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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION INQUIRY INTO SKILLS  
RECOGNITION, UPGRADING AND LICENSING**

**SYDNEY HEARING – 23 NOVEMBER 2005**

**EVIDENCE PRESENTED BY:**

**Mr Richard Acheson, Director of Community Relations Services, Community Relations  
Commission For a multicultural NSW (CRC)**

**Mr Ian Kingsley, Director, Apprenticeships and Traineeships, NSW Department of  
Education and Training (DET)**

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE  
QUESTIONS**

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**SKILLMAX PROGRAM**

**Question (Mrs Irwin)**

Could you let me know a bit more about the program and how many people that have gone through that program have found employment?

**Answer**

*Information on the Skillmax Program*

The NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) Skillmax Program offers courses to skilled migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds who have overseas qualifications, skills and/or experience. The program aims to assist these clients to improve their employment prospects by developing their language and job seeking skills.

The Skillmax Program was established in 1983 and has had a recurrent budget of \$1.7 million since that time. The program has two strands:

- 1 Courses for newly-arrived skilled migrants in the language of job seeking and cross-cultural understanding of the Australian workplace and job seeking practices
- 2 Courses for public servants from non-English speaking backgrounds who were working below the level of their overseas qualifications, skills and/or experience.

The courses assist clients to identify potential employment, prepare résumés and employment applications and prepare for interviews.

There were 6,737 enrolments in the Jobseekers Skillmax Program for the three years 2003-2005 and 1,643 enrolments in the Public Servants Skillmax Program. The AMES does not assess changes in employment status. However, indicative figures provided at the close of the

Skilled Migrant Placement Program in June 2003, showed that some 65% of participants in the Skillmax Programs either gained employment or improved their employment status.

### ***Recent developments***

Although some courses continue for public servants, the majority of the program now caters for newly-arrived skilled migrants. Some full-time and part-time longer courses are offered for those who need more assistance in developing communication skills and preparing for employment. However many of the clients do not want to commit to a long course and NSW AMES has developed the following range of modules which are offered as shorter courses or in workshop format:

- Orientation to employment in Australia
- Telephone skills for job seeking
- Writing Skills for job seeking
- Interview Skills for job seeking
- Communication skills for work.

## **PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS TRAINED TEACHERS**

### **Question (Mrs Irwin)**

You mention the pre-employment program for overseas trained schoolteachers on page 17. Your submission says:

The program was developed in response to concerns raised by principals that overseas trained teachers need appropriate orientation to prepare them for teaching in NSW public schools.

What feedback have you received from principals and overseas trained teachers with this program?

### **Answer**

#### ***Feedback from principals and overseas trained teachers***

As part of a 2005 evaluation report on the Pre-Employment Program for Overseas Trained Teachers, the following feedback was obtained from principals and overseas trained teachers.

Many of the overseas trained teacher applicants expressed the view that the program targets the needs of secondary teachers who completed their teacher qualification in non-English speaking institutions and whose previous teaching experience has been in countries where English is not the main language spoken.

As indicators of the general achievement of program outcomes, responses to surveys and interviews indicate that:

- school principals valued and strongly supported the continuation of the program as one strategy to provide students with access to qualified, capable teachers
- overseas trained teacher employment applicants indicated that in general, the orientation program had made a considerable to a very high contribution to their preparation for the assessment components of the program

- overseas trained teacher employment applicants whose initial qualifications had been awarded by a non-English speaking institution were more likely to rate as high to very high the extent to which the orientation program had contributed to specific areas of capability that were demonstrated during the assessment phase
- overseas trained teacher employment applicants, regardless of their views about specific aspects of the program, overwhelmingly acknowledged the value of the opportunities it provided for professional learning through first-hand interaction with enthusiastic and expert colleagues in a school setting.

Principals and employment applicants identified benefits from participation in the program. The majority of overseas trained teacher employment applicants:

- said that they knew what was expected of them during the in-school assessment phase. The majority of these respondents also indicated that they felt well prepared for the assessment
- were of the view that the opportunities with which they had been provided to demonstrate their capability were adequate and appropriate. Some also indicated that the opportunities had provided a degree of professional challenge.

Some overseas trained teacher employment applicants expressed concern about aspects of the in-schools assessment process. The negative comments related to the assessment phase being “too long” and the approach taken by the supervising teacher and/or the principal.

When discussing the benefits from participating in the program, principals identified professional development outcomes for the teachers in their school who were directly involved in providing the orientation and assessment components of the program.

The majority of principals interviewed agreed that the program is likely to result in schools having access to a pool of casual teachers whose professional capabilities are aligned to teaching in NSW government schools.

### **Question (Mrs Irwin)**

I think with that program there were 239 overseas trained teachers who participated and 225 have been approved to teach in New South Wales public schools. Is it mainly in country areas that they are teaching?

### **Answer**

Overseas trained teachers who successfully complete the program are granted an approval to teach. This approval allows them to teach in NSW public schools on a casual or temporary basis.

By May 2005, 84 teachers who participated in the Pre-employment Program for Overseas Trained Teachers gained permanent, temporary or casual employment in NSW government schools.

Five of these teachers had gained permanent appointment. Three were appointed to metropolitan locations (Western Sydney, South Western Sydney and Northern Sydney regions) and two were appointed to rural locations (New England and Western NSW regions).

A further 34 of these teachers undertook temporary employment in the following regions: Sydney (12); Northern Sydney (7); South Western Sydney (6); Western Sydney (4); Hunter/Central Coast (3); Riverina (1); and Illawarra and South Coast (1).

Forty-five of these teachers had undertaken casual teaching. Teachers who undertake casual teaching may do so in a range of schools.

Several survey respondents indicated that they had obtained employment in non-government schools or were engaged in non-teaching work.

In promoting teaching as a career, the Department advises all employment applicants that they will maximise their employment opportunities if they are able to indicate a willingness to work anywhere in the State, in particular non coastal rural locations and western and south western Sydney.

## **OVERSEAS SKILLED MIGRATION EXPOS**

### **Question (Chair)**

Representing, as you do, the New South Wales government at this inquiry, have you been involved in the exhibitions overseas in London, Berlin, Amsterdam and Chennai, or has anybody associated with you been involved with those?... Is there any feedback on the success or otherwise of those exhibitions? Has there been any flow-on in terms of skilled people coming as a result of those exhibitions, to New South Wales, particularly regional New South Wales?

### **Answer**

New South Wales (Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD)) participated in the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) "Australia Needs Skills" migration expos in London, Amsterdam and Berlin in September and October 2005. The NSW (DSRD) focus was to promote skilled migration to regional NSW. NSW (DSRD) carried job advertisements at these expos provided through Regional Certifying Bodies (RCBs) from several regional employers prepared to sponsor skilled migrants to fill vacant positions.

Hunter Councils Inc also sent a representative to the London expo with financial support from DSRD and focussed on finding town planners and civil engineers.

NSW (DSRD) has received follow up email enquiries following the expos from around 20 prospective migrants seriously considering migration to NSW.

Hunter Councils obtained resumes from around 20 civil engineers and town planners suitably qualified to fill positions in the Hunter.

It is too early to obtain any final data on the number of skilled migrants to NSW resulting from participation in these expos.