

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To the Secretary

Migration Amendment (Regulation of Migration Agents) Bill 2019

Migration Alliance has in excess of five-thousand Registered Migration Agent members. Approximately twenty-five per cent of those members are also lawyers. Migration Alliance is by far the largest professional association representing this profession. Migration Alliance is the only professional association to have held a National Migration Conference in 2019, with in excess of seven hundred and fifty migration agents in attendance. The Department of Home Affairs, most of the State governments, the AAT, Jason Wood MP, and other high-profile speakers presented at our National Conference this year, which may provide the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee with a better understanding of the size and influence of Migration Alliance.

The announcement by The Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs, the Honourable Jason Wood MP made at the Migration Alliance Conference on 15 November 2019 to the effect that legislation was being tabled, deregulating the provision of "Immigration Assistance" by Australian Lawyers has been realised.

The "running sore" being the dual regulation of Australian Lawyers by both Law Societies and the OMARA is coming to an end. The Assistant Minister and the Government are to be commended on this initiative.

The dual regulation of Australian lawyers has been the subject of various reviews and commentary but it is the current Federal Government who has taken the initiative and tabled the relevant legislation.

It is anticipated that approximately twenty-five per cent of the population of Registered Migration Agents currently under the supervision of the OMARA will fall under the Supervision of the offices of the Legal Services Commissioner (NSW) and its equivalents interstate.

Vulnerable consumers will be now able to initiate complaints in respect of Australian Lawyers practising in Australian immigration law. Those complaints will be diverted to the relevant State or Territory legal regulator.

These changes reflect the recommendations of the Kendall Review in 2014, and are consistent with the stated objective of this Government to remove "red tape".

The profession welcomes these initiatives and applauds the Assistant Minister for bringing these matters before Parliament, and thanks him for his solid support and recognition of the very important role played by Registered Migration Agents within the Australian migration advice profession.

Yours Sincerely

Migration Alliance Inc