

Your employees sponsored through the 457 or 482 visa program can only bring their families to Australia if you agree. The reason for this is that there are some sponsorship obligations that apply to your sponsored worker that will be extended to their family.

If you agree for the family to join your employee, you agree to the following obligations for the family:

- **PAY TRAVEL COSTS TO ENABLE SPONSORED PEOPLE TO LEAVE AUSTRALIA** - You must pay reasonable and necessary travel costs to enable the sponsored person and their sponsored family members to leave Australia **when their employment ends.**

A former employee must ask you in writing for you to pay the return travel costs. The costs will be considered reasonable and necessary if they include all of the following:

- travel from the sponsored persons usual place of residence in Australia to their place of departure from Australia
- travel from Australia to the country of passport of the visa holder
- economy class air travel or, where that is not available, a reasonable equivalent.

Please note that this obligation only eventuates upon cessation of employment. It is not for vacations. Furthermore, if your employee continues to Permanent Residency, then this obligation would never be activated.

- **PAY COSTS TO LOCATE AND REMOVE AN UNLAWFUL NON-CITIZEN** - In the event a primary sponsored person (or any of their sponsored family members) becomes an unlawful non-citizen, you may be required to pay the costs incurred by the Commonwealth in locating and/or removing the primary or secondary sponsored persons from Australia.

*The full wording of the sponsorship obligations are available through the [Department website](#).*

There are no costs involved for the sponsor as your employee will pay for the visa and travel costs for their family enter Australia. What this can mean is if you terminate their employment, or they resign without having a new sponsor, you now have an obligation to fly the main applicant AND his family back to their home country.

I always recommend a sponsor to consider the timing upon which you agree to sponsor families and set a policy for this. I usually recommend having a worker with you for at least 6 months before agreeing to family sponsorship. This recommendation is given because:

- It allows an employee to complete probationary periods in the employment contract making sure they are the right fit for your company.
- It allows your employee to be settled into the area and have the knowledge on how to source appropriate housing for family and to help their family settle into life in a new country.
- Having family in Australia is expensive. It's important the workers have time to be financially stable before bringing family out to ensure they have adequate funds for supporting them.

Whether you agree to sponsorship is your decision as the sponsoring employer. However, your employee will have no other way to have their family come and join them in Australia unless you agree to this. It is important that workers have their family join them to keep them mentally healthy and the family unit strong as we have seen some workers decide to go home as they miss their family too much.

If you don't support the request of your employee, we recommend discussing this with the employee and agreeing to a timeline. You may also like to communicate your policy to all of your visa holders so that they know they can only request sponsorship after a certain period of time.

Please feel free to call me on 08 9463 6624 if you would like to discuss this in any further detail.

*Susan Cayago*

**MIGRATION AGENT | MARA 0801338**