

SAVANNAH GUIDES



Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback

8 May 2024

To whom it may concern

RE: REVIEW OF MIGRATION STRATEGY (DECEMBER 2023)

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Austrade *Review of Migration Strategy* (December 2023).

Savannah Guides is a network of Tour Guides and Tourism Operators across Australia. We are Australia's leading provider of Tour Guide training with the country's largest membership base of Tour Guides. We work with other guiding and tourism organisations, especially the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) to support high quality tourism.

Australia is facing a debilitating shortage of Tour Guides, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period many guides retired or left the sector, and they are not being replaced in sufficient time to meet demand. Consequently, the delivery of visitor experiences is dropping in quality, and we risk serious reputational damage to our tourism industry.

KEY ACTIONS TO ASSIST THE TOUR GUIDE GAP

8.1 Targeting temporary skilled migration to address skills needs and promote worker mobility

- 'Tour Guide' should be included on the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) due to the chronic, ongoing shortage of tour guides in Australia.
- The Skills in Demand visa proposal can help to address the high demand for tour guides with additional languages for non-English speaking groups visiting Australia.
- Tour guide work in Australia is mostly seasonal, so tour guide mobility should be enabled to build a viable career in the industry.
- Tour Coordination is an associated skill that can be addressed by temporary workers with broader backgrounds in tourism, teaching, environmental sciences and management.
- The high priority streamlining of the visa application process would support faster solutions to this growing problem.

8.2 Reshaping permanent skilled migration to drive long-term prosperity

- More accessible pathways for skilled workers to apply for permanent residency would help build a higher quality and more consistent tourism workforce.

8.3 Strengthening and integrity and quality of international education

- An opportunity exists for international students to move into Tour Guide roles, especially if suitable visas are accessible. This can improve the practical aspects of many studies including

language and university courses. Savannah Guides and Tour Guides Australia offer short courses to support skill development to fast track employability.

8.5 Planning migration to get the right skills in the right places

- The demand for Tour Guides is nationwide, with regional tourism, cruise ships and group touring packages requiring staff in all major cities and many remote areas. The mobility factor is again important here. Many regional tourism operators can provide accommodation solutions, so encouraging migrants to explore a full range of location options is important.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this process. Please contact me for further information.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Title]

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Savannah Guides Limited