

Introduction

Conduct of the inquiry

1.1 On 18 March 2014, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, asked the Committee to inquire into and report on the Business Innovation and Investment Programme (BIIP), excluding the Significant Investor Visa stream. The terms of reference of the inquiry were to:

- Assess whether the BIIP is meeting its intended objectives and if any adjustments are necessary.
- Consider the conditions involved in the decline in rates of application for the BIIP, in light of rates of application for the previous Business Skills Program.
- Evaluate the current eligibility criteria, with particular regard to the operation of the BIIP points test, and its effectiveness in selecting suitable migrants.
- Weigh the size of the current BIIP programme against the emphasis placed on other elements of the skilled stream of the migration programme in generating economic growth.

1.2 The Committee invited an array of stakeholders, groups and individuals to submit to the inquiry, including relevant Federal, State and Territory government departments, peak bodies, Chambers of Commerce, Business Councils, and industry groups.

1.3 The Committee received 23 submissions and five exhibits from a range of Federal, State and Territory government departments, peak bodies, migration lawyers and agents.

- 1.4 The Committee also took evidence from 20 organisations and individuals at seven public hearings held in Canberra and Sydney over the course of the inquiry.¹

Structure of the report

- 1.5 The Committee's report is structured around the inquiry's terms of reference. This introductory chapter provides an outline of the conduct of the inquiry.
- 1.6 Chapter two provides a brief background on the previous Business Skills Programme, the BIIP, the State and Territory nomination process and a comparison of the BIIP against the whole skilled migration programme.
- 1.7 Chapter three examines whether the objectives of the BIIP are being met.
- 1.8 Chapter four focuses on the application rates and whether there has been a decline.
- 1.9 Chapter five examines the eligibility criteria including the innovation points test and suggestions for attracting skilled business migrants and entrepreneurs to Australia.

1 See appendices A, B and C.