Garry Seo & Associates

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5 July 2010

Committee Secretary

Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee

PO Box 6100,

Parliament House

via email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

ABN 95 784 257 868

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re:

Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010

Subject:

Submission

Background to Making a Submission

I am a solicitor predominantly practicing within the Korean Community and I deal with many Koreans who wishes to immigrate to Australia. Whilst I do immigration work in my practice, the general skilled migration work represents only small percentage of my overall immigration income. I have decided to make a submission because I clearly understand the impact of the new BILL will have if it was exercised by the Honourable Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

The Main Aim of the Bill

As rightly pointed out by The Hon. Laurie Ferguson in his second reading speech to the Parliament, the Government has grave concerns about the continuing inflow of visa applications under the Skilled Migration Program which are not sponsored and nominating occupations that are not in high demand. The Hon. Laurie Ferguson is particularly concerned about the visa applications nominating the occupation of cooks and hairdressers. He specifically mentions that out of 41,000 general skilled migration visa granted in 2007-2008 program, there were more than 5,000 cooks and hairdressers.

The government is clearly aware that out of 147,000 (including primary and secondary applicants) general skilled migration visa applicants waiting in the pipeline for a visa decision,

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large chunk of them are cooks and hairdressers.

It is clear that the passing of the Bill will open the door for the Minister Chris Evans to apply the law for onshore independent skilled migrations and grant visas to those who have studied high demand occupations and refuse all other outstanding applications not yet processed. The Minister has failed to point out that majority of people amongst 147,000 applications are already in Australia and have adopted to Australian way of life and many will face huge difficulties should they be forced to return to their own countries.

Recent Changes Addressing Similar Issues

- (1) On the 8th February 2010, the Hon. Minister Mr Chris Evans exercised his powers under Section 39 of the Migration Act and capped and terminated all unprocessed offshore general skilled migration visa made prior to 1st September 2007.
- (2) The Minister has also introduced NEW SOL to be operational from the 1st July 2010 and it has significantly reduced the occupations eligible for skilled migration program compared to the old SOL.
- (3) The Minister has also limited transitional arrangements for NEW SOL which will eliminate many cook and hairdresser graduates from applying for permanent resident visa under the general skilled migration program.

Are above changes, fair and just for overseas students?

Recently, there has been number of peace rallies in various States addressing the issue of fair and just immigration policies for overseas students. This limited transitional arrangement will significantly disadvantage those students because some of them had to sell their houses and seek huge assistance from their parents to establish new life in Australia. I believe it is the view of all overseas students and stakeholders that those who held subclass 572, 573 and 574 as at 8th Feb 2010 be able to apply for permanent resident visa as well.

Most of us do not understand the lives as overseas students who come to Australia for study. Many of them spend tens and thousands of dollars and by the time they finish study and apply for permanent resident visa through general skilled migration program, they are often left with nothing. They go through the enormous stress of learning English, adjusting to the Australian customs and culture, studying at TAFE or Universities in English (Second Language) provides enormous stress and difficulties, some study as well as work in part-time jobs, some families end up in divorce not being able to cope with the hardness of life they have not fully comprehended. But most of overseas' students survive difficult times and many are happy to become part of Australia and enjoy fullness of the life this beautiful country provides.

This so called 'flawed' system of Permanent Resident Factory, was created by the Howard-Costello government. During this period, we have enjoyed economic growth and the overseas' students market had significant contribution to the boom we have enjoyed over the last 10 years. Overseas students created jobs and many Australian became rich and especially the Universities have enjoyed significant growth in infrastructure over the last 20 years which would not have been possible if it was not for income from the overseas students.

I believe it is not fair one government to allow flawed system to continue for long time and another to reject the system and people by introducing unfair legislation.

The government has already safeguarded Australia from influx of overseas students seeking to benefit from the Permanent Resident Factory system (although it does not exist anymore) by introducing NEW SOL and that NEW SOL will be reviewed annually to reflect market demand. It has already sent clear message to those seeking to study in Australia that they may have to return to their own countries after completing the course.

I believe our Government is entitled to introduce new laws, regulations and policies but when the new Act effects significant number of people in such a huge way, the government must not apply the changes retrospectively. And I believe many of Australians will accept that whilst they agree with current governments' policy of controlling the population to sustainable level and cutting the immigration intake is the most effective way, they will agree that the subject **Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010** before the Parliament is not a fair one.

There are many heartbreaking stories of overseas students that will touch people's heart. And I think it is important for you to hear about some of the stories to understand the impact it will have on students.

Story of — An overseas student family

Let me introduce the story of who came to Australia in 2005. She first came to Australia briefly in 2004 to visit her sister and she fell in love with Australia straight away. Upon returning to Korea, she researched about immigrating to Australia and decided to come as an overseas student and apply for permanent resident visa afterwards upon completion of a course in cookery and diploma of Hospitality. Her husband was working for a Bank and it is considered to be stable occupation.

She attended language school in Aug 2005 and she studied Diploma of Hospitality in 2006 and 2007 and graduated with good grades. She worked for little while to obtain skills assessment through Trade Recognition Australia and received good marks in IELTS English tests. Whilst she was busy satisfying conditions of the immigration guidelines, her son attended pre-school

and kindergarten without the supervision.

In Dec 2007, she applied for permanent resident visa under skilled migration program and has

been waiting for decision ever since. It has been more than 2 years and when she heard about

the subject Bill, she wanted her stories to be known to the Senate Committee preparing the

report for the government. Her son who was 4 years old when they first arrived in Australia is

now 9 and have difficulty expressing himself in Korean language.

They have become fully integrated into Australian society and she cannot imagine how they can

settle back into Korea if the visa capping bill is passed and they became victim of such

government policies.

Petitions

I was a member of unregistered organization called the "Fairness and Justice for Overseas

Students (FJFOS)" and FJFOS started meeting together about 5 months ago to address issues

concerning overseas students. With the assistance of its founding members, we sent people out

to major Korean Community Centres in Sydney (Strathfield, Eastwood, Chatswood & City) for

Petitions and FJFOS has allowed me to submit the Petitions with my submission.

Recommendation

Now that the Minister has implemented NEW SOL from the 1st July 2010 and plans to review

the SOL as often as yearly basis, the subject BILL should not be passed to disadvantage those

visa applications already in the pipeline awaiting decisions. Many people who may become

subject of proposed Bill have come from very competitive countries such as Korea, China, India

etc where it would be extremely difficult for those students to return and adjust back into the

society.

The government should address the issue by updating the NEW SOL for future applications but

should not apply capping to onshore skilled migration applications.

Yours faithfully,

Garry Woon Hak Seo

Solicitor

To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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Dang-uk Kirm
Joseph Park
Scongworng Lee
Elin Seon
Martin Ha
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We, the undersigned, petition you to show fairness and benevolence to overseas students. The proposed Amendment to Migration Act will give the Honourable Minister for Immigration and Citizenship unprecedented power to cap and terminate those overseas students who have already lodged and are awaiting visa application outcome. It will affect tens and thousands of overseas students and their families who have already become part of Australia.

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Please return to: Fairness & Justice for Overseas Students, 6/14-16 Russell St, Strathfield NSW 2135

To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

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SHIN YOU-TAEK

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HAGE SUNI CHO

Jinna Jeon

Jay Lee

BONGTH CHUZ MYOUNG KIM JACK LEE

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Chayshin choi

Teresa KIM Jae yun KIM

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To: Senate Committee – Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010 [Provision]

Name Vincent OH
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Kim Hanna
David Kim
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CHOI Ho Chul
SUNG JOONK

To:

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