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This monthly message pack has been developed to provide an update on the Visa Services 2020 Programme. Included in this update is a review of key achievements and progress for September, as well as a look ahead to October.

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## SEPTEMBER IN REVIEW

The Programme is heading into a critical time in the transition to the new visa processing model with the removal of processing from the larger offices on track and some peak processing periods ahead. Visa Services staff continue to rise to the challenge and work at pace and with focus. More detail on current activity across the Programme follows.

**Simplification** The Simplification team has been working to identify opportunities to remove repetitive tasks when processing 'like' applications. The team recently extended the **bulk processing** functionality to permanent resident visas (PRVs) in **Porirua**, which was completed in September.

The implementation of the functionality enables the creation of batches of like applications which can then be bulk approved saving processing times. This has seen some very good results with noticeable gains across both low and high touch applications.

The team are already exploring the applicability of this functionality across other product categories.

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**Build Site Readiness** In September, the **Christchurch** office became 'future state ready', which means the office is now only processing work visa products. The remainder of non-visa products (label transfer and endorsements) will transition out in early November.

The property refit at the **National Documentation Office (NaDO)** has been completed successfully. This refit provides additional seating for new staff as well as freshening up the office.

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## Site Closures and Transitions

At the end of September the **Bangkok** office converted to a dedicated risk and verification site, which will be led by Risk and Verification Manager Kate Taggart. The last week for Bangkok processing staff was marked with a stakeholder farewell event as well as a team dinner, with staff finishing up on 28 September. The business would like to thank and acknowledge the service and commitment shown by the Bangkok office over the years, especially in the last few weeks leading up to transition. Operations Manager, Julia Knoef will return to her substantive position as an Immigration Manager in Christchurch in the coming weeks.

The Programme visited the **London** office in late September to commence the planning processes and assess the requirements to support transition to a risk and verification presence from the end of February 2019.

During September the Programme also continued to support transition activities the **Shanghai** office which is due to close at the end of October, as well as the **Washington D.C.** office which will convert to a dedicated risk and verification site at the end of November.

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## LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER

The following provides a snapshot of the activities planned for the month of October. Further detail on the achievements will be communicated in the next issue of the Monthly Messages.

### Simplification

#### Bulk Processing

Fresh from success in **Porirua**, the Simplification Bulk Processing team will be shifting the focus to **Beijing** and visitor visas. Theresa Smith from the Programme will travel to Beijing in early October to train the local managers and staff ensuring consistency in approach. The training will be timely as it comes ahead of the China peak for visitor visa applications.

#### Essential Skills

After the extended essential skills pilot in Christchurch, the focus for the project team will turn to the **Manukau** office in October. Good preparatory work in the Manukau office by Simplification secondees Asha Sharma and Nicola Haliday, in conjunction with their Wellington and Christchurch based colleagues means the office is ready for training of staff to take place in October.

#### “Passport free” stocktake

In order to ensure we proceed down the path of removing the need for physical passports to be sent to INZ offices, a stocktake has been commissioned to explore the extent to which we rely on passports to establish identity. The results from this will be reviewed prior to further consideration of the removal of physical passport handling for more products.

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**Build Site  
Readiness**

During October the focus will continue on readiness activities to support build offices progress to their target states, as well as ensuring the receipt and movement of work from closing and converting sites continues to be managed well.

Planning and work load balancing considerations are being made as the business now moves into peak period. There are five different peaks all overlapping, with the first starting in October.

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**Site Closures  
and Transitions**

At the end of October, the **Shanghai** office, will close. With 76 staff impacted by the closure, it represents the largest site to transition to date.

In advance of the October closure, the staff farewell event was held at the end of September, with Darren Calder, Assistant General Manager, Transition and Richard Griffiths, General Manager, Human Resources in attendance to farewell the staff on behalf of both the Immigration Leadership Team and Visa Services Leadership Team. The majority of staff are expected to finish on the 19th October.

Transition support will continue for **Washington D.C.** as the office prepares to transition to a dedicated risk and verification office from the end of November. John Duncan will remain at the helm as the seconded Risk and Verification Manager, and recruitment of the Verification Officers is likely to be confirmed in the coming weeks.

**London** planning will continue following the recent site visit, with the Programme working closely with the Operations Manager, Alan Barry and Risk and Verification Manager, Emily Sanders to ensure all facets of change are considered and planned for.

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**We look forward to bringing you another update in early November, which will focus on achievements and progress made in [October](#) and a forward view of activity planned for [November](#).**