

## **CHAPTER 15– FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **POLICY PARAMETERS**

15.1 This Review was conducted with the broad policy objectives of temporary residence policy in mind. A large number of visas and a wide range of visas were examined in the context of those imperatives. The Report is structured so that those policy parameters are consistently addressed.

15.2 A number of findings in the Report recognise the current policy settings that remain appropriate and where procedures are working well. Other findings recognise procedural principles against which recommendations for change are identified. As well, there are a number of areas where the Report has identified the need for further analysis, consideration or consultation prior to identifying scope for and direction of change. There are 36 Recommendations for Change which identify specific changes that would support the policy goals of temporary residence and the procedural objectives of public administration.

15.3 This Review had two goals: to create a temporary residence visa regime that is responsive to today's needs, and to rationalise, standardise and clarify requirements, in order to provide a regime that is efficient for both clients and departmental staff. The findings in this report focus on these goals and the recommendations for change address these objectives.

15.4 The temporary residence regime currently contains considerable policy and procedural complexity, some of which is the result of intended specificity and therefore needs to be retained. It is not possible to sweep away some of the specific requirements of certain of its visas, nor is it desirable to do so. On the other hand, some of the complexity and inconsistencies are

unintended and therefore can be removed; there is room for simplification, removal of inconsistencies and the introduction of best processing practice. Thus the findings and recommendations of this report recognise where things are working well and should be retained without change, where minor refinement is necessary and where alternative approaches are called for.

15.5 From the feedback obtained during consultations it is apparent that Australia's temporary residence program works well to meet the requirements of Australian business and the community through bringing in overseas workers and people with specific skills and attributes. The overall result is a program that brings significant benefits to Australia. These benefits derive from the work and other activities of temporary residents that contribute to the economic, cultural and social development of the Australian community and help to foster international relations and goodwill. The recommendations of this report nevertheless aim to achieve the Government's overall objectives of reducing red tape and delivering better service to clients, while at the same time maintaining its public policy responsibilities in relation to maintaining border integrity and public accountability.

### **SUBMISSIONS**

15.6 The comments made in public submissions sent a clear message: Australian sponsors seeking to bring people from overseas do not make a decision to look outside Australia lightly. Such action is costly and is only entered in to when local workers are not available. Also, once a need for a worker is identified, that need is usually immediate and therefore speed of processing is paramount. Any procedures that can result in faster processing should be considered and any action that results

in a more transparent and faster process will be welcomed. In this respect the changes flowing from this review that have already been implemented in relation to the temporary business (457) visa should result in faster processing of those visa applications and will recognise the expertise that employers have in relation to their segment of the labour market.

## CLIENT SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY

15.7 The Report focuses on efficiencies which should enable clients to deal with the department more efficiently as well as those directed towards departmental processes. To achieve these increased efficiencies, clarity of client information is vital. A readily identifiable single point of contact within the department with whom clients can deal will also reduce inefficiencies and delays associated with linking processing and communications in different offices with different people together. Complete, as opposed to incomplete, applications will also provide for more efficient processing – and therefore speed – for both parties and this Report notes a number of recent developments and makes some recommendations that will contribute in this respect.

## INTEGRITY

15.8 It is critical that the focus on efficiency is not at the expense of program integrity. The recommendations in this Report combines a better focus on client service with a regime grounded in immigration integrity. It is a Report that has Australia's needs in mind.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

15.9 In summary the recommendations of this Report relate to four main areas:

- A clearer better presented temporary residence visa regime where it is clearer

to clients which visa to use and the requirements and role of that visa;

- greater standardisation of requirements and removal of inconsistencies so that visa requirements can be more easily understood by all parties, especially our clients;
- Retention of specific rather than generic requirements where those requirements are in line with overall Government policy; and
- Better processing practices to deliver better service in the most efficient way possible for both staff and clients.

15.10 Following on from the recommendations and reconsideration of the role of the various visas, the breakup of the temporary residence visas would change. The current and proposed stream breakup is at Appendix N.

## IMPLEMENTATION

15.11 The implementation phase of any legislative change is demanding. A possible implementation timeline is at Appendix B. DIMIA has many challenges ahead to give effect to these recommendations if accepted. The changes that the recommendations bring affect not only the legal requirements of the Migration Regulations, but also ancillary areas such as client information, supporting computer systems, forms design and staff training. Following from the long lead times involved in implementing the package of changes and refinements proposed in this review, the Government decided to implement a few key changes to the temporary business (subclass 457 visa) arrangements on 1 July 2001. This has permitted the benefits from these recommendations to be reaped as soon as possible.

15.12 Some of the findings in this Report note the need for further consultations and consideration of specific issues. In addition, implementation of some of the

recommendations may clear the way for future simplifications where currently they do not appear feasible.

## **THE FUTURE**

- 15.13 Taken as a whole, the recommendations for change refine the current temporary residence regime and take advantage of new technological developments. This Review does not represent the end of a process of review, but rather part of a process of continual assessment of policy and procedures and a necessary process of change if DIMIA is to position itself for the future. Improvements and refinements become possible as new opportunities present themselves.
- 15.14 The Government expects DIMIA to maintain the lawful and orderly entry and stay of people. In order to continue delivering that outcome, DIMIA looks to ensuring its business processes are transparent, add value, maintain integrity and are accessible to clients. DIMIA itself looks to be business-like and cost-effective. This Report should be seen in this context.