



11 February 2011

The Director
Sponsored Skilled Migration Policy Section
Department of immigration and Citizenship

Dear Director,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the review of the Business Skills Visa Program. As the state's peak business organisation, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) recognises the importance of Skilled Migration to Australia's population and productivity agenda.

CCIQ represents the interests of 25,000 businesses across Queensland, many of which operate in rural and regional areas where skill shortages are particularly acute. CCIQ is supportive of migration policies and frameworks that generate employment, increase productivity and improve the ability of businesses to meet their skills needs and address ongoing skills shortages.

CCIQ anticipates that skills shortages will be prevalent throughout Australia over the coming decades as our population continues to age and as competition for highly skilled labour intensifies in both domestic and international markets. As the natural population growth rate declines and new entrants to the workforce stagnates and even declines, overseas migration is likely to play an increasingly important role in expanding the nation's workforce.

Respondents to the CCIQ Skills Survey indicated that Queensland businesses are fairly confident that there would be sufficient skilled people available in the future to meet skills needs in low and intermediate jobs. However, businesses were not confident that there would be sufficient skilled people available to fill high level and management jobs in the future. CCIQ recognises the potential for the Business Skills Visa Program to address this issue and up-skill the regional workforce through the transfer of business skills and the diversification of local business expertise.

CCIQ supports the activities of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to reduce the regulatory burden and simplify the processes of the Business Skills Visa Program. CCIQ encourages the Department to enhance the program to facilitate the migration of people with professional business skills in areas such as entrepreneurship, small business management and commerce, these skills are vitally important to the growth of our economy and, with the aging population, are skills increasingly in shortage across all industries and regions.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this response, please do not hesitate to contact me or Elizabeth Roberts, Education and Training Advisor on (07) 3842 2227.

Yours Sincerely

Nick Behrens
General Manager, Policy



Chamber of Commerce &
Industry Queensland
Industry House
375 Wickham Terrace
Brisbane Q 4000

ABN 55 009 662 060

t > 07 3842 2244
f > 07 3832 3195
e > info@cciq.com.au

Employer Advice Line
1300 135 822

Regional Offices
Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast,
Toowoomba, Rockhampton,
Mackay, Townsville, Cairns