

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration****Chair: Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP****Deputy Chair: Mrs Louise Markus MP**

Skilled migrants leading the way on workforce participation

The role of skilled migration in supporting Australia's economic and social future will be on the agenda this Wednesday, 17 August, when the Joint Committee on Migration hears from independent expert body Skills Australia.

According to Skills Australia, attracting skilled migrants with high employability and strong language skills is crucial to supporting our economy and ageing population.

However, it also recognises that migration needs to be balanced with investment in skilling the domestic population and improving overall workforce participation.

Data cited by Skills Australia shows that skilled migrants have workforce participation rates of 95 per cent, 30 per cent higher than amongst the general population.

Committee Chair Maria Vamvakinou said that Skills Australia believes migration targeting for high skills is now right, but poor skill utilisation among General Migrant Stream entrants and the relatively low participation rate for the general population remains a problem.

"The Committee will investigate two key issues: whether the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda could do more to boost workforce participation among recent and settled migrants in particular; and whether skilled migrants are actually taking Australian jobs or, by contrast, are growing new employment opportunities for all Australians," Ms Vamvakinou said.

The Committee's public hearing will commence at **10.45 am in Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra.**

Proceedings will be audio broadcast on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Further information about the inquiry can be obtained from the Committee's website www.aph.gov.au/mig or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560.

MEDIA CONTACTS:**Media comment: Committee Chair Ms Maria Vamvakinou (03) 9309 3655 or 0417 541 465 (Basem Abdo)****Background: Inquiry Secretary Migration mobile no: 0413 086 521 from 27 July 2011 (PM)**