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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

29 June 2005

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

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Dear Sir/Madam

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BY: MCG

PEDIA

### **Inquiry into Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing**

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia (CCI) is the peak business association in Western Australia. It is the second largest organisation of its kind in Australia, representing approximately 5,000 organisations across all sectors including manufacturing, resources, agriculture, transport, communications, retailing, hospitality, building and construction, community services and finance. About 80 percent of CCI members are small to medium enterprises, and members are located across all geographical regions of WA.

CCI is very pleased to make this submission into your review of Australia's system of assessing the skills of people wishing to migrate under the skilled migration system.

This short submission will highlight two regulatory impediments to skilled migration:

- The lack of appropriate feedback to applicants both pre and post decision to reject an application for trades recognition; and
- The importance of a single process for trades recognition and licensing.

### **Need for Appropriate Feedback**

One of the most time consuming aspects of navigating the migration process is the pre-migration assessment of qualifications (skills recognition) and in particular the inflexible and onerous requirements imposed by Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) for trade skills assessments.

TRA is the nominated assessing authority for a range of trade and associate professional occupations for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) for skilled migration purposes.

TRA approval is therefore required before prospective migrants can be recognised in their trade occupation for migration purposes. The process can take several months and there is no opportunity to comment or provide further information in the interim prior to TRA making a decision to reject an application.

Essentially, there is no avenue to discuss a specific application that is being assessed by TRA.

In addition to providing opportunity to comment prior to rejecting an application, detailed comment on the specific grounds for the rejection are necessary. This would enable those rejected to furnish additional technical details or documents and help determine whether there are any remedial actions they can take to meet TRA's requirements for trade recognition.

### **Importance of Single Process for Trades Recognition and Licensing**

At the state level in Western Australia, the Overseas Qualifications Unit of the Department of Education and Training is developing a pilot program intended to assist the process of assessing qualifications.

Under this pilot system, however, approval by the federally-based TRA will still be necessary.

In addition, those occupations covered by licensing arrangements present additional challenges for migrants and their employers. The licensing arrangements are a separate State-based system to the TRA, and translate into a second assessment and additional time lag in enabling a skilled migrant to work in those occupations in Australia.

A single State-based system of trades recognition and licensing would provide time and resource efficiencies and speed up the process significantly.

The National Training Quality Council (NTQC) has identified that trying to navigate parallel systems of vocational education and training and licensing requirements presents considerable confusion and translates to additional challenges and impediments for employers and migrants.

The absence of a national system for mutual recognition in the regulatory process and confusion regarding requirements for additional tests for license / regulatory requirements after having already obtained a trade qualification are cited as key issues.

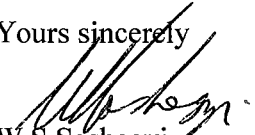
The difficulties facing employers and migrants would be substantially reduced if the Australian Government were to allow trades recognition arrangements, currently managed at a national level by TRA, to be amended to allow State based approvals. This should enable arrangements to be put in place for licensing and regulatory requirements to be met at the same time as the trade recognition process.

### **Conclusion**

The challenges for employers and prospective migrants in traversing the approvals process for skilled migration would be considerably reduced if appropriate feedback pre and post assessment decision were to be incorporated and if trades recognition arrangements were to be streamlined to allow State based approvals which incorporated both trades recognition and licensing.

CCI would be pleased to further discuss the above matters with your Joint Standing Committee. Mr Ivan Hoe, Senior Consultant CCI Migration Services, can be contacted in this regard on (08) 9365 7618 or e-mail: [hoe@cciwa.com](mailto:hoe@cciwa.com)

Yours sincerely

  
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