



2 February 2018

Department of Home Affairs

Re: Invitation for Submissions Regarding Managing Australia's Migrant Intake

To whom it may concern

Thank you for inviting interested individuals and groups to submit considerations and comments on managing Australia's migrant intake.

The German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (GACIC) is the official representation of German business in all of Australia and represents over 900 companies active in the bilateral business relationship, as well as various industries and company sizes, particularly SMEs and medium-sized German companies ("Mittelstand").

The GACIC supports an Australian visa system that is in line with the Australian Government's priorities, offering a comprehensive set of visa categories that meets the need of the stakeholders involved, including that of Australian businesses.

The visa categories should be easy to understand in order to allow applicants and employers a clear path outlining the requirements through the visa system. At the same time, the visa categories available and number of places available in each category need to have the crucial flexibility to address real-life circumstances in often complex international arrangements.

In order to fully understand the impact of the Migration Program on Australian businesses in the German-Australian business community, the German-Australian Chamber conducted a survey about this topic in January 2018 to which all Chamber member companies were invited to contribute.

The results of this survey clearly show that this is a very important topic for the operation of Australian businesses in the German-Australian business community. Over 50% of businesses that responded to the survey currently employ an employer-sponsored permanent migrant, the experience of the surveyed businesses of the visa process varies a lot with a significant number of businesses reporting long processing times impacting negatively on their business.

In terms of the number of places in the employer-sponsored skilled migration program, over 75% of respondents think that the number should be increased in future and less than 25% of respondents think that the number should stay at the current level. None of the respondents think that the number should be decreased.

The Chamber also surveyed its member companies about the currently available set of employer-sponsored temporary and permanent visa categories. While the basic options are welcomed by the majority of responding businesses, the lack of clear

pathways from temporary to permanent skilled employer-sponsored visas make it difficult for some companies to attract top international talent to Australia to fill gaps when no suitable local employee can be found. This is particularly impacting European businesses as the physical distance from Europe to Australia means that most employees need clarity about their visa perspectives in Australia before relocating themselves and their family.

So overall, the Chamber believes that managing Australia's migration intake is an important element in securing Australia's international competitiveness and economic growth. International migrants contribute to society as well as the company culture in the businesses where they work. They also contribute additional skills and help companies address cultural sensitivities and through their skills train other employees.

As our member survey has demonstrated, the number of employer-sponsored skilled migrants should be increased in future and the visa process, especially in terms of processing times, can be improved.

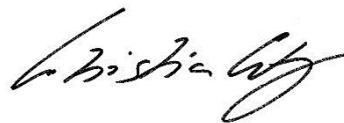
Also in light of the upcoming negotiations for an Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement, the German-Australian Chamber encourages the Australian Government to take into account the impact on international trade, investment and innovation and to take the benefits of international staff movements for the competitiveness of Australian operations and businesses into account when making decisions about the visa system and the number of places available in the visa categories.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Chamber for further assistance in this matter. Director of Policy, Dr Michael Zettinig, will continue his engagement with you.

Yours sincerely



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