

# MEDIA RELEASE

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### Support for quicker 457 visas

The migration advice profession has welcomed media reports that Immigration Minister Senator Chris Evans is considering speeding up the 457 work visa application process for big companies.

The Migration Institute of Australia says it is heartened to learn that an expert advisory group set up by the Minister is looking at this and other ways to improve the visa process.

MIA Chief Executive Bernie Waters said that the organisation's members are at the coalface in helping employers apply for visas for the skilled workers they so desperately need.

"We see employers every day who need this process speeded up to allow those with good records to bring in workers with minimal bureaucratic hurdles and in a timely manner," he said.

"We would like the government to allow Registered Migration Agents to assist the Department of Immigration identify applications for priority processing and to recognise the reality of the widespread skills shortage by not reintroducing requirements for employers to test the labour market for skilled occupations before being able to sponsor overseas workers."

"At the same time the MIA urges the government not to ignore small businesses that also have good overseas worker sponsorship and employment records."

"Many small business employers need skilled workers just as urgently as big business."

"While there have been some cases of abuse of 457 workers, which we deplore, figures recently released by the government show that skilled overseas workers are earning above average wages, highlighting the success of the scheme."

"Also, many people who come in under this scheme go on to become permanent migrants and help build Australia's future."

"In recognising this success, the government does need to balance the needs of employers with the interests of Australian workers through greater training of young Australians, but I cannot emphasise enough employers' needs for speed of entry once they have found a skilled worker overseas," Mr Waters added.

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