

Representation against Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010

Since becoming a nation Australia is respected internationally as a place where all human beings are treated equally irrespective of their colour, creed, sex, religious beliefs, nationality or cultural background. Australia has a reputation of being a culturally diversified country and known as a country protecting human rights for over 100 years and so far Australia has protected its reputation very well, but now with the introduction of the current visa capping bill 2010 our reputation of being fair dinkum is under threat. We have earned goodwill of the world by taking thousands of African /Vietnamese and other refugees, but have we thought how the world will think of us if we put over 147,000 families at risk? International students who have already given 3-5 years of precious time of their life studying in Australia hence we have no right to ruin their lives just with one click .

On an average it takes around \$60,000.00 (normal 2 years study 25k fee and 36K for living expenses) to complete 2 years study in Australia. Majority of the international students come from middle class families, and most families have put their life time earnings to make carriers of their children. It takes two life times to save \$60,000.00 for a middle class family in developing countries, where these students belong to. Australia with the reputation of being fair, these families have trusted Australia and chosen this country for higher studies for their children's. Many families have sold their homes and life time assets to make carriers of their children with the hope that their children will become Permanent Resident of this country. Many students come with their families (Mum, Dad or kids). They came here with kids and paid huge amount of fee to schools for their kids other than their college fee. They have made decision to come to Australia by trusting the current law at that time, and keeping in mind the reputation of Australia as fair dinkum they never expected that Australia will change the laws to ruin their lives in such a big number with one click.

International students completed their studies here, successfully attained IELTS results, successfully worked in industry for required experience and lawfully lodged their GSM visa applications. They waited more than 3 years because they had trust in the fair go policy of Australia. Now if all of a sudden Australia says good bye, go back to these applicants. How can we justify this? International community will blame Australia as a cheater which no Australian citizen wish to be labeled. Students actually sacrificed all the opportunities in their home country when they took decision to study here and make it their home country and just imagine, now after spending 3-5 years of precious time of their life, and now if they are told to go back, how will they start their carriers back in their home country? How will they get back their jobs which they left to make carrier here? They have emptied their pockets by spending the life time savings of their parents

by paying the fee to our local colleges and universities, and now if sent back which college/university will accept them when they have exhausted all their funds ? Majority of International students belong to developing countries which does not have social security system in place. Dear Parliamentarians/Senators just put your kids in such a situation and think generously how they will cope with such a situation? In most countries there is certain age limit to get Government jobs or studying. International students who have given that carrier building years to Australian institutions, now if they are sent back how they will start or build their carriers in their home countries? Many people have left their permanent Government jobs overseas for better carrier in Australia if thrown back they will become suicidal. Many couples came here for new start of lives and many kids born to those couples here. These kids are 3-4 years old now and these kids are our future. They are as much Australian citizen as any other kid born to Australian parents. With this bill we will be kicking out these innocent new born Australians as well for no fault of them.

All GSM applicants are professionally qualified and are multi skilled. If some of them not working in their profession, they are working in other jobs up to the satisfaction of their employers. Their criminal history checked, they are medically checked; their English level is tested and found ok in all aspects. They are paying tax to our Government, so they are absolutely not a burden on our community or tax payers rather they are putting value to our economy, and they are far better then boat people. They are ready work force and if given opportunity, they can work for Australia in any field as they are young with full energy. With the aging population, Australia needs young people and these young people have the ability, what is required to our nation. Currently our unemployment rate is 5.2% which is considered very low in developed countries so that low unemployment rates itself indicates that they are not a threat to our workforce. Many of these International students have brought pride to Australian community by playing sports in international tournaments by wearing Australian green and gold and in future can bring more and more pride to our beloved country. We understand that handful of students have created troubles for our Government, by creating law and order problems. We being law abiding citizens would support every legal action against those individuals who are trouble makers. Identify those individuals and deport them. Do not punish other law abiding international students for the action of those handful black sheep.

We do not oppose any genuine migration rule changes but this Visa Capping Bill 2010 is unethical and this law should not be applicable with retrospective effect as proposed by the Government. We can understand the concerns of our Government and we do not want to put any extra burden on our tax payers.

To address these issues here are some suggestions:

1. Assess and accept the current applications, which have provided genuine documentation and are eligible for GSM visa. Applications found with dodgy documents must be dismissed.
2. As rural Australia needs to be developed, Grant GSM visa and impose conditions that they have to work in rural area for 3-4 years.

3. To avoid burden on our tax payers, impose condition of health insurance for 5 years to newly granted GSM visas under this scheme. This way we can avoid burden on our tax payers and create jobs in health insurance industry.
4. Take a bond or commitment from applicants that no social security will be available for them for 5 years. This will avoid liability of Federal Government.
5. Waive the condition of \$45200 wages for 457 visas seekers; by doing that, more businesses would be in capacity to sponsor GSM visa seekers.
6. Freeze overseas migration in these professions for next 5 years.
7. Give an option to qualified GSM applicants to invest \$50000 in business and employ at least 2 Australians and business must earn 20 k profit for 2 years to get PR confirmed just imagine if 20000 applicants choose to take this option and buy businesses to get PR we will have 40000 jobs and Australia will have \$1, 00000000.00 (1billion) of foreign currency which will definitely add value to our economy and it will grow rapidly

We would like to raise our concerns before Senate Committee as all Australians have fundamental right to raise their voice. We understand that our Government has the right to make laws for betterment of this country but to implement the law retrospectively is not the justice, and if we do it, we will be answerable to international community. As in case of Aboriginal people our Prime Minister have apologized in Parliament on behalf of the nation for the wrong doings of our ancestors, same way, if we pass this bill our future generations have to apologize for our wrong doings. Now it is the time to say NO to this VISA CAPPING BILL. If it is utmost necessary to pass this bill to control immigration then it should not be implemented retrospectively. Our reputation of being fair dinkum is on the line. It took 100 years to create this reputation and please don't let it to be tarnished in a click. We will be answerable to international community for this ill bill. History will not forgive us.

Prabhjot Singh Sandhu
Coordinator
Punjabi Media Council of Australia (INC)