

Immigrationforum



Every year, many thousands of people apply for visas to enter and stay in Australia.

Australia now has a non-discriminatory immigration policy. Anyone from any country can apply to migrate - regardless of ethnic origin, gender, or religion.

All applicants for permanent entry to Australia are assessed, by officers of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, against visa criteria and health and character requirements. Australia has many different visa types, allowing entry to family members of Australian citizens or residents, to skilled migrants, to refugee or humanitarian cases, to visitors and to students.

Decisions made by departmental officers about whether or not a person is granted a visa to come to or stay in Australia can be reviewed by the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT), the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) or, on some matters related to visas, by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

The MRT, which replaced the Immigration Review Tribunal (IRT), provides final merits review of a wide range of migration decisions. The RRT, established in 1993, reviews decisions relating to refugee status.

Working in the area of immigration can be extremely challenging, as the outcome of cases can make a dramatic impact on people's lives. This series of articles examines the difficulties in working in the area of migration advice and review, from three different viewpoints.

Migration lawyer Jane Goddard and former IRT member Gabriel Fleming provide personal perspectives on their careers within the migration field, outlining many of the difficulties faced by migration advisers and decision makers. In the third article in the series, barrister Craig Colborne presents a critique of the RRT, from the viewpoint of a former member.