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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Home Affairs has just released information regarding Police Clearance Certificates and the way forward in respect of procurement of Police Clearance Certificates which are required for Visas lodged from within South Africa, as well as extensions or variation or change of conditions of an existing Visa or permanent residence permits.

Up until now the process has consisted of attending on the nearest Police Station for payment of the administrative fee and also where fingerprints are taken. The prints are then dispatched to the South African Criminal Records Bureau for processing and within a reasonable turnaround time this process can be completed.

Our offices helped with literally thousands of these clearance certificates.

With effect from the 1st January 2018, the process will change and “biometric background check services” will be available at the point of lodgement of the Visa extension or other Visa application through the offices of VFS. The system will ostensibly be linked to the South African Police Service database.

According to the VFS website the service will be provided of a value added cost of R175.00 including VAT payable to the SA Police services.

Although the system kicks in fully on the 1st January 2018, with effect from the 1st November 2017 an applicant will have the option to either go the route of current practice or to apply through VFS.

Up until the 31st December 2017 manual copies of Police Clearance certificates will be taken in, but from the 1st January 2018 only the VFS submitted documents will be accepted.

IMPORTANT NOTE

It is extremely important to note that the VFS Police Clearance referred to above is only in respect of applications lodged at VFS for temporary and permanent residence visas.

In respect of all other requirements for a South African Police Clearance Certificate that fall outside the above categories, the hard copy applications done through the South African Police Services still remain unchanged.

APOSTILLE AND AUTHENTICATION OF CERTIFICATIONS

This item is a reminder that our office continues to offer the service of Notarial Certifications of documents that require authentication or Apostille certifications, the actual Apostille process and subsequent to that, where required, attendance on the Embassy in order to do the final certification.

You are free to contact our office if you require assistance in this regard, through the e-mail enquiries@immigration.org.za with the words “Apostille and Authentication Certificates” in the subject line and we will respond.

WAIVER APPLICATIONS

We wish to report that by way of an update, Waiver petitions in respect of Department of Labour certifications and advertisement requirements as well as all other Waivers are currently in an extreme backlog.

It is not uncommon, we continually hear of people who submitted their applications more than six (6) months ago and which have not been finalised.

This factor must be taken into account when considering time frames with applications for Visas and Extension of Visas where a waiver has been applied for.

AUSTRALIAN VISAS

In our previous newsletter and update, as well as on our Social Media platforms we announced a while back that our office would be dealing with Australian Visas in association with one of the top Immigration Consultants in Australia. He was in fact in South Africa recently for the purpose of conducting interviews and this was a successful exercise resulting in our planning a further round of assessment interviews.

These will take place in Pretoria at our office and at our Satellite office in Johannesburg, and if necessary elsewhere.

The appointments will run from the 20th November 2017 for a period of one (1) week so it is important, if you are interested in an assessment at nominal costs, that you do book as soon as possible.

Please direct your enquiry to enquiries@immigration.org.za with the words "Australian Visa Enquiry" in the Subject line. And we will immediately respond and forward on to you our Standard Questionnaire for completion.

It is suggested that if you are contemplating on a consultation in the strictest of confidentiality, for a move to Australia that you do so as soon as possible. Feasibly, the next available opportunity will come in 2018.

We remain the only South African Attorneys with a full time presence in Gauteng who will be dealing with these Visa issues.

FORMAL EMIGRATION

Part of the process of doing a formal emigration from South Africa is that one has to comply with a host of requirements to complete such formal emigration.

We have contracted the services of a leading expert in this regard who will similarly be consulting electronically on some of the issues surrounding this aspect and would also be available for consultations in our Pretoria office or at our Johannesburg Satellite office.

If you are interested in finding out more about this please direct an e-mail to us at enquiries@immigration.org.za with the words "Formal Emigration" in the subject line.

ANNUAL SHUT DOWN

Will all clients and prospective clients please take note that our offices will be closing for the Annual Festive Season shut down on the 15th of December 2017 and will re-open again on the 8th of January 2018.

We have found over many years of being involved in this area of Specialty Law that the levels of service delivery slow down to an almost non-existent halt during this festive period and that there seems to be little purpose in maintaining an open office during this period.

If you do have any emergency during that period or require assistance that cannot wait then please e-mail us urgently on enquiries@immigration.org.za with the words "Queries during Annual Shut-down" and we will respond wherever possible on an urgent basis.

MILESTONE

On the 27th October 1980, Julian was admitted and sworn in as an Attorney of the High Courts of South Africa. On that same date the Law Practice Julian Pokroy Attorneys in its previous guise of Galgut Curtis Opperman and Pokroy came into operation.

This meant that on the 27th October 2017 Julian has been practicing for 37 years, largely in Immigration and Citizenship Law and this in turn also means that currently our Law Practice remains the oldest Law Practice in South Africa in the boutique niche of Immigration and Citizenship Law.

May we continue to thrive for another 37 years ☺

GREETINGS

We wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the team at Julian Pokroy Attorneys to wish all of our clients a happy Festive Season and if you are going to be on holiday, a successful and fruitful and safe holiday and finally, we would like to thank all our clients for their continued loyal support.

Despite setbacks in service delivery aspects with the Department of Home Affairs, we continue in our endeavors to achieve the impossible all the time.

**AS ALWAYS, WE ENDEAVOR TO KEEP YOU UP TO DATE ON
ALL IMMIGRATION RELATED ISSUES**

JULIAN POKROY

AND

TARRYN POKROY RIETVELD

AND

THE TEAM AT JULIAN POKROY ATTORNEYS