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English language test suggested for Australia visa – 10th October, 2020

Level 4

Foreign partners of residents who want permanent residence in Australia may soon have to pass an English test. Australia said people needed to show a certain level of English before they can get a permanent visa. This could start from the middle of 2021. The immigration minister said: "We will require an applicant...to have met a functional level of English." People can get 500 hours of free English classes on a government language programme.

Many politicians are critical of the new requirement. They called it "discriminatory" and "racist". They said it targets people from non-Western nations. An opposition politician said: "English proficiency isn't a test of someone's love." He said couples already faced an uphill struggle in the application process. An immigration expert said: "It certainly puts a lot of pressure on couples...and now they've got this added burden to pass an English test."

Level 5

Getting visas in Australia just got tougher. Foreign partners of residents who want permanent residence must soon pass an English language test. Australia's government says people need to show a certain level of English proficiency before they are given permanent visa. This requirement could start from the middle of 2021. Australia's immigration minister said: "We will require an applicant...to have met a functional level of English or to have at least made reasonable efforts to learn English." People can get 500 hours of free English classes on a government language programme.

The English test is controversial. Politicians critical of the new requirement called it "discriminatory" and "racist". They said it targets people from non-Western nations. A spokesman for Australia's opposition party said: "English proficiency isn't a test of someone's love." He said couples already faced an uphill struggle in the application process. An immigration expert said: "It certainly puts a lot of pressure on couples who've been hit hard by COVID. Many of them have lost their jobs and now they've got this added burden to pass an English test."

Level 6

Visa requirements in Australia just got a little tougher. Foreign partners of existing residents who want a permanent residence visa must soon have to pass an English language test. Australia's government says it is important that people prove a predetermined level of English proficiency before they are granted a permanent visa. The prerequisite could be in place from the middle of 2021. Immigration Minister Alan Tudge said: "We will require an applicant and a sponsor to have met a functional level of English or to have at least made reasonable efforts to learn English." He said such efforts would entail about 500 hours of free English classes on a government-run language programme.

The proposed requirement has stoked controversy in Australia's parliament. Politicians critical of the planned measure called the new language test "discriminatory" and "racist". They argue it targets people from non-Western nations and their partners. A spokesman for Australia's opposition party said: "English proficiency isn't a test of someone's love." He said couples already faced an uphill struggle in the application process and that the new requirement would add an "additional burden". An immigration expert said: "It certainly puts a lot of pressure on couples who've been hit hard by COVID. Many of them have lost their jobs and now they've got this added burden to pass an English test."