

Filipino Migrants Forum

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This is the third of five parts of our submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration in the Federal Parliament. The remaining two parts will appear over the next two issues.

In this issue, we will reproduce our submission on what we believe is the current situation for overseas skills recognition and associated issues of licensing and registration for families of skilled stream migrants, family stream migrants and humanitarian entrants who seek assessment/registration/upgrading after arrival, with our recommendations.

Current situation:

The general rule is that migrants cannot go on social security benefits during their first 2 years of independent or family skilled migration, although they are entitled to Medicare.

If the migrant has been sponsored and a member of their family unit obtains a Social Security benefit, the cost of the benefit can be recouped from their assurer.

Issues:

1. A partner of a skilled migrant may be interested and willing to work but because of the difficulty obtaining recognition of his/her qualifications, he/she is unable to find suitable work.
2. Very often employers require 'local work experience' but no employer is available to provide that first 'local work experience'.
3. Many migrants have no information about charitable organisations such as The Smith Family, or St Vincent De Paul's
4. Many migrants have no information on how to get settled in Australia, such as information packages about the public transport system, directory assistance numbers or the use of concession cards.

Recommendations:

1. Agencies such as Centrelink should advise partners of skilled migrants on any training options which may enable them to qualify for any registration they require to be able to work in their profession in Australia.
2. Employers should be given incentives to employ or provide first jobs for new migrants.

3. Migrants should be given information about charitable organizations such as The Smith Family, or St Vincent de Paul's regarding assistance in furnishings etc.
4. Organizations which are being given grants (e.g. PACSI) should be obliged to provide information on how to get settled in Australia, such as information packages about the public transport system, directory assistance numbers and the use of student concession cards.

This information is of a general nature and should not be taken as authoritative legal advice for specific cases. The writer, Atty. Imelda Argel is a practising Filipino lawyer and a registered migration agent in Sydney, Australia. She is a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, the High Court of Australia, Attorney at law in the Philippines and in the State of New York, USA. Her Migration Agent Registration no. is 9682957. More information is available at www.iargel.com.au