD 60) for *Direct Airside Transit Visa* (DATV) to stay airside or GBP 62 (AUD 110) for *Visitor in Transit Visa* (VITV) to enter the country. Applications can be applied online but biometrics are to be provided in person for those who wish to enter the country. Whilst many embassies and VACs do not charge a fee for biometric collection, some premium/user-pay VACs may charge GBP 55 (AUD 97) for biometric and passport handling fees. This is actually a lengthy process that could take up to 15 days for just passing through the UK. Thus, some visitors might be forced to opt for other user-pay services such as priority processing service (GBP 184 or AUD 323) when time is not an option for them.

New Zealand

All transit visitors through New Zealand will have to pay transit visa fees as well as any associated VAC service fees. These fees are not uniform across countries. Rather, they are country-specific. The visa fees range from AUD 138 to AUD 154; and the VAC service fees from AUD 21 to AUD 46 (refer to Table 6, noting Taiwanese visitors are free.

¹⁹ <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/france-visa/application-fee/>

²⁰ http://www.vfs-germany.co.in/mumbai/airport_transit.html

²¹

http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/informace_pro_cizince/obecne_vizove_informace/sazebnik_vizovych_poplatku/index.html



Table 6: Transit visa scheme - a comparative analysis

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based (4 locations) Processing time: 4-6 days No fee Valid for 72 hours Stay airside or single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only (31 locations) Processing time: Within 10 working days CNY725 (AUD145) processing fee + CNY230 (AUD 46) VAC service fee Valid for 24 hours Stay airside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (15 locations and mobile biometrics service) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard 3-5 days priority service 24 hours super priority service GBP34 (AUD60) for Direct Airside Transit visa (DATV) or GBP62 (AUD110) for Visitor in Transit visa (VITV) Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service or GBP919 (AUD1615) for super priority visa processing service. Optional GBP750 (AUD1318) for mobile biometrics service (up to 10 people) Valid for 24 hours for DATV and 48 hours for VITV Stay airside (DATV) or single entry (VITV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (5 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-7 days for scheduling interview 1-3 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Valid for up to 29 days Single entry 	<p>China Transit Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa exempt for Chinese citizens who plan to fly through Canada to or from the United States Must arrive and leave on the same day <p>For those not eligible for the above program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (11 locations) Processing time: 19 days No fee Valid for 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport transit visa not required Length of stay up to 24 hours No entry (stay airside)
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based (12 locations) Processing time: 4-6 days No fee Length of stay: Up to 72 hours Stay airside or single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only (9 locations) Processing time: Within 10 working days INR7000 (AUD 144) processing fee + INR1000 (AUD 21) VAC service fee Valid for 24 hours Stay airside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (16 locations and mobile biometrics service) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard 3-5 days priority service 24 hours super priority service GBP34 (AUD60) for Direct Airside Transit visa (DATV) or GBP62 (AUD110) for Visitor in Transit visa (VITV) Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service or GBP919 (AUD1615) for super priority visa processing service. Optional GBP750 (AUD1318) for mobile biometrics service (up to 10 people) Valid for 24 hours for DATV and 48 hours for VITV Stay airside (DATV) or single entry (VITV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (5 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-25 days for scheduling interview 2-3 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Valid for up to 29 days Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (10 locations) Processing time: 31 days No fee Valid for 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport transit visa required when passing through Czech Republic, Germany and France. Transit visa not required for other member countries Paper-based and provide biometrics, lodged at any embassy/consulate of member country Processing time: 2-15 days EUR60 (AUD93) or EUR 35 (AUD54) for children aged 6-12. Fee waiver for children under 6 years old Valid for 24 hours No entry (stay airside)
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based (4 locations) Processing time: 4-6 days No fee Valid for 72 hours Stay airside or single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only (2 locations) Processing time: Within 10 working days Rp 1,400,000 (AUD137) processing fee + Rp 248,500 (AUD 24) VAC service fee Valid for 24 hours Stay airside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Airside Transit visa (DATV) exempted Length of stay up to 24 hours Stay airside Visitor in Transit visa (for landside transit): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days standard 3-5 days priority service No super priority service GBP62 (AUD110) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) priority service Valid for 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 days for scheduling interview 2 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Valid for up to 29 days Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (2 locations) Processing time: 6 days No fee Valid for 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport transit visa not required Length of stay up to 24 hours No entry (stay airside)

Table 6: Transit visa scheme – (continued).

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit visa exempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only (1 location) Processing time: Within 10 working days THB3800 (AUD 154) processing fee + THB800 (AUD 33) VAC service fee Valid for 24 hours Stay airside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Airside Transit visa (DATV) exempted Length of stay up to 24 hours Stay airside <p>-----</p> <p>Visitor in Transit visa (for landside transit):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: 15 days standard 3-5 days priority service No super priority service GBP62 (AUD110) processing fee Optional GBP184 (AUD323) priority service Valid for up to 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) Processing time: 1-2 days for scheduling interview 1-2 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Valid for up to 29 days Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based (1 location) Processing time: 108 days No fee Valid for 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport transit visa not required Length of stay up to 24 hours No entry (stay airside)
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: 4-6 days No visa fee but AUD26 biometrics fee Length of stay: up to 72 hours Stay airside or single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based only (1 location) Processing time: Within 10 working days VND2.370.000 (AUD 138) processing fee + VND 484.500 (AUD 28) VAC service fee Valid for 24 hours Stay airside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application and provide biometrics (3 locations) Processing time: 15 days standard 3-5 days priority service No super priority service <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GBP34 (AUD60) for Direct Airside Transit visa (DATV) or GBP62 (AUD110) for Visitor in Transit visa (VITV) Optional GBP184 (AUD323) for priority processing service Valid for 24 hours for DATV and 48 hours for VITV Stay airside (DATV) or single entry (VITV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) Processing time: 14-28 days for scheduling interview 1 working days for processing USD160 (AUD209) Valid for up to 29 days Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based and provide biometrics (2 locations) Processing time: 87 days No fee + biometric fee CAD85 (AUD 88)/person or CAD170 (AUD 176)/family Valid for 48 hours Single entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport transit visa not required Length of stay up to 24 hours No entry (stay airside)
Taiwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Transit visa exempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Transit visa exempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver Country Transit visa exempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa Waiver country Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) Online No fee Valid for 90 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Online Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) required if arrive by flight or transit Most are approved within minutes CAD7 (AUD7.25) for ESTA Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Airport transit visa not required Stay airside or visa on arrival

The US

The US applies the same fees to both schemes: the standard visitor visa and the transit visitor visa. Thus, all transit passengers from other Asian source markets have to pay the same fee as standard visitor visa USD 160 (AUD 209), except Taiwanese visitors (visa waiver country). As expected, additional costs may incur due to the requirement to show up in person for interviews/biometrics during working hours.

Visa process

The Schengen

In general, there are no options for transit visa holders to enter the Schengen countries whilst waiting for the next flight. Travellers will have to apply for Standard Visitor Visas if they wish to go through the immigration (except for Taiwan - visa waiver country).

For the purpose of transiting, the Schengen offers the most efficient program with airport transit visa exemption up to 24 hours for most Asian markets; except Indian visitors, whose airport transit visas are required to go through Czech Republic, Germany and France, and the same standard visitor visa fees are applied. Indian applicants would have to apply via paper-based and provide biometrics at the relevant embassy/VACs. The processing time is two days if transiting via France and up to fifteen days for the other two countries. It appears that the Schengen countries have a much stronger focus on screening Indian visitors than visitors from other origins to their countries.

Australia

Australia offers transit visitors through the country a simple and very effective visa scheme. Australia exempts transit visas for visitors from Thailand, Taiwan and for Indian official passport holders. Visitors from China, India, Indonesia and Vietnam can only apply via paper-based, and the Vietnamese passport holders are particularly required to submit biometrics. The visa processing time is four to six days. In general, for a small fee, transit visas allow passengers to either stay airside or having single entry for up to 72 hours, which is far more convenient for visitors than just 24 hours offered by the Schengen group. This way, Australia provides visitors in transit an incentive and opportunity to have a business trip or at least to visit one of the iconic destinations of the country for tourists travelling for leisure. The induced effect could be significant, as international business travellers could easily arrange a meeting in Australia – a third party country – or subsequent visits for leisure visitors.

Canada

Transit visas in Canada allow passengers to either stay airside or enter the country (single entry) for up to 48 hours. Taiwanese passport holders are required to apply online for ESTA and most are approved within minutes. Canada allows all visitors to apply both online or via paper-based. The online option is a more convenient and cost effective option. However, Vietnamese passport holders are required to submit biometrics (quite expensive). For Chinese visitors particularly, transit visas are exempt if they arrive from the US and leave Canada on the same day.

One of the negative aspects of visa processing by Canada is that it can be very time consuming for some countries such as India (31 days), Thailand (108 days) and Vietnam (87 days). This potentially puts the competitiveness of Canada's visa process at risk compared to Australia, the UK and the Schengen group even though Canada is quite cost-effective and cost-competitive.

New Zealand

New Zealand reduces the transit visa *processing time* by half of the standard visa process. It has a global policy of ten days for all markets using the paper-based option, lodged at the VAC locations. This approach could be rather inconvenient for travellers, as some may have to travel to the VACs for lodgement or pay extra courier fees, even though they are not going to stay in New Zealand. It has a strict rule of 24 hours airside only, no entry is allowed to the country, except visitors from Taiwan with visa waiver country status.

The UK

The UK has two types of transit visas that distinguish between passengers who stay airside and who wish to enter the country. The Direct Airside Transit visas (DATV) are similar to the Schengen transit visas that allow passengers to stay airside for up to 24 hours. The Visitor in Transit visas (VITV) allow passengers to have a single entry to the country for up to 48 hours.

Given the visa waiver status, visitors from Taiwan can pass through transit visa-free. Visitors from Indonesia and Thailand are also exempt from applying for DATV, no fees to stay airside. For China, India and Vietnam, applicants can choose a specific visa type that suits their transit need. Biometric collection is required for all visitors from these three countries, despite them being able to apply online. The processing time of this biometric collection is the same as for Standard Visitor Visa – within 15 days. Thus, it would require Chinese, Indian and Vietnamese visitors a bit of planning ahead to allow for time before travelling through the UK. Otherwise, they would have to pay a large fee for priority/super priority service to speed up the process.

The US

Transit visas through the US do not require visitors to leave on the same day. The US actually offers 29 days of validity for a single entry. Thus, visitors in transit through the US could stay for a short visit, as granted by the policy. This scheme is more flexible than the transit visa offered by the Australian Government (3 days). However, all visitors have to adhere to the standard visa process and attend in person for interviews and biometric collection, which can be quite inconvenient for travellers, considering they might not need to enter and stay in the country. Similar to Canada, the US does not have a global processing time; the time required for scheduling interview and processing is country specific, the most time consuming for tourists from Vietnam (15 to 28 days) and India (8 to 25 days).

Comments and discussion

Transit visa schemes deal with visitors passing through a country for a short period of time. Destination countries have different focuses and objectives thus provide different incentives to visitors in transit. For some countries, transit visa policies tend to be designed to optimise the operation of the airports. This can be seen by the strict 24-hour airside only policy of New Zealand and the Schengen countries. Some transit visa schemes encourage tourists to go through their countries by not charging transit visa fees. This policy probably works well for transport-hub countries hosting long-haul carriers connecting regions. The no transit visa fee would encourage overseas travellers to fly with their airlines, boosting more air service sales for the country than the foregone transit visa fee itself. This is probably the approach adopted by the Schengen countries.

For other countries, the transit visa policy seems to persuade travellers to take time out for a stay in the country by charging travellers a sizeable fee and providing a long period of validity for the transit visas. This way, travellers might as well make use of what they pay for and explore the country. This is probably the approach adopted by the US.

Australia's approach seems to be somewhere in between: free transit visas with a validity only for three days. Given Australia's geographical location (i.e. airports are not major international hubs and are quite distant from all other destinations), the zero-fee policy would, at least, not add any discouraging factors preventing travellers to pass through the country. Once visitors have arrived, the convenience of having three days might entice them to stay and thus generate induced tourism expenditure that would more than offset the foregone visa fee. If travellers want to explore the country to a greater extent, they will have to come back for a longer period and full visa fees will be charged.

Given the fact that Australia is not an intended destination of visitors' journey initially, perhaps the online application option would (a) provide convenience to attract visitors, (b) improve productivity from the Australian administrative perspective and (c) reduce any *unnecessary* costs associated with VAC services for the visitors to increase incentive.

Amongst countries that have similar practice of short stays such Canada and the UK (VITV), both allow visitors two days, slightly less than what Australia currently offers (three days). Outside this review, Qatar²² has increased their free transit visa to four days, undoubtedly to provide more incentive for tourists to spend in the country. Although there is not such a benchmark for this practice, it is desirable to increase the current validity to a reasonable length of time for tourists to visualise the benefits clearly, thus four or five days are advisable.

²² <https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/26/09/2016/Qatar-expands-free-transit-visa-stay-to-96-hours-for-all-nationalities>

Working holiday visa or Work and holiday visa



Many countries, including Australia, have developed Working Holiday Maker visa programs to promote cultural exchange and enable young travellers, usually between 18-30 years old, to have extended periods of holidays, which are partially funded by earned income through short-term employment at the destinations.²³ A very important aspect of most of these programs is the ability to attract young workers to supplement the domestic labour force in areas of need. Table 7 lists specific visa schemes that are available in relation to the Asian source markets under review.

Table 7: Working Holiday Visa schemes by selected destination countries

Australia	Work and Holiday visa (Subclass 462) Working holiday visa (Subclass 417)
New Zealand	China working holiday visa Thailand working holiday visa Vietnam working holiday visa Taiwan working holiday visa
The UK	Tier 5 (Youth mobility scheme) visa
The US	Student/Exchange visitor visa J1
Canada	International Experience Canada (IEC) work permit
The Schengen	No specific working holiday visa for the whole Schengen. Any available programs are bilateral agreements between countries

²³ <http://www.australia.com/en/facts-and-planning/working-holiday-visa-faq.html>

Whilst all countries other than Australia have concise visa program names, Australia's two visas are not quite different from each other. The differences could be the priority that the Australian Government grants to each group of countries, in terms of quotas and processing times. The Working Holiday visa program (subclass 471) seems to have a higher priority. Full lists of countries in these programs are presented in Appendix 1. Essentially, Work and Holiday visa subclass 462 includes China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam whilst Working Holiday visa subclass 417 covers Taiwan. India, however, is not eligible to any programs. Table 8 provides a detailed summary of a broad range of all Working Holiday Maker ²⁴ (WHM) visa programs offered by Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen to six Asian source markets. It should be noticed that not all countries have these working holiday visa programs linking with these Asian source markets.

Visa costs

Of the twenty six countries in the Schengen group, only Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have working holiday visa programs with Taiwan, the only one out of six Asian markets under review. Visa fees vary with each of these Schengen countries. Slovakia offers the lowest fee of 33 EUR (AUD 52) whilst Belgium charges the highest fee of EUR 350 (AUD 548).

Canada has a very competitive visa fee, CAD150 (AUD155), followed by New Zealand with a fee of NZD 208 (AUD 190). The UK and Australia have comparable visa fees with each other, GBP 235 (AUD 418) and AUD 440 respectively, and both are much more expensive than that of Canada and New Zealand. For the UK, Taiwanese applicants would need to submit biometrics, which incurs an additional VAC fee of GBP 55 (AUD 97) for passport and biometric collection. Thus, *the effective fee for Taiwanese visitors is GBP 290 (AUD 515)*. For Australia's program, Thai and Vietnamese passport holders are required to submit biometrics. This would imply an additional cost of THB 851 (AUD 34) for Thai visitors and VND 478,000 (AUD 26) for Vietnamese visitors. Total cost for Thai visitors could be AUD 474, and AUD 466 for Vietnamese visitors.

Visa cost for the US continues to be the highest among the destination countries under review. The US charges a standard visitor visa fee of USD 160 (AUD 212) and an additional USD 180 (AUD 239) SEVIS fee. SEVIS is an internet-based database that allows schools and other sponsoring organisations to transmit data regarding students to the Immigration.²⁵ Importantly, applicants also have to pay the program fee, which is approximately USD 1000 (AUD 1331), depending the sponsors. In total, the cost of working holiday visa in the US would add up to an expensive sum of USD 1340 (AUD 1782).

²⁴ This Working Holiday Maker term refers to all visa programs related to this purpose, including "Work and Holiday" and "Working Holiday" visas.

²⁵ <https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/current/sevis/>

Table 8: Working holiday maker visa schemes - a comparative analysis

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
China	<p>Work and Holiday visa (Subclass 462)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application or paper-based (12 locations) •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Annual quota of 5000 first working holiday visas •Processing time: 24-49 days •AUD440 •Length of stay up to 12 months •Multiple entry 	<p>China working holiday visa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Annual quota of 1000 first working holiday visas •Processing time: Within 20 working days •NZD208 (AUD190) •Length of stay up to 12 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	<p>Student/Exchange visitor visa J1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (5 locations) •For post-secondary school students enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or other full-time course of study •Applicants must meet educational and English requirements •No quota on visa but the application process is supervised by a designated sponsor •Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-6 days for scheduling interview 1-2 working days for processing •USD160 (AUD212) processing fee + USD180 (AUD239) SEVIS fee + Program fees (vary by sponsor) •Length of stay and validity up to 3 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa
India	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa	<p>Student/Exchange visitor visa J1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (5 locations) •For post-secondary school students enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or other full-time course of study •Applicants must meet educational and English requirements •No quota on visa but the application process is supervised by a designated sponsor •Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-25 days for scheduling interview 2-3 working days for processing •USD160 (AUD212) processing fee + USD180 (AUD239) SEVIS fee + Program fees (vary by sponsor) •Length of stay and validity up to 4 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa
Indonesia	<p>Work and Holiday visa (Subclass 462)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application or paper-based (12 locations) •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Annual quota of 1000 first working holiday visas •Processing time: 24-49 days •AUD440 •Length of stay up to 12 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa	<p>Student/Exchange visitor visa J1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) •For post-secondary school students enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or other full-time course of study •Applicants must meet educational and English requirements •No quota on visa but the application process is supervised by a designated sponsor •Processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 days for scheduling interview 1-2 working days for processing •USD160 (AUD212) processing fee + USD180 (AUD239) SEVIS fee + Program fees (vary by sponsor) •Length of stay and validity up to 2 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa

Table 8: Working holiday maker visa schemes - a comparative analysis (cont.)

	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	USA	Canada	Schengen
Thailand	<p>Work and Holiday visa (Subclass 462)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application or paper-based and provide biometrics (2 locations) •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Annual quota of 500 first working holiday visas •Processing time: 24-49 days •AUD440 processing fee + AUD34 biometrics fee •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	<p>Thailand working holiday visa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Quota of 100 first working holiday visas issued each year •Processing time: Within 20 working days •NZD208 (AUD190) •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	<p>Student/Exchange visitor visa J1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) •For post-secondary school students enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or other full-time course of study •Applicants must meet educational and English requirements •No quota on visa but the application process is supervised by a designated sponsor •1-2 days for scheduling interview •1-2 working days for processing •AUD212 processing fee + AUD239 SEVIS fee + Program fees (vary by sponsor) •Length of stay and validity up to 4 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa
Vietnam	<p>Work and Holiday visa (Subclass 462)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application or paper-based and provide biometrics (2 locations) •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Annual quota of 200 first working holiday visas •Processing time: 24-49 days •AUD440 processing fee + AUD26 biometrics fee •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	<p>Vietnam working holiday visa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Quota of 100 first working holiday visas issued each year •Processing time: Within 20 working days •NZD208 (AUD190) •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	<p>Student/Exchange visitor visa J1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (2 locations) •For post-secondary school students enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or other full-time course of study •Applicants must meet educational and English requirements •No quota on visa but the application process is supervised by a designated sponsor •Processing time: 7-15 days for scheduling interview 1 working day for processing •USD160 (AUD212) processing fee + USD180 (AUD239) SEVIS fee + Program fees (vary by sponsor) •Length of stay and validity up to 4 months •Multiple entry 	Not eligible for working holiday visa	Not eligible for working holiday visa
Taiwan	<p>Working holiday visa (subclass 417)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application or paper-based (1 location) •For applicants between 18-30 years of age. •No limit on number of visas issued each year •Processing time: 11-24 days •AUD \$440 online + additional \$80 for paper-based •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	<p>Taiwan working holiday visa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application •For applicants between 18-30 years of age who meet educational and English requirements. •Quota of 600 first working holiday visas issued each year •Processing time: Within 20 working days •NZD208 (AUD190) •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	<p>Youth mobility scheme visa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application and provide biometrics •For applicants between 18-30 years of age •Quota of 1000 visa issued each year •Processing time: Within 21 days •GBP235 (AUD418) •Valid for 24 months •Multiple entry 	<p>Student/Exchange visitor visa J1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online application, provide biometrics and interview in person (1 locations) •For post-secondary school students enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or other full-time course of study •Applicants must meet educational and English requirements •No quota on visa but the application process is supervised by a designated sponsor •Processing time: 8 days for scheduling interview 2 working day for processing •USD160 (AUD212) processing fee + USD180 (AUD239) SEVIS fee + Program fees (vary by sponsor) •Length of stay and validity up to 4 months •Multiple entry 	<p>International Experience Canada work permit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •For applicants between 18-35 years of age •Annual quota of 940 •Eligible applicants register to enter the pools of IEC candidates and can only apply online for a work permit once receive invitation. •Processing time: 8 weeks •CAD150 (AUD155) •Valid for 12 months •Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Working holiday visa agreement with Austria, Belgium, Czech republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia. •Paper-based and provide biometrics •For applicants between 18 and 30 years •Annual quota, fees and processing time varies by country •Lowest fee: Slovakia 33 EUR (AUD 52). Highest fee Belgium EUR 350 (AUD 548) •Valid for 1-2 years depending on country

Visa process

As most of other destinations do not have working holiday programs with all markets in interest, the comparison in this section is probably more comparable just among New Zealand, Australia and the US.

New Zealand

Arguably, New Zealand has the most *competitive process*, with 20 working days processing time globally for all markets and no requirement for biometrics. New Zealand only offers applicants between 18-30 years of age from China, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam opportunities to visit and work in the country for up to 12 months. Applicants can apply online and in general must have functional English and tertiary qualifications. There are limited numbers of visitors accepted for each year, depending on origins: 1000 for China, 600 for Taiwan, and 100 each for Thailand and Vietnam. India and Indonesia are currently not eligible for New Zealand's working holiday visa programs.

Australia

Australia has the *most comprehensive* Working Holiday Maker visa program, across both subclass 462 and subclass 471. These apply to visitors who are between 18-30 years old, without any accompanying dependent children and would like to travel and work in Australia up to a year. Applications can be lodged either online or paper-based. India is the only country that is not eligible for both programs.

Taiwanese passport holders are eligible for Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417) without any limit on the number of visas issued each year. Application visa processing time for this subclass is relatively fast, from 11 to 24 days. There are no specific educational and English requirements for applicants. The Australian Government is considering options for expanding the upper boundary of eligibility from 30 to 35 years of age, including timeframes, legislative requirements and engagement with partner countries²⁶, Taiwan in this case.

China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam are eligible for Work and Holiday visa (Subclass 462). The processing time for this visa on average is between 24 to 49 days, much longer than the processing time in New Zealand. Applicants in this subclass are required to have functional English and tertiary qualifications.

There are different annual quotas applied to first visa applicants for different countries. China and Indonesia have large quotas, 5,000 and 1,000 respectively, and are not required to submit biometrics. Thailand and Vietnam have much smaller quotas, 500 and 200 respectively, and must submit biometrics.

The Working Holiday Maker program is intended to offer participants just one visa in their lifetime. However, when applicants spent three months of work during the first visa period in rural areas on specified work, they are eligible for a second Working Holiday Maker visa (Department of Immigration and Border Protection Australian Government, 2017).

The US

The US does not offer a working holiday visa program per se but rather a variety of cultural and educational exchange programs. The most comparable type of visa to working holiday visa is Student/Exchange visitor visa J-1 (Summer Work Travel Program). This type of visa allows college and

²⁶ <https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/417-#tab-content-1>

university students enrolled full time and pursuing studies at post-secondary accredited academic institutions located outside the US to temporarily work and travel in the US during their summer vacation.²⁷

All Asian countries under review are eligible to apply. The visa validity is generally short and varies between countries: up to 4 months for applicants from India, Thailand and Taiwan, up to 3 months for applicants from China and up to 2 months for those from Indonesia and Vietnam.

There is no quota on first visas for any country. Instead, the US introduces a third party (i.e., designated sponsor organisations) to select eligible applicants and monitor the whole application process. Applicants generally need to have functional English and successfully completed at least one semester or an equivalent of post-secondary academic study in their origin country.

As with all types of visas, the US requires applicants to have interview and provide biometrics in person. The processing time also varies between countries, with Thailand enjoying the fastest process of two to four days and India the longest waiting time of up to 28 days. However, this processing time does not take into account the time required for applicants to be screened, selected and registered by the designated sponsor organisations (usually 3-6 weeks).²⁸ Effectively, the whole process is quite lengthy.

The UK and Canada

Both the UK and Canada have very limited working holiday programs for Asian countries. Except Taiwan, none other countries are eligible.

As of 2017, the UK's Tier 5 (Youth mobility scheme) has only eight countries (Appendix 2) participating in the scheme, including Taiwan.²⁹ This visa program allows applicants between the ages of 18 to 30 to live and work in the UK for up to 2 years. Canada has the International Experience Canada (IEC) program, which provides temporary work permits (12 to 24 months) to young people between 18 and 35³⁰ years old from over 30 countries including Taiwan (Appendix 3).

Both the UK and Canada allow online applications but applicants need to submit biometrics for the UK. The quotas on the numbers of visa issued each year for Taiwan are broadly the same, 1000 for the UK and 940 for Canada. Candidates for IEC program are registered into a pools and can only apply online for a work permit once receive an invitation. Taiwanese applications are required to have proof of £1,890 (AUD 3366) or CAD 2500 (AUD 2590) in their savings account to cover expenses. The processing time is average for UK (within 21 days) and quite lengthy for Canada (8 weeks).

The Schengen

As mentioned earlier, no specific Working Holiday Visa program exists for the whole Schengen. Instead, programs are at the individual country level – bilateral agreements between countries. China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam are not eligible for working holiday visa with any Schengen countries. Taiwan, however, has reached working holiday visa agreements with eight countries in the

²⁷ <https://j1visa.state.gov/programs/summer-work-travel/>

²⁸ <http://www.intraxworktravel.com/participants/frequently-asked-questions/>

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-youth-mobility/eligibility>

³⁰ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/iec/eligibility.asp>

Schengen^{31,32,33,34}: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Depending on each country, the eligible age groups accepted are all different: 18-26 for Czech Republic, 18-35 for Hungary, and 18-30 for other countries. Poland is the only country that offers two year working holiday visas whilst the rest only allow one year. The visa process is difficult, which allows only paper-based and requires biometrics.

The annual quotas for Taiwanese working holiday visitors are low: 50 for Austria, 100 for Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, 200 for Belgium and Poland, 300 for Germany, and 500 for France. Processing time varies depending on countries but typically takes 2 weeks or more.

Comments and discussion

Comparatively, the Working Holiday Maker program of Australia is comprehensive, covering five (out of six) Asian source markets under review. Every year, Australia is prepared to take in a total of 6,700 first working holiday visa applicants from China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, apart from an unlimited number of applicants from Taiwan. The contingent of 6,700 applicants is far more than the combined total number of applicants offered by New Zealand, the UK, Canada and the Schengen together (5290 applicants, first working holiday visas). Including all source countries beyond the ones considered in this review, there was a total of 157,858 first Working Holiday visas (subclass 417) and 34,097 second Working Holiday visas granted by Australia in 2016-17. In the same year, Australia granted 18,647 first Work and Holiday visas (subclass 462) and 409 second Work and Holiday visas. These numbers illustrate a substantial commitment of the Australian government toward the program, which offers a large potential to supplement our domestic labour force for areas of need.

However, the visa fees and processing times for the Working Holiday Maker visa program of Australia do not seem to match with its intended commitment. In order to assess how serious the Australian Government is committed to attracting additional labour supply, the comparison here across all six destinations is now broadened across to all markets that these destinations have, beyond the five Asian markets in interest. The visa fees of Australia are expensive, from AUD 440 to AUD 470. This is nearly three times more expensive than that of Canada (CAD 150 or AUD 155), and more than twice as much the fee of New Zealand (NZD 280 or AUD 190), our closest neighbour. Furthermore, the processing time for Work and Holiday visa (subclass 462) is between 24 to 49 days, far too long compared to other countries such as New Zealand (within 20 working days), the UK (within 21 working days). In fact, it is probably the second slowest, behind Canada with 56 days.

Given the fact that these programs are designed for young people to travel and work in Australia, it is imperative that the working conditions for these young travellers are safe and fair. In addition, the competitiveness of these visa programs also depends on other economic factors such as income tax imposed wage income of these young travellers.

All in all, the fees, the process, working conditions and the income tax, these are areas that can be further refined to make Australia's working holiday program more and more attractive. Otherwise, regardless

³¹ <http://taipei.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/coming-belgium/working-holiday-program>

³² https://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=1EADDCFD4C6EC567&s=F0FD7A1055977E0C

³³ <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/07/15/2003651076>

³⁴ <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201411240010.aspx>

how cheap the visa fees are, how easy the processes can be, the program cannot be successful. The impacts are not only the potential loss of tourism expenditure generated by these working holiday makers, it will also be a loss of the supplementary labour supply to areas of need, especially in remote areas of Australia, where regional industries, particularly tourism and agriculture, cannot rely on the domestic source in high demand seasons.

Departure taxes

A comparison between Australia and key competitors



A **departure tax** is a fee charged by a country upon a passenger's departure from that country. Departure taxes have become increasingly popular in recent years. Governments may impose a tax on air and sea passengers for a number of reasons, for instance, as an environmental charge; to provide funds for passenger-related services; to raise general government revenues; and to fund specific non-transport initiatives (Keen & Strand, 2007).³⁵

However, a high departure tax (especially to high-priced destination such as Australia) may have strong negative impacts on a destination country's competitiveness, and further reduce the economic significance and employment potential of the nation's tourism industry (Forsyth, Dwyer, Spurr & Pham, 2014)³⁶. Within this context, the report provides a brief overview of departure tax in Australia and a comparison with its key tourism competitors.

Australia's departure tax (1978 – 1995)

Initially introduced in 1978, the AUD 10 departure tax was primarily justified as a means to recover the costs associated with passenger processing at Australia's air and sea ports. The tax was increased to AUD 20 in 1981, but then lowered down at AUD 10 in 1988 to help stimulate tourism. The rates were raised again to AUD 20 (1991) and AUD 25 (1994). In the more recent increase, the departure tax was seen as a way to raise government revenue for tourism promotion via marketing or for strengthening security.

³⁵ Keen, M., & Strand, J. (2007). Indirect taxes on international aviation. *Fiscal Studies*, 28(1), 1-41.

³⁶ Forsyth, P., Dwyer, L., Spurr, R., & Pham, T. (2014). The impacts of Australia's departure tax: Tourism versus the economy?. *Tourism Management*, 40, 126-136.

The Australian Passenger Movement Charge (1995 – 2002)

In 1995, the Australian Government introduced the Passenger Movement Charge (PMC) as a replacement for the previous departure tax. The PMC is paid by the airlines and recovered from all passengers older than 12 years old as part of the fare or as a special charge. It is a flat rate for both low-price fares and first-class fares, regardless short or long-haul flights.

Initially set at only AUD 27, the PMC of Australia has been increased five times over the past decade to become the highest departure tax for short-haul trips, and the third highest departure tax in the world, after the UK and Germany, for long-haul trips. In every case, the Australian government has given a rationale for rate increases. These are summarized in the below table:

Table 9: Timeline and rationale for PMC increase

Year	Cost	Rationale
1995	AUD 27	To offset the costs of border control functions such as customs, immigration and quarantine
1998	AUD 30	To offset the costs of transiting people and goods for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games
2001	AUD 38	To fund increase in border control cost as part of Australia's response to the threat of foot-and-mouth disease
2008	AUD 47	To partially fund national aviation security initiatives
2012	AUD 55	To fund the establishment of the Asia Marketing Fund.
2016	AUD 60	Serve as a counterbalance to reduce the tax rates paid by working holiday makers

Table 9 shows that PMC is increasingly viewed by the Australian government as a means to raise general government revenue for diverse purposes. Rationale provided for the PMC increase in 1998 and 2001 are to serve short-term purposes, yet the PMC remain the same or further increase after these purposes have been achieved. The initial purpose of raising fund to offset passenger-related services can no longer serve as rationale for a fee increase, as the government's revenue from PMC is now more than double the amount required to fund border agencies (including customs and border protection, quarantine and immigration).³⁷

Mapping departure taxes of Australia and key competitors

Information on departure taxes of Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen countries (Table 10) show that a small number of countries have opted to either reduce or abolish the fees

³⁷ Australian Customs and Border Security Service, Annual Reports 2010–11;

charged to departing passengers, whilst many others have introduced or increased existing fees in the last decade.

Table 10: 2017 Departure taxes of Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen the US

Country	Departure tax name	Tax (Local currency)	AUD ³⁸
Canada	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Zealand	Border Clearance Levy ³⁹	Departure fee only • NZD 3.37 for air and private craft • NZD 3.57 for cruise travel	\$3 \$3.25
The US	International Departure Tax ⁴⁰	USD 17.8	\$24
Australia	Passenger Movement Charge	AUD 60 flat rate	\$60
The UK	UK Air Passenger Duty	• Short haul (0–3220 km) economy: GBP 13 • Short haul business: GBP 26 • Long haul (>8000 km) economy: GBP 75 • Long haul premium cabin: GBP 150	\$23 \$46 \$134 \$267
The Schengen			
Austria	Air Transport Levy	EUR 7 Short haul EUR 15 Medium haul EUR 35 Long haul	\$11 \$23.5 \$55
Germany	Air Transport Tax	EUR 7.50 Short haul EUR 23.43 Medium haul EUR 42.18 Long haul	\$12 \$36.7 \$66
France	Civil Aviation Tax	EUR 4.31 domestic and other European countries EUR 7.75 all other countries	\$6.75 \$12
Norway	Air Passenger Tax	NOK 80 for passengers over 2 years old travelling out of any Norway's airports	\$12.8
Italia	Italian Council Tax	EUR 10 for flights from airports near Rome EUR 9 for flights from other Italian airports	\$16 \$14
Greece	Departure tax	EUR 13	\$20
Spain	Aviation tax	EUR 7	\$11
Denmark	N/A (abolished in 2006)		
Malta	N/A (abolished in 2008)		
Netherlands	N/A (abolished in 2009)		

Based on Table 2, the destinations' competitiveness in terms of departure taxes are:

1. Canada tops the list in relative competitiveness as the country has not imposed any departure tax on passengers.
2. New Zealand recently introduced a Border Clearance Levy in 2016, and charges air, sea and cruise passengers both arrival and departure taxes. However the departure tax is still quite minimal (NZD 3.37 to 3.57 or AUD 3 to 3.25) compared to other countries under review. Combining both arrival and departure levies, the fees are NZD 21.57 to NZD 26.22 (AUD 19.6 to AUD 23.9) including GST

³⁸ Exchange rates 10 December 2017 1 AUD = 1.1 NZD = 0.7514 USD = 0.6384 EUR at <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=13&From=GBP&To=AUD>

³⁹ <https://mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/border-clearance-levy/>

⁴⁰ <http://airlines.org/data/international-departurearrival-tax/>

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3. The US has introduced a departure tax in 1970 and an arrival tax in 1997. The US charges the same fees for arrivals and departures, with very small increase per year. As of 2017, the departure tax is still relatively low at USD 17.8 or AUD 24.

4. The Schengen zone : only 7 out of 26 Schengen countries currently have departure taxes

Denmark and the Netherlands introduced departure taxes in late 2000s **but quickly abolished them due to negative impacts on both the aviation and tourism industries.**⁴¹ Malta cut its departure tax by half in 2006 and also scrapped the whole tax in 2008.⁴²

Departure taxes were introduced in Germany and Austria in 2011, whereby different rates applied depending on the flight distance. In 2013, Austria's fees were reduced slightly from EUR 8 to EUR 7 for short-haul routes and from EUR 20 to EUR 15 for medium-haul routes. The departure taxes of these two countries are still quite high, ranging from EUR 7 to EUR 35 (AUD 11 to AUD 55) for Austria and EUR 7.5 to EUR 42.18 (AUD 12 to AUD 66) for Germany.⁴³

Other Schengen countries, including France, Italia, Greece, Norway and Spain, have also introduced departure taxes, though at more reasonable rates of between EUR 4.31 – EUR 13 (AUD 6.72 – AUD 20) depending on country. Importantly, passengers travelling in the Schengen zone can still opt to depart from the 19 Schengen countries that do not impose departure taxes.

5. Australia's PMC is the third highest departure tax among the countries under review. Currently it imposes a flat rate of AUD 60 on passengers above 12 years old departing by air and sea travel. Having no distance-tiered, the PMC is effectively the most expensive international tax for short-haul flights (defined as less than 3,220 km), for example between the Northern Territory and Indonesia (2,904 km).
6. The UK's Air Passenger Duty (APD) remains the highest departure tax in the world. Depending on the travel distance and class, passengers are charged a fee between GBP 13 and GBP 150 (or AUD 23 and AUD 269) when leaving the UK. Originally introduced in 1994 as a means to pay for the environmental costs of air travel, the APD has risen 824% by 2015. The tax is set to further increase in 2019.
7. Taking departure taxes in Table 10 into account, the total visa cost for Australia is approximately AUD 200, AUD 230 for the US, and much more expensive for the UK, depending on the travelling distances of visitors. These three are the most expensive countries when all fees associated with visas are considered.

⁴¹ <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20060419/local/denmark-drops-departure-tax.28390>

⁴² <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20081031/local/departure-tax-out-price-transparency-in.231182>

⁴³ <https://www.airport-technology.com/features/featuremapping-out-airport-taxes-around-the-world-5647771/>

Impacts on aviation and tourism industries

The departure taxes have created a range of consequences in countries where they exist. The Netherlands' departure tax was in operation from July 2008 to June 2009. During this period, some of the country's biggest airports recorded a steep decline in passenger numbers. For instance, the Schiphol Airport, Europe's fifth biggest in terms of passenger enplanements, recorded a 13.7 per cent drop of 430,000 passengers in February 2009 compared to the same month a year before. The tax was expected to generate a total revenue of EUR 300 million. However, a study by Amsterdam Aviation Economics found that it may have cost the Dutch airports, airlines, and related businesses between EUR 1.2 to EUR 1.3 billion in lost revenue.⁴⁴ After the tax was abolished in 2009, air passenger numbers recovered and in 2010, the Amsterdam Schiphol airport reported traffic growth of 3.8 per cent, whilst the regional airports at Eindhoven and Maastricht reported passenger number increases of 25.2 per cent and 30.6 per cent respectively.⁴⁵

Similarly, according to the German Aviation Association BDL, since the introduction of the tax, Germany has seen a drop in the number of passengers departing from its airports, and a boost in departures from airports just across the border in neighbouring countries.⁴⁶

After Italy increased its Council Tax by 33 per cent to 38 per cent in 2016, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimated that this move would reduce passenger numbers by over 755,000 and Italian GDP by EUR 146 million per year. Around 2,300 jobs will be lost each year, totalling over 9,000 job losses by the end of the decade.⁴⁷

For Australia, IATA has presented an economic model that suggests increases to the PMC would lead to increased fares and significantly harm Australian exporters through higher travel costs and reduced competitiveness. Comparing the status quo with a scenario in which the tax was abolished, the findings show that the impact would equate to 30,000 fewer international passenger return journeys each year and 350,000 fewer trips. It is estimated that the reduction in aviation-related gross value-added (GVA), compared with a scenario where the PMC was abolished, could total AUD 375 million with 3,800 fewer jobs supported.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ <http://www.greenaironline.com/news.php?viewStory=412>

⁴⁵ <http://www.anna.aero/2011/03/09/dutch-airports-recover-as-departure-tax-is-abolished/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.dw.com/en/german-aviation-tax-pushes-travelers-to-cross-border-airports/a-15374865>

⁴⁷ <https://flightchic.com/2016/01/25/iata-warns-of-job-losses-after-italy-surprises-with-new-aviation-tax/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.iata.org/policy/Documents/attachment-1-australia-pmc-removal-oct.pdf>

Conclusions



This report has provided a detailed comparison of four visitor visa types provided by Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen countries to passport holders from six Asian source markets – China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan.

Among the six Asian source markets, Taiwan is the only country that obtains Visa Waiver Agreements with all destination countries under review. This helps Taiwanese passport holders travel visa-free, minimise visa fees significantly when required, and enjoy the easiest processes for visitor visas.

In broad terms, China, India and Indonesia passport holders can be characterised as a middle level of difficulty when applying for visitor visas. Australia, New Zealand and Canada provide both online and paper-based visa application options and do not require biometrics for applicants from these three source markets. The UK and the US allow online applications, but applicants need to provide biometrics and, for the US, also in-person interviews.

Thailand and Vietnam face the most difficult processes and the highest cost compared to all of other Asian source markets considered in this report. In particular, they are required to provide biometric requirements from most destination countries (except New Zealand) and have the long processing times.

The report also identifies a number of hidden cost that are associated with the visa processes. For instance, having only paper-based application option would force applicants to pay additional VAC service fees and in many cases courier fees (apart from the official visa processing fees). The collection of

biometrics also significantly increases the costs for many applicants as they would have to travel (sometimes across regions) to collection centres during working day/hours. This also delays the time required for visas to be issued, considering that the visa process only starts after the biometrics have been collected.

Australia's key strengths

It is challenging and not practical to derive a clear ranking order for the competitiveness of all destination countries, as there are many interplaying factors and objectives. Amongst all visa programs investigated in this report, Australia's transit program is probably one of the most competitive. The transit visa program has zero fee and offers both options either to stay airside or to enter the country up to three days, which are very convenient for visitors and much more competitive/attractive than those of the other countries under review.

The Working Holiday Maker program of Australia is the most comprehensive program, covering five out of six markets. Visitors from the examined source markets do not have to be students, as required in the Exchange visitor visa J-1 offered by the US. The length of stay can be much longer in Australia and New Zealand, compared with the US.

The visa schemes that matter the most to Australia's tourism revenue are the ADS and Standard Visitor visa programs. Australia is broadly comparable with New Zealand in relation to the Standard visa fee, but more expensive for the ADS visas. However, in both programs, Australia's visa fees are below those excessively expensive fees of major destinations such as the US and the UK. The visa processing times of Australia for these two visas are efficient, particularly no biometrics are required for important markets (China and emerging India). Most impressively, the ADS visa program eases the process further with an option to allow Chinese visitors to submit applications in their own language. Among other countries, New Zealand is the only destination that offers the same language option to ADS visa applicants.

Australia's key weaknesses

Of the main program, Standard Visitor Visa, the VFR visitors and tourists (holidays) contribute a large percentage in total visitors and expenditure to Australia. However, these two groups have the longest waiting times (40 to 54 days for VFR; 16 to 29 days for tourists) across the examined source markets. The priority service fee (AUD 1,000) is far too expensive for average travellers. Adding to this is the uncertainty around the processing time, which makes it hard for travel planning of visitors from these selected Asian markets. Compared to other visa programs such as ETA subclass 601 and eVisitor subclass 651, certainly the Visitor visa subclass 600 does not have an adequate level of priority, given the contribution of this visitor group.

Although the Working Holiday Maker program is seen to be efficient in its process, the visa cost is quite expensive, much more than similar schemes offered in Canada and New Zealand, not to mention the income tax that visitors will still have to pay.

Finally, Australia is the third most expensive country in terms of departure tax or PMC, which adds quite significantly to the total costs of travelling to Australia for overseas visitors. This ultimately puts Australia in the group of three countries that have the most expensive total visa costs, namely the UK, the

US and Australia. This high total visa cost raises a concerning issue whether or not visa policies have other objectives than just providing security and border protection to the country. This needs to be seriously looked at.

Overall recommendations

- Reduce visitor visa fees and extend visa validity;
- Revise and reduce as much as possible the PMC (departure taxes);
- Offer online application options without biometrics for *suitable* visitors, not necessarily all visitors to lower the barrier as much as possible for applicants;
- Increase number of locations where applicants can provide biometrics;
- Commit to either a fixed global processing time, or fixed country-specific processing times explicitly to provide certainty to visitors;
- Increase the inclusion of more countries under visa waiver agreements and transit-visa exemption
- Allow all current countries under the Visa Waiver Agreements to apply for ETA online

Visitor visa – ADS for Chinese visitors

- Provide online fast track approval with 48 hours to facilitate more Chinese visitors to the country, given the low risk of terrorism from this group.
- Upgrade from single entry to multiple entry and extend the visa validity longer for perhaps three years in order to encourage the propensity to travel of Chinese visitors.
- Provide package deal for group visa fees that can effectively reduce the per-head fee below AUD 140. This will attract more visitors into this program; the marginal benefits will be greater than marginal losses of the reduced fee.

Standard Visitor visa

- The Australia's visa fee in this group is more expensive than the Schengen and Canada only, but not significantly. From the perspective of Asian markets, take China for example (Pham *et al.*, 2017), the Schengen and European countries in general could be more popular than Australia. Thus it is desirable to reduce the Australian standard visa fee broadly to the fees in this group, approximately at AUD 100 instead of the existing AUD 140;
- Australia and New Zealand tend to be commentary destinations of each other, it is also desirable to extend Australian visa validity longer, from one year to five years, with multiple entry to capture potential spill-over effects from visitors travelling to New Zealand. In this regard, perhaps it might be an option to team up with New Zealand to create an equivalent to the Schengen group; and,
- Review the effectiveness of the Frequent Traveller stream particularly in the context of China market to see if it work as intended, whatever the objectives are.

Transit visa

- Provide online applications to provide convenience to attract visitors; improve productivity from the Australian administrative perspective; and, reduce any *unnecessary* costs associated with VAC services for the visitors to increase incentive;

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- Extend the transit time to four or five days to entice passing through travellers to stay and take short trips; and,
 - Allow transit visa exemption to more countries (at least for those staying airside) to compete with the Schengen and the UK.

Working holiday visa

- Re-assess the demand for Working Holiday Maker visas. If the quotas are always fulfilled, no need to reduce the visa fee, the limits should be increased instead. Otherwise, visa fee reduction might be desirable;
- Improve the processing time.
- Re-assure applicants of the safe and fair working conditions.
- Income tax on working holiday makers should be reduced /removed. Australia needs their services more than their tax contribution.

Passenger Movement Charges

- The magnitude of Australia's PMC is amongst a few countries with the highest rates, Germany and the UK.
- Surprisingly many other countries could sustain with very low level charges, as low as is AUD 3 and some go without.
- The economic impacts of such charges are *not insignificant*.
- This raises a question regarding the real objective of the PMC.
- Australia's PMC charges should be reviewed and re-assessed in the context to protect the competitiveness of the tourism industry.

Appendix 1: Eligible countries in Working Holiday Maker program

Eligible countries for WORK and HOLIDAY VISA (subclass 462)

- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Chile
- China, People's Republic of
- Hungary
- Indonesia
- Israel
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Peru
- Poland
- Portugal
- San Marino
- Singapore
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Thailand
- Turkey
- United States of America
- Uruguay
- Vietnam

Eligible for WORKING HOLIDAY VISA (subclass 417)

- Belgium
- Canada
- Republic of Cyprus
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (including British National Overseas passport holders)
- Republic of Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- United Kingdom.

Appendix 2: Eligible countries for the UK's Youth Mobility Scheme

- Australia
- Canada
- Japan
- Monaco
- New Zealand
- Hong Kong
- Republic of Korea
- Taiwan

Appendix 3: Eligible countries for the International Experience Canada program

- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hong Kong SAR
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- South Korea
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Mexico
- The Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- Ukraine
- The United Kingdom

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