

Summary

- 10.1 In the course of its review, the Committee encountered a number of other reviews relevant to, or dealing with, aspects of the Committee's terms of reference. The Committee has refrained from attempting to duplicate those efforts and, where appropriate, has drawn attention to and endorsed conclusions of recent studies.
- 10.2 These include:
- *Bridging the Skills Divide* - recommendations concerning "Skill Shortfalls and Future Skill Needs" including the development of an integrated and nationally consistent approach to the collection and reporting of labour market and current and future skill needs.¹
 - *Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants* – recommendations covering:
 - ⇒ development of new service options for migrants;²
 - ⇒ development of streamlined arrangements for obtaining information about skills assessment;
 - ⇒ more targeted assistance to overseas-trained professionals permanently resident in Australia;
 - ⇒ review of information provision, including pre-embarkation information.³

1 Chapter 4 of this report, citing: Senate, Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee, *Bridging the Skills Divide*, November 2003, *Recommendations 1 - 4*.

2 Recommendation 10, DIMIA, *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*, May 2003, p. 124, http://www.immi.gov.au/settle/settle_review

- *Temporary Residence Program Review: Report of the 2000-02 review's* conclusion concerning the need for clear pathways to permanent residence for skilled workers.⁴
- 10.3 In examining international competition for skilled labour (Chapters 1-3) the Committee identified the large scale of international labour migration, and considered that Australia's comparatively high per capita intake indicated that it was competitive.⁵
- 10.4 The Committee considered (Chapter 3) that Australia's migration arrangements are enhanced by its open and straightforward points system and the policy of accepting skilled migrants as permanent settlers without further qualifying arrangements or residence requirements.
- 10.5 The potential attraction which might come from the long-term stability of program requirements is, however, compromised by the adjustments made to accommodate policy imperatives.
- 10.6 The Committee considered that the reluctance of many countries to pursue permanent migration offered Australia a potentially powerful selling point in the international skills marketplace.⁶
- 10.7 The Committee found (Chapter 2) that migrants to Australia ranked job opportunities lower in importance as reasons for migrating than their families' future and lifestyle/climate,⁷ and that this indicates that, whatever Australia's perception might be, skilled migration is not primarily about jobs - at least for the migrants.
- 10.8 Examining the role of State and local authorities in attracting skilled migrants (Chapter 2), the Committee found coordination to be an issue of concern. It recommends some steps to increase and improve access to existing data on migrant desires and views and to the visibility of State, Territory and regional areas of settlement through improved use of the internet. (Recommendations 1, 2, 3). It also suggests that communities seeking to promote migration to their areas might profitably engage with their migrant populations and

3 Recommendations 11-13, DIMIA, *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants, May 2003*, p. 130, http://www.immi.gov.au/settle/settle_review

4 DIMIA, *Temporary Residence Program Review: Report of the 2000-02 review*, para 2.97. <http://www.immi.gov.au/general/review.htm>

5 Table 1.1, Paras 1.5-1.8; 1.20.

6 Para 3.20.

7 Estimated from Tables on p. 5 and p. 47, NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Tables 3.3, 3.6. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

- their informal overseas links, and notes that overseas recruitment by firms was also likely to be successful.⁸
- 10.9 The Committee reviewed competition for skilled migrants to meet temporary demand and the associated national programs in Chapter 4 and identifies some means of improving the commitment to local skilled training. (Recommendations 4, 5)
- 10.10 In considering permanent migration the Committee examined the mandatory requirements and points systems in a number of competing countries (Chapters 5 – 8). In view of the evidence of the importance of local work experience provided in Chapters 7 and 9, the Committee proposes increasing the points allocated to it for the purposes of the points test. (Recommendations 6, 7).
- 10.11 Examination of overseas and Australian consideration of the importance of age (Chapter 8) leads the Committee to propose adjustments to both the maximum age limit for migrants and their spouses and to the points allocated for age. (Recommendations 8, 9, 11).
- 10.12 Having considered overseas points allocations for the applicant's spouse the Committee recommends that more weight should be given to their experience and qualifications in the Australian arrangements. (Recommendation 10).
- 10.13 When considering whether new migrants were settling well (Chapter 9), the Committee placed emphasis on their labour force outcomes because these were the rationale for pursuing permanent migration and would provide the foundation for the migrants' wider participation in Australian society. The Committee therefore examined the factors thought to be key hindrances to positive labour force outcomes, and for recognition of overseas qualifications and the need for local work experience.
- 10.14 The Committee noted that the requirements for gaining recognition of qualifications and being able to use them in practice in Australia were not well explained to potential migrants and recommends immediate action and improved cooperation to overcome this. (Recommendations 12, 13, 14).
- 10.15 In the course of its consideration of other countries' skilled permanent migration programs it was evident to the Committee that there had

8 The NILS, *Life in a New Land : The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, reached the same conclusion, p. 19, www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

been substantial cross-fertilisation of ideas in the application of mandatory criteria and the weighting of the points system. The similarities reflected a concern to identify skilled migrants who were going to be successful in their new country, and a concern that the process be as objective and transparent as possible.

- 10.16 In the Committee's view the differences between the systems are not an indication that one country was any more informed about how to select migrants than any other. Rather it is evidence that differing nations have differing philosophies of skilled migration and have adjusted their filtering systems accordingly.
- 10.17 It follows that, while the Committee's recommendations may have been informed by overseas ideas and practices, they are aimed at ensuring that both skilled migrants and Australia gain from their joint endeavour in migration.

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March 2004