

Dear Sir/Madam:

I write to voice my anguish and disappointment at the Australian government's plan to pass the Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010. I am an Australian medical student and as a future doctor, I have many friends who have lodged the PR application, meeting all criteria set by immigration, and are still waiting after some time. Some of these people have waited as long as 2 years on a bridging visa. I am a firm believer of the Australian value that everyone deserves a fair go. This decision is certainly unfair.

I believe it is wrong to set up skilled migration criteria, lure people into our country to study and pay hefty tuition fees, allow them to meet skill migration criteria and lodge their application for residency and then kick them out while they are waiting. I see this as false advertising. Many of these onshore applicants are young and have spent a major part of their lives here in Australia. This is their home. They have contributed significantly to the Australia society and have made enormous efforts in the hope of residency for this country that they love. It is time for us to look after them.

It is bad to keep them waiting on bridging visas for such long times because they meet the set criteria (they cannot find proper jobs nor travel very easily on bridging visas). It is worse to reject their applications so the government can take the easy way out. The government can change immigration criteria to affect people who apply for skill migration in the future but should not damage the lives of those who are already very integrated into the Australian society. These people are contributors of our system, skill migrants are hard workers and do not end up applying for government assistance.

Allow me to provide one example of someone I know who I strongly believe deserves residency in Australia. This person has been in Australia for 6 years! They have paid in excess of AU\$250,000 in terms of tuition fees on getting qualifications to apply for skill migration. They lodged the application in July 2008 meeting all set criteria and have been kept waiting almost 2 years with a bridging visa (normally it only takes couple of months). In those 2 years they have found it extremely difficult to look for a professional job related to their degree because they do not have PR. But they did not give up and worked anyway in a manual labour job and paid their taxes every week. This person is 25 years of age and has spent almost a quarter of their life away from their family in the hope of Australian residency. They have followed the rules and waited in the queue. It would be very un-Australian to then turn around and punish them. Where is their fair go?