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Migration expert calling for joint submission to skilled migration review

A major announcement by the Immigration Department of a review into Australia's skilled migration program has quietly slipped under the radar, despite being set to "result in the most far reaching transformation...in the last 20 years" according to an official overview.

The review will encompass all skilled migration and series 400 visas, including both temporary and permanent subclasses, and is set to shape the programme for the next two decades.

Migration Solutions Managing Director, Mark Glazbrook, says nowhere are changes more desperately needed than low-population growth states and regions such as South Australia.

"It's a hugely significant review, particularly in the wake of what happened recently with the 457 review," he said.

Despite significant anticipation surrounding the conclusion of the 457 programme review, few of the recommendations contained within the final report offered any substantial concessions or benefits for regional areas.

Mr Glazbrook says the result was a typical outcome given the fragmented approach South Australian industries take into such events.

"When it comes to national reviews like this and the 457 review South Australia has a relatively small voice, and as such we tend to get left with the scraps," he said.

"We're a small state in terms of population as it is, and when you take into account how badly we are underperforming in terms of migration outcomes it's not hard to see why we're continually being left out of the discussion."

Mr Glazbrook says that in his discussions with industry groups, the themes of greater flexibility, less red tape and concessions to the English-language and salary requirements are all common recurrences.

His proposal is to lodge a joint submission involving a number of major industries and business groups for the upcoming skilled migration review, the reasoning that a collective voice won't be so easily dismissed.

"We've been talking to almost every major industry group in South Australia over the past year or so, and just about all of them are calling for the same thing. The problem is that there are too many individual voices being lost in the discussion," he said.

“This review represents a huge opportunity for South Australia to provide local employers with better access to the skilled migration programme, enabling them to combat skill shortages and help stimulate greater economic activity in regional areas.”

The deadline for preliminary submissions is October 17, leaving not a lot of time for action to be taken.

“We’re calling on South Australian industries to come together for a round-table discussion regarding skilled migration in order to put together a joint submission to this upcoming review,” he said.

“It may be another 20 years before an opportunity for us to voice our concerns comes around again, and there are many businesses out there that simply can’t wait that long.”

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