

Hi MBIE,

3/5/17

I would like to make a submission regarding proposed immigration changes, as well as offering a few possible strategies to work around our skills shortages in New Zealand.

First, I don't quite agree with Immigration New Zealand's approach of measuring a worker's eligibility by their income. Anyone's income can become based on a number of factors outside of their value, such as the present economic climate or laziness and greed on the employer's part. (many will offer a job to the lowest bidder in terms of salary) Besides, there are many valuable jobs we rely on that aren't highly paid. What the granting of a work visa, and especially a residence permit, should come down to is it's made clear the worker has something unique and of value to offer the community that a New Zealander is unable or unwilling to offer.

There's a number of criteria that can be researched and tested to check for consistency of the above approach. I'm not an expert in Human Resources or employment, but we do have the tools to assess what training programs are available in NZ (University courses for G.P.'s and nurses, Polytechnic courses for electricians, etc.) and compare them to what is not. (specialist areas such as Plastic Surgery or Neurology) Many DHB's are hiring foreign nurses to keep their costs down, while NZ trained nurses at best have their wages suppressed by cheap labour flooding into the market, and at worst not able to find work in their own country. The point is, if there is education available for a line of work, then there should be strict controls in importing foreign workers to fill those types of vacancies.

Second, I've read a lot of articles from the media lately of international restaurant owners becoming angry about INZ's proposed restrictions on bringing in chefs from overseas. A head chef, I can understand. But why can't they train a citizen or resident to cook? As if there aren't any kiwis with cooking and hospitality training? And it's not like there aren't already a lot of immigrants of a given nationality already living in NZ? The difference is they would learn, say Indian cooking rather than western cooking. There would still be knowledge that overlaps about food safety, cooking technique, etc. that would steepen their learning curve for that restaurant. It seems they are some of many employers who want the quick and easy route of hiring an already trained chef for substandard wages. (foreigners often settle for less than a local would) Bottom line, a head chef has the capabilities the restaurant needs to succeed. A newly hired worker-bee should not. And shouldn't a head chef's wages be at least \$49,000 a year anyway?

This last idea is related to INZ's "need" to import workers, but is more focused on developing our own workforce. It's common knowledge that unemployment rates are rising and our own people are facing further barriers to becoming educated and getting their foot in the door into a given field...

Why not adapt how the military recruits to the civilian workforce? What I'm proposing is a collaborative effort between government, industry & union leaders, as well as interested small business owners and student union leaders. Offer apprenticeships to applicants who show they are confident in sticking with the line of work and has the potential to perform well through a vetting process mutually agreed upon by people in the know. Age, knowledge base/ background, past employment, references, attitude and work ethic, you name it. Give them a 1 hour aptitude test that shows an overview of how well they absorb information, problem-solve, think outside the box, apply theories/principals, their short term and medium term memory, etc that was written for their industry. They would sign onto, say a 4 year contract, starting at the bottom making the relevant trainee's wage that gradually increases in line with their productivity. In return, the employer will offer a portion of the work week for on the job training and support toward an NZQA approved qualification. Once the contract is near expiry, they have a meeting and either decide to go their separate ways, or to hire them for a permanent, higher level position (and wage) at the company.

To minimize risk to the employer, there needs to be a safety net for them provided by government, possibly with modest financial support and access to a recruiting/ temp agency to find a replacement. A possible condition could be if the employee leaves on voluntary grounds, then they can be left with a student loan-type arrangement of compensating the employer for not meeting their obligations. (They would have similar arrangements for leaving halfway through a university semester, so this isn't a new idea.) Exceptional circumstances, such as medical reasons, should exempt them from having to repay and be backed by a government scheme. It may sound far-fetched on the surface, but in practice it

could be an alternative to student allowances or WINZ subsidies for some.

This has potential to be a win-win-win-win system. The different sectors need to form the “glue” that holds this model together. The worker wins, because they get a career start while up-skilling, building a work history, and earning experience accompanying a qualification along with a modest wage to support themselves through the duration of the contract. The employer wins, because they get 3rd party support in getting access to people they hand-picked with potential to go through the ranks in their business, as well as having been trained to their specific standards. The country wins by lowering unemployment, improving their skill base and working conditions, and lowering the need for importing workers from overseas. The government wins by helping to build a workforce better able to support itself, made up by higher skilled workers that are less dependent on government assistance, bringing with it higher wages and tax revenue that follows.

Every idea expressed here is intended to reverse the “short term gain for long term pain” approach we have been under for the past several years. Our housing crisis and rise in unemployment and crime has proven itself many times over it doesn't work. My recruitment approach turns this upside down into a short term pain for long term gain method. There's bound to be opposition to it, but I have also observed there are a great many people who want change.

I hope this is forwarded to the appropriate person(s) for consideration.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

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s 9(2)(g)(i)

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