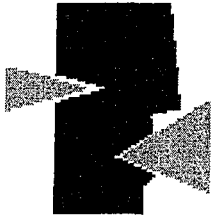


Speech Pathology Australia



Giving people a say in life

The Speech Pathology Association of Australia welcomes the opportunity to present this submission to the Joint Standing Commission on Migration. The Association is the Assessing Authority for Speech Pathologists for the purpose of skilled migration.

We feel we have been well consulted regarding the procedures for skilled migration and find these procedures are generally working well. However, there does not seem to be significant assistance and information relating to the temporary entry program for both Assessing Authorities and potential temporary migrants.

We have briefly addressed specific comments under the relevant points in the terms of reference below.

1.

* *International competition for skilled labour.*

and

* *The degree to which quality permanent skilled migrants are being attracted to Australia and settling well.*

and

* *The degree to which Australia's migration and temporary entry programs are competitive.*

and

* *Whether there are policy and/or procedural mechanisms that might be developed to improve competitiveness.*

Australia is seen as a desirable destination for speech pathologists, particularly in countries where English is the main language. Significant increases in applications, particularly from South Africa, the UK and Ireland over the last 18 months confirm this claim. Despite this, employers report a significant shortfall in the skilled workforce, particularly in rural and remote regions. For this reason, many employers are keen to make short term or locum appointments for people on working holidays. Unfortunately these people have not been advised clearly when applying for their Visa that they still need to apply for approval of their qualifications if they wish to work as a speech pathologist, so frequently have long delays obtaining appropriate documentation. It should also be noted that staff in the posts overseas still, at times, give incorrect information or interpretations regarding the skill assessment for temporary scheme or permanent scheme applicants.

Both these issues cause dissatisfaction amongst applicants, leading to discussion within the professional community overseas. The resulting

perception is potentially damaging to competitiveness and attracting skilled visitors and migrants.

2.

* *The degree to which quality permanent skilled migrants are being attracted to Australia and settling well.*

and

* *Settlement patterns for new arrivals including the role played by State and local authorities.*

We have not reviewed the satisfaction or stability of successful applicants, and it would be valuable to be able to do so. This is beyond the financial resources of this organisation at present, particularly as we attempt to keep our application fee as low as possible. Funding for such a program evaluation across disciplines would be valuable.

3.

* *Whether there are lessons to be learnt by Australia from the entry and program management policies of competing nations, including Canada, New Zealand, USA, Ireland, UK, Germany and Japan.*

The Association is currently reviewing the possibility for mutual recognition of qualifications with UK, Canada and USA. However we are finding significant difficulties with the apparent protectionist policies of the USA and the levels of legal obstacles through additional legislative regulatory bodies in the UK. These attitudes and procedures cannot be seen as achieving improved professional standards nor improving competitiveness in migration, and would be poor models to follow in Australia.

We would be happy to address these issues further if requested.

Louise Brown
Overseas Qualifications Officer
Speech Pathology Australia

Rina Harber
CEO
Speech Pathology Australia