

## Frequently Asked Questions

### For local businesses

#### *Why a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)?*

Having a DAMA in place gives businesses of the South-West options to sponsor workers for occupations that are unique to the area and may not be served by the current Migration Skilled Occupation List. Under the DAMA, there are concessions available relating to age, English and TSMIT (minimum salary) requirements, as well as providing a pathway for all visa holders to permanent residency.

#### *Who can sponsor workers under the South-West DAMA?*

The DAMA is an option for established businesses within the South-West region that have been operating for at least 12 months, they must demonstrate a need for the positions within their organisations and be operating within the designated region (ie. within the Shires of Augusta-Margaret River, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, City of Bunbury, City of Busselton, Shires of Capel, Collie, Dardanup, Donnybrook-Balingup, Harvey, Manjimup or Nannup).

#### *Does a business need to identify the prospective worker/s before lodging an application for endorsement under the South-West DAMA?*

No, a business can seek endorsement and make a request for a Labour Agreement without having to identify the prospective worker. This is because the endorsement and Labour Agreement process are about identifying and addressing a skills shortage in the business, it also allows for future planning and growth for the business.

#### *Is Labour Market Testing (LMT) required before seeking endorsement under the South-West DAMA?*

Yes, the Designated Area Representative (DAR) requires a summary of genuine recruitment efforts prior to requesting an endorsement, as providing evidence of LMT meeting the migration legislative requirements will be required at the Nomination stage with the Department of Home Affairs. The LMT requirement ensures that if there is a suitable Australian citizen or permanent resident to fill a vacancy, that they are prioritised.

***Can businesses sponsor prospective workers currently offshore?***

Yes, South-West employers may sponsor workers residing in Australia or overseas through the South-West DAMA.

***Can a worker bring their family along?***

Yes, you may include members of the family unit at the visa application stage where they meet the requirements. Members of the family unit can include a spouse or de facto partner and any eligible dependent children. Please refer to the Department of Home Affairs website for further information: [Glossary \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/glossary)

***Does the Skilling Australian Fund levy apply to businesses under the South-West DAMA?***

Yes, for more information read the Skilling Australia Fund page: [Skilling Australians Fund - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/skilling-australians-fund)

***What if my required occupation is not listed on the DAMA?***

The occupation list was compiled in consultation with businesses and industry in the South-West region and reflect the unique skills shortages of the South-West. If your occupation is not listed on the DAMA, there may be other visa options available, see Department of Home Affairs to see current information.

***I am an employer within the region looking to access the DAMA, what can I do?***

Contact the [DAMA Officer](#) at the Shire of Dardanup to discuss your eligibility. Consider starting your labour market testing (advertising) for an identified occupation listed on the DAMA occupation list. You can read up on the requirements and obligations as a sponsor with the [Employer's Guide to Accessing a Labour Agreement](#). You may also consider engaging a Registered Migration Agent to manage your application: [search the Register of Migration Agents](#).

***What happens next after a positive endorsement for the South-West DAMA?***

Providing you receive a positive endorsement from the Designated Area Representative, you will be able to lodge a Labour Agreement request with the Department of Home Affairs. The Labour Agreement, nomination and visa application stages are all managed by the Department of Home Affairs.

## For prospective workers

### *I am a visa applicant looking to move to the South-West, can I apply for the DAMA?*

The DAMA is a migration agreement signed between the participating South-West local government areas and the Commonwealth; it is not a visa subclass that you can apply for independently. If you are a visa applicant, we would encourage you to look for a job with an employer within the South-West region.

### *Can you recommend me businesses that will be willing to sponsor me under the South-West DAMA?*

It is up to you to find employment within the region. We recommend using a job search platform with national reach, such as [Seek](#), [Indeed](#), [Jora](#) or [Workforce Australia](#). For details on which occupations can be sponsored under the DAMA, see the Shire of Dardanup website: [South-West DAMA » Shire of Dardanup](#).

### *What visas are available under the South-West DAMA?*

The South-West DAMA utilises the Temporary Skills Shortage (subclass 482) visa, the Skilled Employer-Sponsored Regional (subclass 494) visa, and where permanent residence is available, the Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) visa and the Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional - subclass 191) visa under the Labour Agreement stream.

### *Do I require a skills assessment?*

Details of the skills assessment will be specified in the Labour Agreement with the company.

### *Is there a pathway to permanent residency under the South-West DAMA?*

Yes, all visa holders under the South-West DAMA have a pathway to Permanent Residency. For subclass 482 visa holders in occupations skill level 1-4, there is an option to apply for the 186 visa after three years if nominated by your sponsoring employer. For skill level 5 occupations, the qualifying period is four years, with at least two of those years to be at a skill level 4 occupation.

Visa holders on a 494 visa can apply for the 191 visa independently after three years.

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