

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

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021

## Answers to questions without notice

Dear Mr Leaser,

During the Albury hearing you asked two questions that I felt required deeper thought and a more considered response.

You asked about the occupations on the PMSOL list: In my opinion the existence of a list effectively limits the opportunity for employers to seek the skills that they cannot acquire locally. This is particularly the case in regional areas where attracting employees is difficult and potentially and only small in number of a particular skill set. I note that the national skills commission is tasked with providing advice to government on the skilled workforce requirements for business. I would propose that this will provide advice on the broad nature of skill requirements but will, by the nature of its scope, be unlikely to identify the individual needs of specific employers or regional industries. This will particularly be the case where a business has the need for a skillset that does not have a listed definition. An example would be the design company that we use for some of our product design. They are seeking a skill set that is above a draftsperson but below an engineer. They have been searching for many years unsuccessfully. There are people in the world with this skill set but without a specific ANZSCO occupation they will never appear on any skills list. The nature of the skill set may also mean that the total demand in the Australian labour market would be very low, perhaps in the 10's and not in the 100's, causing the skills to be considered not of sufficient importance to warrant consideration. Not being able acquire unique or low demand skill sets will have a detrimental impact on business. From the employer's point of view their business is skills restrained and their ability to operate limited by this constraint. I would call on the committee to seriously consider what mechanisms should be in place to ensure that employers looking for unique or hybrid skill sets are not shut out of the skilled migration program due to the nature of their requirements or the total number of positions that are open.

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This may be dealt with by removing the reliance on ANZSCO as the basis for decision making and visa proposal and replacing it with:

- A list of ANZSCO occupations excluded from the skilled migration program
- Listing occupations at the four-digit ANZSCO level rather than the six digit level.
- Providing a mechanism for skills not covered in the ANZSCO list.

You also asked about the level of the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT). In my opinion assigning a threshold for skilled positions assigns a limiting factor to lower level skills making it potentially impossible to access skilled migrants to fill certain positions. It also potentially leads to skilled migrants be paid more for a position than an Australian worker. For skilled workers that are covered under an existing award or EBA there is already a mechanism in place to ensure workers are paid correctly for the work that they perform. To assign an income threshold is interfering with the operation of the award system. I would call on the committee to consider removing the threshold for all positions covered by the modern award system to allow that mechanism to deal with the fair pay and conditions for skilled migrants.

Yours Faithfully

Andrew Fisher  
Bulk Storage Business Manager  
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