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From: Ben and Janet Genevieve
Sent: Saturday, 2 July 2005 10:29 PM
To: Committee, Migration (REPS)
Subject: Skilled Migration

Good Morning

I saw you advert in the West Australain this evening (2 Jul 05) and thought I would drop you an e-mail about my experiences in settling in WA.

I came to Perth with my wife last April as self-funding retirees to be with our daughter. Michele is a doctor at the Royal Perth and is a permanent resident. We hope that she will be able to sponsor us so we too can be permanent resident.

My wife Janet and I are very happy here; we work 20 hours per week each and enjoy it tremendously. The employment keeps the brain ticking over and enables us to meet people and make friends. It also enables to be productive members in our new country. Our plan until we become permanent residents is to keep renewing our visa every 2 years starting from 2007.

Some personal history to put things in context:

Janet (a registered nurse) is an experienced Learning Support for children with special needs - no formal qualification as such, just years and years of on the job experience. She works in a school in Fremante and is very happy; the school is very happy with her too. They wish she could work more hours.

I am employed as a Laboratory Assistant in a medical research institute. I am happy in my job too and my employers tell me they are pleased with me.

I am a qualifed Medical Scientist (MSc in Medical Biochemistry, Fellow of the Institute of Biomedical Scientists in UK). Prior to emigrating to UK I was the Manager of the Pathology and Radiology Departments of the biggest non-teaching NHS hospital in UK. My budget was £16M and I was responsible for some 400 staff. I was also the Deputy to the Divisional General Manager for Clinical Support (Pathology, Radiology, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Chaplaincy, Medical Physics, etc). I had lots of responsibilty and used to work 60 hours a week - I loved it.

Prior to joining the NHS, I was the General Manager of the first private pathology laboratory in the NHS. Before that I was an officer in the Medical Branch of the Royal Navy (17 years in the ranks and 11 as an officer). I was presented with the MBE by HM the Queen in 1996.

I thought (mistakenly as it turned out) that I would be able to get a job reasonably easily in the pathology services in WA. I was aware that as a part-timer I could not aspire to much but I thought I

had a lot to offer - lots of knowledge, skills and experience. I could not even get a job as a Lab Assistant - my qualifications must have frightened/threatened a lot of managers.

My age (over 44) meant that I could not be a skilled migrant (even self funding) - somehow being over 45 meant I could not be useful to anybody. I would have worked for 2 years in the bush if it had meant permanent residency and being able to pass on my KSE (knowledge, skills and experience).

Don't get me wrong I am not whingeing nor am I bitter. We love being here in Australia - we wish we had come much earlier but then we would not have the KSE.

The purpose of this e-mail is to suggest that skilled migrants should not have an age limit (except maybe Australian retirement age). If you need the skills, then age should not be a limiting factor; you either need the skills or you don't.

The healthy and invigorating environment in Australia enable people to lead a long and productive life; 44 seems such a young age these days to be told you cannot be useful in your new country. Especially as 44 is when some skilled migrants are at their peak.

There are so many jobs being advertised that I am qualified (sometimes overqualified) to do; but I cannot work full time or over 20 hours. Dozens of your qualified Medical Scientists go to the UK every year and while they are replaced by new graduates - the net effect is a gradual erosion of the overall scientific KSE pool.

Thank you for the opportunity to prattle on for a bit

Yours sincerely

Ben Genevieve MBE MSc FIBMS
Lieutenant Royal Navy (Retired)