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Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Migration

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### **Re Submission to inquiry into skills recognition, upgrading and licensing**

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), established in 1976, is the peak body for ethnic communities in Queensland. We represent the interests of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and we promote multiculturalism. We undertake advocacy on a range of issues affecting ethnic communities at provide aged care and sexual health services.

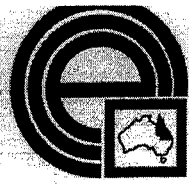
Unemployment and underemployment is a major issue for migrants and refugees leading to poverty, loss of self-esteem, depression and family conflict. The difficulties within the qualification recognition system are a significant impediment to gaining suitable employment.

ECCQ has, over the years, prepared a number of submissions on the issue of skilled migration and qualification recognition and has first-hand experience of the difficulties job seekers face through the Commonwealth-funded recruitment program which ECCQ managed in Queensland for a number of years.

We have reviewed the submission from the Multicultural Development Association and support the measures proposed in that submission to address this situation, where migrants and refugees suffer individually and the Australian economy and society loses out in many instances on the skills and experience that migrants may bring.

Specifically, we support the following proposals contained in the MDA submission:

- *Migrants need to arrive in Australia with a realistic picture of what is expected of them and what they need to do to meet employer expectations... applicants under the skilled migration stream should be provided with an Information Session at Australian overseas missions... these sessions should be to inform prospective skilled migrants about:*
  - *The current labour market in Australia and which professions are experiencing skills shortage*
  - *How to be competitive for jobs in Australia*
  - *How to look and apply for work in Australia*
  - *Employer expectations.*
- *All immigrants should be provided with access to employment-related training shortly after arrival in Australia - workplace health and safety, employment and industrial relations legislation, Australian tax system and Australian education and training system. A short training could assist in the elimination of barriers to employment and ensure skilled migrants are better equipped to get jobs in Australia much sooner after arrival.*



- *The two- year waiting period should be waived and not tied to eligibility for Centrelink benefits in respect of assistance offered by Job Network agencies which should be offered added incentives to assist skilled migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds.*
- *More needs to be done to promote the benefits of employing migrant workers to Australian employers. A change of attitude is required.*
- *Arrangements for people entering Australia under migration streams other than Skilled Migration to more easily access procedures for recognition of overseas qualifications and for skills assessment. Coordination and information sharing between DIMIA and professional bodies could be improved.*
- *Bridging courses for existing qualifications, especially for trade qualifications.*

Thank you for considering our submission and we hope that your inquiry leads to positive changes in this area. Please provide us with information on the outcomes of your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

**Ian L Muil**  
**Executive Manager**