



OFFICIAL

Attachment A - Regulatory Reform Opportunities

1. Best practice guidance for Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 regulated entities

Summary of action:	Co-design guidance indicating what the department considers best practice in regards to risk mitigation strategies and compliance with <i>Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018</i> (SOCIA Act). This will provide clarity of industry where regulatory settings are ambiguous or complex. This also support greater self-regulation reducing the need for government regulatory compliance actions.
How it will uplift productivity and/or economic growth:	The co-design of best practice guidance, specifically addressing risk management and an all-hazards approach, will support better compliance with complex regulatory settings and reduce the need for post action compliance action due to increased clarity and self-regulation. This will save significant time on regulatory investigations and allow industry a better opportunity to comply with outcomes and reduce time spent on their own compliance actions.
The size, scope and impact the action will have:	Co-designed guidance material will impact all critical infrastructure assets, as well as providing advice to assets outside of the SOCIA Act definition of critical infrastructure. In preparation of the material, the department will take a risk-based approach and target the development at the highest risk areas first, before moving to lower priority areas for development.
When the action will be implemented or take effect:	The co-designed guidance is being prepared on a rolling schedule, starting with initial delivery in Quarter 1 of 2025–26, with subsequent updates through Quarters 2-4. Once developed, the guidance will be circulated through social media platforms as well as through the TISN and TISN forums.
How any trade-offs or risks will be managed:	In the short term (2025–26), development of this material will have an increased administrative burden for the department, and may also impact regulated entities during the consultation phase. However in the longer term, the guidance should enable regulated entities to source answers quickly, and without waiting on departmental advice via email on the Trusted Information Sharing Network platform, and or via meetings.
Suitable for public commitment/announcement:	Yes, noting the announcement can indicate that best practice guidance is being developed to support an all-hazards approach for resilience of critical infrastructure assets, and will be released throughout 2025–26.

2. Expand pre-application ballots for WHM visas

Summary of action:	Apply pre-application ballots across all subclass 462 Work and Holiday visa countries, to help manage oversubscription of the program and where there are barriers, to streamline processing.
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2. Expand pre-application ballots for WHM visas

How it will uplift productivity and/or economic growth:	Streamlining the WHM process through a ballot will reduce complaints about applications in oversubscribed programs as well as provide greater transparency and certainty for users about their ability to apply for and obtain a WHM visa.
The size, scope and impact the action will have:	Use of the ballot could be extended to several other subclass 462 partner countries whose demand exceeds available visas. For example, Mongolia and Ecuador have small caps of 100 visas each program year which are filled within days of opening. The Philippines is capped at 200 places and has attracted nearly 4,000 draft applications prior to the program opening. Brazil has 500 places and it has already attracted more than 8 million attempted lodgements so far this program year.
When the action will be implemented or take effect:	The relevant IT system is already in place to accommodate any expansion of the ballot. The reform could be implemented in the next 12 months.
How any trade-offs or risks will be managed:	Introducing a ballot may attract criticism from partner countries who feel unfairly targeted by the additional cost (to register in a ballot (AUD25)) for their applicants. These countries' allocations will remain unchanged, and communications will reinforce that the ballot process is a fairer and more transparent process than the current demand-driven process that is oversubscribed and exhausts quickly.
Suitable for public commitment/announcement:	Yes, noting Government has already applied pre-application ballots to China, India and Vietnam. Announcement could include references to the successful implementation of ballots for these countries, and refer to countries with oversubscribed WHM allocations.

3. Reform the Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) Levy

Summary of action:	Develop a revised framework for the SAF that has more equitable charging and refund provisions to give employers confidence to sponsor skilled workers. The new framework will ensure employers are only charged where they receive the benefit of the migrant working for them, and new refund provisions will enable employers to recoup some costs where the migrant changes employer.
How it will uplift productivity and/or economic growth:	Employers, including small business, will have more confidence to employ skilled migrants, thereby improving productivity of these businesses, knowing that SAF charges are aligned with the enhanced mobility of migrants under the Skills in Demand visa.
The size, scope and impact the action will have:	The action will benefit all employers across all sectors who sponsor skilled migrants. In the 2024–25 program year, approximately \$500 million in SAF payments was collected.
When the action will be implemented or take effect:	Development of the new charging and refund framework can be delivered within 12 months and will require Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) approval due to financial considerations.
How any trade-offs or risks will be managed:	Economic benefits for businesses will need to be balanced against any revenue implications for the Commonwealth in making changes in administration of the scheme.
Suitable for public commitment/announcement:	Yes, noting Government has previously committed to SAF reform as part of the Migration Strategy. The announcement would have to provide details of the newly agreed framework given this previous commitment.

4. Improving citizenship application processes

Summary of action:	Development of a new citizenship by conferral application form to reduce the impost of irrelevant information collected and required from applicants as well as reducing manual processing.
How it will uplift productivity and/or economic growth:	The new citizenship by conferral application form and revised business processes will reduce regulatory burden by only requiring information and supporting documentation relevant to an individual's circumstances and removing unnecessary interactions with clients. It will also reduce the administrative burden for the Department by reducing manual system interactions which are significant and impact on the time for conferral.
The size, scope and impact the action will have:	The action will benefit all applicants for citizenship by conferral. A total of 214,356 applications for citizenship by conferral applications were lodged in 2024–25.
When the action will be implemented or take effect:	The new form can be delivered within 12 months.
How any trade-offs or risks will be managed:	N/A
Suitable for public commitment/announcement:	Yes, noting Government is committed to promoting citizenship uptake. Citizenship application processes should be accessible and reflect a modern multicultural Australia that is inclusive and proud.