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BY: MIG

Submission No. <u>1</u>
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21 December 2006

 / The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Inquiry into eligibility requirements and monitoring, enforcement and reporting arrangements for temporary business visas.

Townsville Enterprise Limited has been a representative of the Skilled Migration Scheme for several years now, and as the Regional Certifying Body for North Queensland, our involvement in the process of the application is significant and important for our regional business community.

We are not aware of any complaints about the services we supply, however we believe there are a number of misconceptions and impediments that deserve clarification.

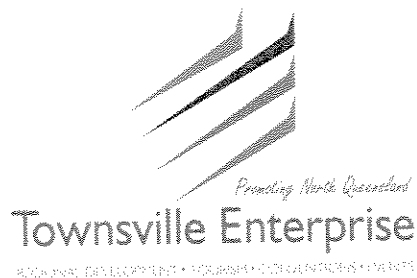
Eligibility Requirements

Through our experience with employers, we believe that the skill level should remain the same; however, the minimum salary level should be eliminated. An alternative is that the employees wage be based upon the industry rate for that occupation or that they receive the equivalent of their fellow Australian employees for that region. This would also prove fair for the Australian workers - in many cases the Minimum Salary Level is higher than the industry rate, meaning the employer must pay migrant employers more than their Australian workers.

In regards to the nominees being proficient in the English language, we feel that this should be a requirement or that there be mandatory and adequate training or classes provided by the employer.

Monitoring and Enforcement

Although as a Regional Certifying Body we are not directly involved in the monitoring of employee/employer activities, it seems the level of control that the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs executes is limited. This is evident through contact with employers who have been involved with the scheme for some time and have not yet been contacted by the department in relation to any matters. It also seems unjust, as there have been known employers who have abused the system yet are still able to utilize the 457 Visa Scheme.



Procedures

We suggest the development of specific guidelines that can be applied with consistency by all Regional Certifying Bodies. The current lack of such guidelines creates uncertainty and potential inconsistencies in the approval processes across the regions.

This should include the development of a Regional Certifying Body processing training package that could be given to all representative staff.

At present, there also seem to be occasional communication barriers between the Regional Certifying Bodies and the Department. There have been previous circumstances where necessary information for clients had not been received until days after a non-negotiable policy was already in place. An improved procedure could be a monthly update or newsletter from the department reporting on relevant material. We need to strengthen our ties and communication regarding these matters.

We look forward to further close cooperation with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs as well as your committee. For further information or clarification please contact us at any time.

Yours sincerely

Glenys Schuntner
Chief Executive Officer