



City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder

577 HANNAN STREET, KALGOORLIE

OUR REF: OUT02956848:CB:LY: 00023

YOUR REF:

ENQUIRIES TO: Ms Chris Bolvig

28 October 2002

Ms Teresa Gambaro, MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Gambaro

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Joint Standing Committee of Migration current Review of Skilled Migration.

The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is the largest outback City in Australia and our major industry is mining. It also serves as the regional centre for approximately one third of Western Australia. As such, there is a need for highly skilled personnel across a wide range of professions.

Primarily the City is concerned about two major industries, our mining industry and health services. Both these areas within our City and region require highly skilled practitioners to achieve required outcomes and provide the services that the community of Kalgoorlie-Boulder deserves.

There is a chronic shortage of a wide range of professions including:

- Doctors including all specialist practitioners;
- Nurses both general and specialist practitioners;
- Allied Health Professionals from the full range of professions;
- Tradespeople, especially those most required by the mining industry; and
- IT workers.

The situation in Kalgoorlie-Boulder is further exacerbated by our location in regional Australia. There is a well documented tendency for Australians to live by the coast and incentives to live and work in regions are practically non-existent. The cost of living is markedly higher and withdrawal of services, both government and private is on the rise.

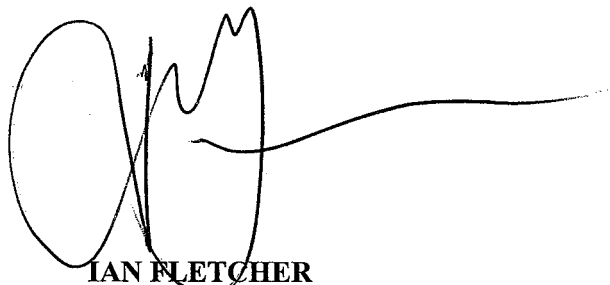
Taking into consideration all these factors, the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder offers the following brief comments regarding the current review and the need to attract appropriately skilled migrants to Australia and most especially rural Australia.

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- Incentives to attract and retain professionals to regional Australian need to be strengthened and made available in the shortest possible timeframe. This will assist not only with skilled migration but also with retaining the current population base in the regions.
- Rapid assessment of the skill base of possible migrants based on both the quality of their initial training, their work history and practical skill assessments.
- The ability for skilled migrants who require upskilling to undertake training under the guidance of employers. A program similar to the "New Apprenticeships" program currently on offer where recognition of prior learning is available would be appropriate within the mining industry.
- Health professionals should be afforded the ability to upskill under the guidance of professionals within the current public health system.
- Assisted migration programs which bind recipients to a specific locality for a period of time, for example two years.

Finally, it must be emphasised that Australia as a nation cannot depend upon drawing our skilled professionals from other nations. It is necessary for greater funding and emphasis to be placed on developing the Australian training sector to cater for the short and long term needs of our nation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'IAN FLETCHER', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

IAN FLETCHER
Chief Executive Officer