

1. *The purpose of the skilled migration program and whether it is meeting its intended objectives, including*
 - 1a) *if any immediate adjustments are necessary in the context of the future of work and pandemic recovery,*

The Skilled migration program should be put on hold until all Australian Citizens who have nominated to return to Australia. I was furious to learn that 2,720 skilled migrants entered into Australia in the month of December 2020 when over 30,000 Australian Citizens were denied passage back to Australia on the same flights to have Christmas with their families.¹

The skills of Australians wanting to return to Australia should be assessed, as I'm sure many would be of greater benefit than those skilled migrants unfamiliar with working in Australia.

- 1b) *if more long-term structural changes are warranted;*

If we overcome the effects of COVID-19, skilled migrant numbers should return to levels experienced in 2001. The pre-pandemic levels of skilled migration have caused significant pressure on Australia's infrastructure, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne. Construction of schools, hospitals, roads etc. have not kept up with these artificial increases in population. Increases that are the highest in the OECD.

In 2019 Sydney was facing significant water restrictions, and yet over 1,000 people immigrated to Sydney from overseas every week. Water shortages will occur again and we cannot continue to increase our population at such a fast rate. This is just one example of how large volumes of skilled migration has placed additional pressure on the world's driest populated continent's finite resources.

2. *Australia's international competitiveness in attracting entrepreneurs, venture capital, startups, and the best and brightest skilled migrants with cutting edge skills;*

Consideration needs to be given to the development of the third world countries from which many of our skilled migrants come from. When Australia grants a skilled migrant visa to someone from a developing country, that country has lost an individual that has been trained at great cost to improve the development of that country. Developing countries need to retain educated people so that the standard of living in that country can increase and therefore the need of Australia to accept refugees from that country in the future decreases.

By all means attract a small number of critically required highly skilled migrants from developed countries, but give consideration to developing countries ability to develop.

¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/migration-rules-reviewed-as-government-looks-to-fix-skills-shortage-20210203-p56z6d.html>

3. *Skills lists and the extent to which they are meeting the needs of industries and businesses and keeping pace with Australia's job landscape;*

The skilled lists do not seem to take into consideration how transferrable existing Australian skill sets are. For example, I understand that Construction Project Managers are on a list of high demand in terms of high priority in granting a skilled migrant visa. The Australian Construction industry is experiencing a significant downturn in residential apartment construction. The skills of Project Managers in this field are easily transferrable to other areas of the construction industry. This negates the need to import more Construction Project Managers.

I'm sure there are other examples in other industries where a small amount of retraining will allow Australians to maintain employment.

4. *The administrative requirements for Australian businesses seeking to sponsor skilled migrants, including requirements to prioritise job opportunities for Australians and job creation;*

Australia is currently suffering from low inflation and low wages growth. It is imperative that a more detailed investigation into Australia's current labour market is undertaken to determine if the right skills are available with little or no retraining required. If we continue to import skilled migrants instead of employing Australians who may need a small amount of upskilling, wages will remain low and our standard of living, measured by per capita GDP growth, will also not grow.

5. *The costs of sponsorship to businesses seeking to sponsor skilled migrants;*

Any high cost of sponsorship is absolutely necessary. Lowering the cost will lower the incentive to spend a small amount of money upskilling an Australian to undertake the same job.

6. *The complexity of Australia's skilled migration program including the number of visa classes under the program and their requirements, safeguards and pathways; and*

Complexity is absolutely necessary. Before skilled migration lists are developed, a thorough business case needs to be developed to understand if Australians in jobs similar to those in need can undertake a small amount of upskilling or retraining to transfer into those jobs in demand.

7. *Any other related matters.*

My understanding is that there are several job categories that have been on the demand lists for over 10 years. The committee should extend its review in an effort to understand why Australia's vocational training system has not provided the labour market with enough of the right people. 10 years is more than enough time to restructure Australia's training to accommodate our future labour force needs.