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24 June 2005

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: jscm@aph.gov.au

Submission to Inquiry into skills recognition, upgrading and licensing

Dear Inquiry Secretary,

The Australian Entertainment Industry Association (AEIA) is the peak body for the live entertainment industry in Australia. Our membership includes producers and promoters of theatre, dance, opera and ballet; circuses; contemporary music promoters; ticketing service providers; lighting and sound companies; multipurpose venues and performing arts centres. We thank you for inviting us to provide comments to your review of the current system of skills recognition used in Australia's skilled migration system. Our industry's use of the skilled migration stream is relatively limited, and so this submission is only brief.

Occupations in the live entertainment industry do not currently appear on the Skilled Occupation List for the General Skilled Migration stream, and so we do not have experience with the skills recognition processes used in this stream. We therefore cannot comment on current arrangement for overseas skills recognition for migrants who obtain assessment prior to migrating.

There are a range of entertainment industry occupations which appear on the Skilled Occupation Lists for the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS). As a result, we advise members that the ENS is the best system for them to use to support existing employees who wish to migrate to Australia permanently. In the absence of a clear "professional body", AEIA members may also sometimes be called upon to attest to an individual's international standing if they are seeking to migrate under the Distinguished Talent stream. Once again, our experience with this stream is too limited to comment upon the skills recognition processes used.

Employment in our industry is often experience, rather than qualification, based and registration, licensing or membership of a professional body is not generally required. Accordingly, we are strongly in favour of the element of the Employer Nomination Scheme which allows an applicant to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills for the position for which they have been nominated by working in the occupation in Australia for at least two years. In our limited use of the Employer Nomination Scheme, experience based skills recognition has clearly been the most appropriate measure and has not been overly onerous to demonstrate.

There is one possible area of improvement in procedures which we can identify from our experiences. We note that primary applicants who do not have functional English are required to pay a significant additional visa application charge (currently \$5395). Given the

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obvious benefits to the applicant, their employer and society in general if the applicant improves their English skills, we believe all parties would be better served if the applicant was instead required to spend an amount equivalent to the additional visa application charge on undertaking language classes. Under the current system, the applicant pays the additional visa application charge to the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and still has less than functional English.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make a submission and we look forward to reading the Committee's report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Daley Carr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the name.

Suzanne Daley Carr
Policy and Strategy Advisor