

INQUIRY INTO SKILLS SHORTAGES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Murray Regional Development Board (MRDB)
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Theme:

Summary

Contact: Tim Sheed - Chairman 02 6041 2019



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The Director,
Standing Committee on State Development,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Email: statedevelopment@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into Skills Shortages in Rural and Regional NSW

On behalf of the Murray Regional Development Board, we are pleased to submit to the Legislative Council Standing Committee our formal response to your Inquiry into Skills Shortages in Rural and Regional NSW.

If you require further information or clarification please contact the Murray Regional Development Board Chairman Mr Tim Sheed on 02 60412019

We look forward to the NSW Governments response in due course.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Hull
Executive Officer

Encl. Submission MRDB

Improvement of employer awareness and placement of skilled migrants within the Murray Region.

The Murray Regional Development Board (MRDB) is a Regional Certifying Body and works closely with the DIMIA business centre in Canberra to process applications for skilled people to immigrate to regional Australia. The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) enables Australian employers in regional or low-growth areas to fill 'skilled' positions, on a permanent basis, with non-Australian citizens, where they have been unable to fill a vacancy from the Australian labour market or through their own training programs.

A specific VISA introduced by the Federal Government in July 2004, called the SIR (Provisional) Visa, requires offshore and onshore applicants to sign an undertaking that they, and members of their family unit, will live, work or study in regional Australia (such as the Murray Region) for a term of three (3) years, after which time the applicant is eligible to apply for permanent residency. This Visa can only be certified by a Regional Certifying Body such as the MRDB. It is the role of the MRDB to certify these applications.

Since the release of this VISA, the MRDB has received between 10 – 15 enquiries per week via email and telephone from off shore and on shore skilled/professionals. It has been the role of the Executive Officer to carry out this facilitation, however it is a time consuming process (around 2 to 3 hours) per application. Most applicants require detailed guidance and employers also require personal consultation. In many cases MRDB have not had the human resources to follow through to a successful outcome.

MRDB Aims and Objectives:

- Establish what the current status is in the Murray Regions, including existing databases, recruitment options, known skills shortage surveys etc.
- Implement personal (one on one) mechanisms that enable businesses to communicate their skills shortage efficiently and effectively, recognising that such mechanisms need to have longevity.
- Travel throughout the designated areas and conduct briefings with businesses and local government agencies.
- Promote a matrix of related job networks websites.
- Ascertain whether an applicant has the skills required for employment within the region.
- Assist the applicant in registration or licensing requirements if necessary.
- Inform the applicant of their responsibilities i.e. the need to find a position and accommodation requirements. Liaison with regional employers to assess skills requirements.
- To promote through key agencies, the regional benefits and rural lifestyle of the Murray Region.
- Work in conjunction with employment agencies, real estate agencies and educational facilities.
- Long term communications are maintained with the Labour Hire Companies and the Job Network Providers to ensure they are fully aware of the scheme and any current developments or changes.

MRDB Strategies:

- For Future employment opportunities
- For Immigration and Internal migration
- For Addressing cyclic employment changes
- For Identification of current skill sets
- For Image problems including attitudes of potential Employers & Employees
- For Industry advisory arrangements
- For Retention and attrition rates
- For Facilitation of Increased Student Visa applications in conjunction with Riverina TAFE NSW and Charles Sturt University Albury

As with any increase in employment or population, then there is a direct correlation to increased investment within the community.

Broader Community Benefit & Regional Economic Development:

- Service improvements and cost reductions within individual enterprises and industry groups
- Website links to all councils within the Murray Region, the front page of the site will feature the 10 most wanted Job Vacancies (Skills Shortages) relevant to each of the shires and councils (eg: attached) and updated monthly.
- Collation as resultant of scoping study of existing databases, recruitment options and known skills shortage surveys to be available on website and linked to stakeholders.
- An increase of job placement within the Murray region to Target 60 employees during the financial period of 2005–2006 (this is not including any dependents).
- Student Visas to be marketed for the 2005–06 University year (CSU) to increase by 15 students on last years figures.

Skilled shortage surveys have been carried out in the Murray region by various regional, government and private enterprise organizations during the last two years, however implementation of these findings has not been instigated by a regional organization, it is thought to be *too hard*. Therefore, seminars were initiated by the Murray Regional Development Board and their partners in Albury and Deniliquin to generally promote the migration schemes available to Employers. It was quite clear from the interest that had been shown during the seminars that there was a clear need to promote the skilled migration programs in regional areas. Therefore the Boards role must be to maintain contact with all businesses that use skilled labour as it is of paramount importance to the success of improving employee awareness in lifting skilled migrant numbers into the Murray region.

It is also most important to continue to maintaining communications with those businesses that have an identified skilled labour shortage to ensure their needs are met.

Whilst every endeavour is made to retain and obtain regional and city dwellers to the Murray, it is not often achievable, such surveys as listed below highlights the regional plight:

In a recent DOTARS survey of city dwellers, “Perceptions of Regional Australia” (2003) the following was identified:

- 49% of people said they would not like to live in a rural/regional town for any period of time.
- 24% said they would live in a rural/regional town for 1–2 years but no more.
- 11% said they would live there for a long period but not permanently.
- 15% said they would like to live in a rural/regional town permanently.
- 40% of those surveyed (total surveyed was 651) indicated that they had virtually no contact with people from rural or regional Australia. Their perceptions were based almost totally on what they saw and read in the media.

Whilst the Murray Regional Development Board and its regional employers advertise and encourage Capital City dwellers to relocate, it often boils down to “not enough money”, “not enough to do”, “too far away” and so it goes on. It is an on-going challenge to overcome these perceptions and utilize the option of Skilled Regional Migration.

- *The Murray Regional Development Board delivers its Regional Sponsored Migration services throughout the Murray region, which encompasses the shires and councils of Albury, Balranald, Berrigan, Conargo, Corowa, Greater Hume, Deniliquin, Jerilderie, Murray, Urana, Wakool and Wentworth.*

Recommendation 1:

All Regional Development Boards who have been granted status as a Regional Certifying Body be granted support funding by the NSW Government to deliver the following outputs:

Make Skills Matching Databases available through job placement organisations.

Promote skilled migration to regional employers.

Regional Certifying Bodies to be the principal contact for regional employers.

Local Councils to be educated and mentored by Regional Boards in attracting migrants with specialist skills in demand and use existing programs to support these councils.

Improve access for migrants via information on settlement services.

Education Providers to be more informed and able to provide courses that are applicable to onshore and offshore students so they can utilize their course qualifications in the regional workforce.

Recommendation 2:

The NSW State Government undertake a study of the Victorian State Governments Regional Migration Incentive Fund (RMIF) www.LiveInVictoria.vic.gov.au

The RMIF is part of the Victorian Government's Skilled Migration Program. The RMIF aims to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of communities across regional Victoria through the attraction and retention of skilled migrants.

Up to \$3million has been allocated over three years (2004/05–2006/07) across 11 regions, which represent 35 local government areas. Each region will receive up to \$90,000 per annum as a contribution to the development and implementation of their local skilled migration strategy.

Skills Shortage List	Asco Code	The Border Mail Sat 28/5/05	The Border Mail Sat 4/6/05	The Border Mail Sat 11/6/05	The Border Mail Sat 18 /6/05	The Border Mail Sat 25/6/05	The Border Mail Sat 2/7/05	The Border Mail Sat 9/7/05
Motor Mechanics	4211-11	3	3	4	4	2	3	3
Dental Practitioners	2381							
Refrigeration & Air Conditioning	4312-11							1
Structural & Welding	4122-11	1 (Fitter)	1(fitter) 2		3	2 (fitter)	3	2
Tradepersons – Metal Fabricator (Boilermaker)		1	2	3		3	1	2 (machinist) 1
Urban & regional Planners	2523-11							
Electrical Engineers	2125				1			
Engineer - Mechanical							1	
General Medical Practitioner	2311							
Registered Nurse	2323	3	2	1	2	9		1
Civil Engineers	2124-11	1	3					
Accountant	2311-11	2	4	1	4	1	1	1
Optometrists	2384							
Vehicle Painter	4214-11							
Carpenter & Joiner	4411-11							
Oenologist/Wine Maker	2549-17							
General Manager /Manager	1112-11	1	1	6	2	1		1
Chef		1	4			1	2	1
Electrician				3			2	

Immigration Sample Report

<u>Employers Sponsored</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Applied Visa</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Queries / Comments</u>
1 GYMSPORTS Albury	Nikoayuna Rimma	RSMS	Gymnastics	Submitted application to the Canberra Office
2 Steven Taylor Associates	Jaejin Chung	RSMS	Senior Designer	Submitted application to the Canberra Office
3 Imperial Chopstick	Chen Song Kang	RSMS	Chef	Submitted application to the Canberra Office
4 Advanced Dimensional Solutions	Wrum Andreaq	RSMS	Metrologist	Submitted application to the Canberra Office
5 Seventh Adventist	Johnson Alagappan	RSMS	Teacher	Submitted application to the Canberra Office
6 Dr. Bhupan Kara	Kara Partha Sarathi	RSMS	Draftsman	Submitted application to the Canberra Office
7 Griffith School-Dept of Education	Renuka Sashidranath	RSMS	Teacher	Submitted application to the Canberra Office