

Chuhn Hung (Hong) Goh
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4th February, 2021

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission: Inquiry into Australia's skilled migration program

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am an 887 visa applicant, currently residing in regional Western Australia. I am writing on behalf of myself and the 887 visa applicants community to provide comments and suggestions regarding the inquiry into Australia's skilled migration program.

We are Skilled Regional (Provisional) subclass 489 visa holders, who have fulfilled the obligations to stay and work in regional Australia and are waiting for the grant of 887 permanent visa. The visa processing time has been increased significantly from 6-8 months in 2020 to 20-26 months as of January 2021 due to few case officers assigned.¹ There are currently at least 4,944 applications on-hand of the Department of Home Affairs as of November 2020.² Only 1 case officer is assigned per day to process the visa since November 2020 and during the following 6 months or more.³ We have recently raised a petition to speed up the processing with the parliament.⁴

The absurdly long processing time has caused us to be in a state of limbo, in which we are not able to proceed with many important life decisions. One of the greatest difficulty is to purchase real estate property where we can call home. Without a permanent residency, not only that we have very limited loan choices, we also have to pay Foreign Investment Review Board a hefty \$6,350 review fee as well as, for instance, 8% additional stamp duty in Victoria, on top of the usual stamp duty, even though we are already living and paying taxes in regional Australia for more than 2 years. This only left us with two choices: to wait or to pay the hefty amount. But waiting only opens up a lot of uncertainties, such as dream home being lost to other buyer.

We think it is very unfair for us to wait another 2 years for the permanent residency, as we have fulfilled the obligations to boost the economy in regional Australia. If the manoeuvre is only to further increase our stay in regional Australia, I am confident to say that most of us have already make a home in regional Australia and would never want to return to metropolitan cities such as Sydney and Melbourne which are already overcrowded and where living expenses are high. Additionally, with Australia's economy being hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, expediting the 887 visa processing can assist in recovering or boosting the economy as many of us are likely to increase expenses by getting into the property market. Since all of us are either on-shore or had been living in the country, boosting the economy can be achieved without the need of inviting further immigrants into the country. Additionally, the processing should be very much straight forward as many of the applicants'

particulars have already been verified when we got our 489 visa granted in the first place, such as identify, functional English proficiency, character etc.

We believe this issue is highly related to the inquiry, as expediting the 887 visa processing is only beneficial to the Australia economy and skill shortages in the workforce. For instance, many of business loan and property loan lenders require an applicant to hold at least a permanent residency. Speeding up the grant of 887 permanent residency can therefore allow us to take on the loans and work towards our life and financial goals more rapidly. This will allow more job creations and invigorate the economy by, for example, setting up of more local businesses and creating more construction works. The ripple effects would be sizable, even only a fraction of the current ~5,000 applicants can get on the ventures quicker. Furthermore, most of us are already residing onshore and the results would be swift to be seen if the Department of Home Affairs can quicken the grant of 887 visa, as compared to inviting new immigrants. On top of that, quickening the processing can also allow earlier return of off-shore 887 visa applicants which will, indubitably, be favourable to the Australia economy and workforce.

To summarize, I plead to the Department of Home Affairs to increase the processing speed of 887 visa by allocating more case officers, because:

1. Speeding up the grant of permanent residency to 887 applicants can boost or help in recovery of Australia economy from the COVID-19 pandemic by encouraging substantial spending in real estate, setting up of local businesses and more job creations.
2. Faster processing will allow off-shore 887 visa applicants to return to Australia sooner to aid in filling the Australia workforce skills shortages and economy's recovery.
3. Most of the 887 applicants will remain in regional Australia even after the grant of 887 visa as we already have established social networks and career in regional Australia, and are unlikely to move to the already overcrowded metropolitan cities.
4. It is unethical for us to wait another 20-26 months for a permanent residency, after fulfilling the obligations of living and working for at least 2 years in regional Australia, while paying taxes and assisted in boosting the regional economy.
5. It is very difficult for us to make important life decisions, such as starting a family or buying the first home, which can be a breach of basic human rights.
6. The processing should be very much straightforward as many of our particulars have been verified through the grant of 489 visa.

Please also see the attached documents regarding the number of 887 visa granted in 2020 that show the slowing down of processing towards the end of 2020.⁵ Please don't hesitate to contact me to provide more supporting information or documents.

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope this issue can be solved in a timely manner for the benefits of both the 887 visa applicants as well as the Australia's economy.

Yours Sincerely,



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Accredited Consultant Pharmacist

Reference:

1. Subclass 887 skilled migration
<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/skilled-regional-887>
2. Freedom of Information Request FA 20/12/00521
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/foi/files/2021/fa-201200521-document-released.pdf>
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<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/foi/files/2020/fa-201100169-document-released.pdf>
4. Petition EN2321 - Expedite processing speed of 887 visa applications
https://www.aph.gov.au/petition_list?id=EN2321
5. Freedom of Information Request FA 20/11/00764
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/foi/files/2020/fa-201100764-document-released.PDF>