

The Hon Alex Hawke MP

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs

Monday, 08 March 2021

Strengthened character test to safeguard the Australian community

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Alex Hawke, has issued a new Ministerial Direction to guide decision-makers applying the character test. The character test applies to certain visa cancellation and refusal decisions, as well as the revocation of mandatory visa cancellations.

This direction reinforces the Government's intolerance for family violence by requiring decision-makers to consider family violence as a primary consideration when making visa determinations.

It also requires decision-makers to seriously consider other forms of unacceptable behaviour towards vulnerable people, such as the elderly, who are often the target of serious non-violent crimes including fraud, extortion, exploitation and neglect.

In addition, the direction reflects the Government's strong stance against forced marriage and worker exploitation.

The character test plays a significant role in safeguarding the Australian community by preventing the entry or stay of non-citizens who may present a risk to the safety or good order of the Australian community. Non-citizens who do not pass the character test may be stripped of their visa or have their visa application refused.

"Being a member of the Australian community is a privilege and it comes with a responsibility to respect and abide by our laws," Minister Hawke said.

"Family violence and crimes against vulnerable members of the community have no place in Australia and will not be tolerated.

"These changes align with the Australian community's expectation that non-citizens who commit serious offences will not be permitted to enter or stay in Australia," Minister Hawke said.

Last updated: 09 March 2021

Unless otherwise indicated in this document, it is Copyright of the Commonwealth of Australia and the following applies:

Copyright Commonwealth of Australia.

This material does not purport to be the official or authorised version. Reproduction and use of this material is subject to a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Australia License](#).

You should make independent inquiries and obtain appropriate advice before relying on the information in any important matter.

This document has been distributed by LexisNexis Australia. All queries regarding the content should be directed to the author of this document.