

Dear all,

Please find hereunder and attached my submission for the above subject.

Regards,

Mahmood Alibrahim

I am writing my personal experience as an engineer migrated to Australia in 2009 under the skilled migration program.

The Skilled Immigration Scheme is a very successful government program that attracts too many skilled personals to Australia. Figures could be obtained from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

However, the real problem is how the country can retain those skills and use them as planned. I mean that skilled migrant engineers always find it very hard to find a job as engineers. The skilled migration program is participating in increasing the number of SKILLED CLEANERS and TAXI DRIVERS. I have met many engineers during my life here (2.5 years now) and most of them are working as cleaners or Taxi drivers, however some got better jobs as posties. TO HAVE THE PROGRAM WORKING AS PLANED, GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IS NEEDED.

The main reason for not getting a job as engineers is “lack of Australian experience” which is nonsense as engineering is a global profession. All engineers study the same principals and theories, only you need to adapt to the Australian standards, which in my understanding is like adapting to a set of Project Standards for large scale projects.

When I arrived to Australia in July 2009, I started my job application journey which took me through a very hard, long and expensive year of continuous rejection, until I got a job in mid June 2010. I came with 10+ years of experience, 6 of them were with Swiss organization working globally. I thought that I have what it requires to get a job but soon I discovered that I was dreaming.

I came under 176 VISA, which has a two years waiting period before I can get any government help or support, and due to my age and the place I started my life in Australia (SA), I was unable to find any job, even a small job with the Woolies or Coles. I used all my savings for living (renting, kids and family). I spent about \$28'000 “twenty eight thousand” US dollars, I was borrowing money from my family back home to survive. At one point we split the family for two halves, my eldest son and my self in Australia and the other halve “my wife and my youngest son” went back home as it is cheaper there. We lived a bad life during these six months with the negative effect on the kids.

With no government benefits and no support, I was like some one you ask him to visit you and then you leave him alone without anything.

Within the dark year of my job search (July 2009 – June 2010), I have made 120 job applications to engineering positions and similar quantity to non-engineering ones. I’ve got 4 interviews and one job offer (my current job). I tried to apply as graduate engineer but due to my age (36), I was unable to secure such a position.

Left alone without help from the government, no one wants to give me a chance, and no way I can achieve the “Australian experience” led me to think of returning to my home country and resume my life there. It was like catch 22, you cannot get a job because you do not have Australian experience and you cannot get Australian experience because nobody gives you a job!

Number of points need to be addressed so that the skill migration program could work properly, and when it does, you will see an improvement on this matter:

1. Government support should be provided to the skilled migrants as they are vulnerable, from my personal point of view, better than spending millions and millions of dollars on the illegal migrants and their families, it is better to spend that money on attracting and retaining skills to our country.
2. Incentives to be provided for small businesses to employ skilled migrants so that they can use the available resources.
3. Government supported training and integration programs to be provided for skilled migrants to gain the so called "Australian experience".
4. Discussing large companies to offer (under government support) some positions for skilled migrants similar to the graduate intake.

Finally, after becoming a tax payer, I prefer my tax money to be spent on developing the nation rather than on encouraging illegal entry.

Mahmood Alibrahim