

Submission No. 58  
Date Received



the **development board**

northern rivers regional  
development board inc  
now south wales

12<sup>th</sup> February 2007

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Migration  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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**RE: SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS  
AND MONITORING, ENFORCEMENT AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR TEMPORARY BUSINESS VISAS**

The Northern Rivers Regional Development Board (NRRDB) is a Regional Certifying Body (RCB) located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. As a RCB, the Development Board is required to certify a number of criteria regarding temporary and permanent business visa nominations for this regional area.

The issues regarding the Inquiry into Eligibility Requirements and Monitoring, Enforcement and Reporting Arrangements for Temporary Business Visas in this submission relate to:

- eligibility requirements; and
- skilled labour gaps.

**Eligibility Requirements**

The current gazetted regional salary requirement of \$37,665 is onerous at the regional level, and it is recommended that the Joint Standing Committee consider reducing the salary level to \$32,000, or supporting the application of identified Award or Labour Agreement rates (where these are relevant). It is recommended that the base salary should not be eroded by other benefits, such as superannuation, accommodation, meals, bonuses etc; and that the salary rates must continue to be calculated on a full time rate of 35-38 hours per week.

The Development Board considers that the proficiency of English language is a high priority, particularly in regard to the provision of appropriate on-the-job and OH&S training and information. Management and senior organisational or executive positions also require a high level of English proficiency. There may, however, be scope to relax these requirements if there is a nominated interpreter in the region to assist with migration support within businesses.

The Development Board supports the flexibility in exemptions to minimal skill requirements if the nominee is sponsored in a regional or low population growth area and is filling a local labour market gap.

**Skilled Labour Gaps**

The NRRDB is a Regional Development Board and has a responsibility to encourage local employment opportunities. The Northern Rivers is also a region of extremely high population growth and unemployment, and the Development Board believes it can add value to the RCB role through strong assessment of local labour market skill gaps or requirements. It sometimes presents a conflict for the Development Board to



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be required to approve a visa nomination when it is aware of sufficient skilled labour in the local area to fill the nominated position.

In recent years, the emphasis on labour market testing and evidence for assessing Temporary Regional Business Visa and Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (permanent visa) nominations has been diluted and is no longer a key criterion of the assessment process for permanent visas. The NRRDB is also concerned that the requirement "*to use your knowledge of the local employment market and conditions when certifying a nomination for a vacancy when received by an employer*" is not applied consistently between temporary and permanent visa nominations.

The Development Board recommends that temporary and permanent visa eligibility requirements should require RCBs to use their own local knowledge to determine whether the vacancy needs to be filled from overseas because there is a recognised shortage in their local area. The Development Board encourages the Standing Committee on Migration to enable RCBs to request that the employer should be required to provide evidence of labour market testing to demonstrate this need; and that these requirements should be applied consistently between temporary and permanent business visas.

The Development Board appreciates the extension of time to ensure consideration of these comments.

Please contact Katrina Luckie on [kluckie@nrrdb.com.au](mailto:kluckie@nrrdb.com.au) or 02 6622 4011 if you require clarification regarding any of the matters in this submission.

Regards,



Katrina Luckie  
**Executive Director**