



## **Submission to Austrade – *Review of Migration Strategy* (December 2023)**

**3 May 2024**

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

[Tour Guides Australia](#) is a national peak industry association. We represent, educate and support tour guides to deliver world class services to the tourism industry.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS MADE BY TOUR GUIDES AUSTRALIA REGARDING (SOME OF) THE 8 KEY ACTIONS**

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

- Tour Guides Australia strongly believes that 'Tour Guide' should be a category included on the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) due to the serious shortage of tour guides in Australia
- Tour operators throughout Australia are finding it challenging to meet the demand for tour guides from within Australia alone when planning their tour itineraries. This genuine dire need has been amplified since COVID with many long-term tour guides leaving the industry and settling in other occupations
- There is a particularly high demand for tour guides with additional languages to service non-English speaking tour groups visiting Australia. We suggest that this demand can be largely met through the Skills in Demand visa proposal
- Tour guide work in Australia is mostly seasonal, so we support tour guide mobility to move around the country and engage in tour work according to this seasonal demand, as this is one key way to build a viable career in the industry
- Tour Guides Australia advocates strongly for temporary workers to have and bring skills and experience that are suitable for tour guiding such as planning, organising and managing groups of people. For example, temporary workers with backgrounds in teaching and hospitality make ideal tour guides. Bachelor degree students in fields such as environmental science who are looking to start their careers are also often very suitable
- Tour Guides Australia supports the high priority streamlining of the visa application process to enable potential migration workers to come to Australia sooner

#### **8.2 Reshaping permanent skilled migration to drive long-term prosperity**

- Tour Guides Australia is pleased to see the proposed shift to providing clearer pathways for skilled workers to apply for permanent residency. Tour Guides Australia believes there is

merit in building a stronger long term tour guide workforce, rather than those who typically visit on short-stay visas. Tour operators are more willing to invest in training and onboarding tour guides who can and will stay to work with them for several seasons, building their skills, experience, and a potential career in tour guiding

### **8.3 Strengthening and integrity and quality of international education**

- Tour Guides Australia has been actively supporting Austrade’s THRIVE Strategy by delivering a three-day Tour Guiding Fundamentals micro credential training course at locations throughout Australia and also overseas
- Participants who have completed the course have included migrant workers on temporary visas who recognise the importance of industry-led entry-level training that is specific for tour guiding in Australia
- Our course is contextualised to each region and setting so the knowledge and skills gained are most relevant and helpful to participants seeking tour guiding work in those regions and provide educational support to enable them to realise their potential
- The Tour Guiding Fundamentals course is particularly relevant and helpful for migrant workers who can quickly gain the entry-level skills and knowledge targeted to beginning a career in tour guiding
- Tour Guides Australia also provides an important accreditation program whereby tour guides can apply for Professional Member status and be recognised for their quality in the industry. Quality standards include maintaining current first aid certification and public liability insurance if working as a contractor. This quality program is available to migrant workers with Skills in Demand visas to enhance their opportunities to work as a tour guide in Australia

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

- Tour Guides Australia works closely with ATEC, the state industry councils and our own members in key tourist regions across Australia to provide both our Tour Guiding Fundamentals micro credential courses and other professional development events in regions where this support is most needed

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Tour Guides Australia

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