

26 May 2014

Mr John Azarias
Panel Lead
Independent Panel of the Subclass 457 Visa Programme Review
c/- Department of Immigration and Border Protection
(email: 457.integrity.review@immi.gov.au)

Dear Mr Azarias,

As the state's peak body for small and medium businesses, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) attended the consultation forum in Brisbane on 14 May 2014 for the Independent Review of Integrity on the Subclass 457 visa programme. CCIQ takes this opportunity to provide further feedback to the Independent Panel.

CCIQ considers the suite of reforms introduced in July 2013 was unnecessary and undermined the usability of, and employer access to, the 457 visa programme. It is imperative that businesses, especially in regional and remote areas, have access to skilled migration so they can maintain their productivity. CCIQ highlights that:

- the majority of small and medium businesses participate in good faith and when given consistent and reliable advice, will endeavour to satisfy requirements as 457 visa sponsors;
- the current regulatory processes for sponsoring a 457 visa worker are complex and costly;
- there is scope to streamline processes, particularly in relation to labour market testing, the consolidated skills occupation list and the application of English language requirements; and
- more effective monitoring based on improved data about non-compliance would improve integrity without burdening the majority of complying business sponsors.

These aspects are discussed further in the enclosed submission. CCIQ believes a more balanced approach is needed. The 457 visa programme is recognised as a useful supplement to our local skills and training effort and the regulatory framework must provide certainty to businesses in meeting their skilled labour needs. CCIQ therefore recommends a winding-back of the 2013 legislative changes so that the Subclass 457 visa programme operates as intended.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Behrens
General Manager - Advocacy

