

Filipino Migrants Forum

WHAT SERVICES CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A REGISTERED MIGRATION AGENT?

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With very few exceptions, anyone who provides advice or assistance in preparation of visa applications to the Department of Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) is required by law to be registered as a Migration Agent. A breach of this law attracts very severe penalties.

When considering whether to engage the services of a Migration Agent you should first of all check that the person is a Registered Migration Agent (RMA). There are over 3,000 migration agents registered in Australia. Each one has a registered migration agent number. The number usually begins with the year of first registration. For example, 9682957 means that this Agent first registered in 1996. If the Agent you are considering to engage does not readily provide his or her RMA no. , check the list of registered agents is available on the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) website www.themara.com.au or ask the agent to show you his/her registration certificate which has their photograph on it.

Registered Migration Agents are required to operate under a Code of Conduct which governs the various aspects of their business operations. Overseas offices of Registered Migration Agents are required to comply with the Code of Conduct and a registered migration agent is responsible for the conduct of their overseas staff. The Code of Conduct must be on display in their office. It is also available on the MARA website.

Migration agents are required to make available to their clients, “*INFORMATION ON THE REGULATION OF THE MIGRATION ADVICE PROFESSION*”. It is a brochure prepared by the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) about the migration advice industry, what clients can reasonably expect from Migration Agents and complaints procedures about Migration Agents. MARA controls the registration and monitors the conduct of Migration Agents. Agents who breach the code of conduct can be subject to severe disciplinary action.

Briefly, when engaging the services of a Migration Agent you would expect the Agent to:

- Have a sound knowledge in dealing with your problem: finding the relevant provisions of Migration Act, Regulations and Policy and procedure, how to apply them to the facts of your case and how to present your case to the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) to advance your cause;
- Discuss a realistic and honest assessment on your chances of success or being granted a visa and your options, if any, based on the relevant criteria under current legislation in relation to the information at hand;
- Provide timely and accurate advice;
- Offer a fee structure that is reasonable for the service to be provided and payment terms that are affordable. Fees may vary according to complexity or novelty of your case, location of office, experience and expertise of the Agent.