



IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **MIGRATION PROGRAM STILL UNCLEAR (2010-2011 Federal Budget Response)**

The Migration Institute of Australia (MIA) welcomes the Government's measured approach to the Migration Program within the context 2010-2011 Federal Budget, and compliments the Minister for his recognition that "Foreign skilled labour is an important driver of economic growth."

However, this Budget does little to alleviate the uncertainty surrounding the migration program and the lack of confidence in Australia as a destination for highly skilled people overseas. The patchwork changes made to the skilled migration program over the past year have left many thousands adrift without consistency or regularity.

"An effective skilled migration program can only be achieved with an immediate announcement of the Skilled Occupation List (SOL), now weeks overdue, and a revised Points Test, which underpins the overall program," said Maurene Horder, MIA CEO. "The MIA urges the government to move quickly for the sake of certainty and stability and in recognition of the significant role that skilled migration plays within Australia's economy."

It is disappointing that the 2010-2011 Migration Program reduces the family migration stream levels by 5750 program places, downgrading what was historically a significant element in the development of a cohesive Australian society and one that will be sorely missed. The visitation allowance for family members that replaces these spots is a poor substitute and one which needs to be supported by sensible and sensitive policy changes.

Similarly, the humanitarian program is disappointing as – in the time of significant world turmoil – Australia can afford to be more generous to refugees and asylum seekers around the globe. We need a humanitarian and settlement program that responds to asylum needs and enables people to integrate well into Australian society.

The scant 200 spot increase in the business skills visa category are also unsatisfactory. If properly handled, this stream could make a significant contribution to Australian economic development.

In relation to the administrative budget of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), the MIA had hoped for resources greater than a mere \$250,000 devoted to research, especially in context of the current population and migration debates.

The MIA had hoped for a Federal Budget which provided some answers for potential migrants, but instead the importance of migration has been overshadowed.

### **Available for Interview:**

Maurene Horder  
Chief Executive Officer  
Migration Institute of Australia

### **Contact:**

Brian Duff  
Communications Manager  
Phone: 0432 937 862, Email: [brian.duff@mia.org.au](mailto:brian.duff@mia.org.au)

**MIGRATION INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA**

T 02 9279 3140 | F 02 9279 3172 | E [info@mia.org.au](mailto:info@mia.org.au) | W [www.mia.org.au](http://www.mia.org.au)  
Post: PO Box Q102, QVB Post Office NSW 1230 | Street: Level 3, 83 York Street, Sydney

ABN 83 003 409 390