Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Our Ref: DEEWR SUBMISSION

Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

Protecting Local Jobs (Regulating Enterprise Migration Agreements) Bill 2012

I am pleased to provide the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee's Inquiry into Protecting Local Jobs (Regulating Enterprise Migration Agreements) Bill 2012, with the following information on the Resource Sector Jobs Board (the Jobs Board) and issues of portfolio interest in relation to Enterprise Migration Agreements (EMAs).

DEEWR Role in Enterprise Migration Agreements

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) provides advice to the Australian Government on labour market and workplace relations issues associated with all migration programs. This includes the temporary business (subclass 457) program and EMAs.

DEEWR was consulted by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) in the development of the EMA framework and submission guidelines and, with the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO), contributed to a DIAC DVD to inform subclass 457 visa holders sponsored to EMA project sites of their workplace rights and the protections available through FWO and the Fair Work Building Commission (FWBC).

DEEWR and relevant Commonwealth Departments are also consulted by DIAC on individual requests from project owners for EMA status. In this context DEEWR provides:

- labour market advice – this includes comment on information provided by the EMA project owner to demonstrate the existence of workforce shortages which cannot be met through the recruitment and skills development of Australians. DEEWR also provides advice on the findings of its labour market research including on skill shortages for the occupations covered by the EMA proposal and the unemployment rate and number of registered jobseekers in the region; and
- workplace relations advice – this may include advice on the market salary for the occupations covered by the EMA proposal, noting the subclass 457 program is premised on parity in salary and employment conditions between the Australian and sponsored subclass 457 workforce.

The FWO, FWBC and other Commonwealth, State and Territory Departments will have a role in ensuring compliance with workplace relations and work health and safety requirements on EMA sites and will work cooperatively with DIAC in monitoring project owners, project companies and sub-contractors approved to sponsor subclass 457 visa holders under the EMA framework.

DEEWR will verify the reported use of the Jobs Board by EMA project owners and project companies and their participation in other DEEWR labour market programs administered by Job Services Australia providers (including relocation assistance for eligible Australian job seekers).

Resource Sector Jobs Board

DEEWR has also been working since mid 2011 on the development of the Jobs Board to support EMAs and to ensure Australian job seekers –including those retrenched from other resource projects, mining sites and the manufacturing sector – have the opportunity to apply for resource sector jobs.

The Jobs Board has been continually refined since its launch on 10 June 2012, including sourcing jobs from a number of other job websites, such as the Australian Metals and Mines Association, the Resource Channel and, in the week beginning 17 September 2012, from WESTjobs.com.au. The Jobs Board currently has almost 3 000 jobs. Other sources of resource sector jobs are being investigated to further boost the number of resource sector job opportunities available for Australian job seekers. Therefore, the number of vacancies on the Jobs Board will continue to increase for the remainder of 2012.

The Jobs Board has received a consistent level of interest since its launch, with the site receiving an average of more than 10 000 visits each week. Nearly 20 000 job seekers have registered their details to date and around 6 000 of these have lodged a completed resume.

DEEWR is working on further enhancements to the Jobs Board which will be progressively implemented over the period to end October 2012. These enhancements include the introduction of a standalone website for the Jobs Board; an improved job seeker registration profile (for inclusion of information on skills, experience and licenses); and an improved search engine.

DEEWR is available – if it is of interest to Committee members – to provide a presentation on the Jobs Board following the introduction of the enhancements outlined above.

I trust this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Ngaire Hosking
Group Manager
Social Policy and Economic Strategy Group

21 September 2012