



# South Australia wants to welcome skilled migrants, so take down some of these barriers -Veathika Jain

**S**OUTH Australia is trying to woo skilled overseas workers and the State Government is calling for an overhaul to Australia's visa system – but have they spoken to the migrants to get their feedback on how easy or difficult they find it to settle down here?

We were told SA needed our skills, but when we came here, no one seemed interested – not companies, the neighbours, nor the government.

There are lots of changes required to not only lure skilled migrants but also make them feel welcome and keep them here. Otherwise, the brain drain will only continue.

Here are some of the hurdles that could be removed.

### EASE IN GETTING A JOB

As a migrant, I attended the welcome seminar organised by the SA immigration department and was constantly told "We know you have a lot of experience but try to get a job here to get a foot in the door."

These jobs are for cleaners, supermarket workers and taxi drivers. What about the skills that you advertised and wanted us for?

The government needs to talk to companies, make the on-boarding process easy and educate South Aussies on opening their minds to candidates with global experience and how skilled workers can add value to their companies.

International experience and education is not given much weight. Getting an interview is tough as most companies only want employees with "local" work experience.

If migrants secure interviews but don't end up getting the job, the feedback is they are over-qualified or don't have the requisite "local" experience.

How are migrants expected



to have "local" work experience if they are not given an opportunity to work here?

### MEDICARE

Until you apply for permanent residency, you don't get Medicare. Private health cover is expensive and you still get stung the Medicare levy.

When I asked "Why can't you pay my salary without deducting the levy?", I was told "You'll get your money back when you file your tax return".

The visa offers you full working rights in Australia and takes full taxes – but the returns are limited.

### CENTRELINK AND OSCH

Most migrants leave lucrative jobs and come to SA with their savings. Most of us plan for a year without a job and are willing to spend on living costs.

But despite having full working rights, we are not given any out of school hours care (OSCH) or childcare subsidy. We are contributors and yet get no benefits.

During the pandemic, Tasmania was the only state that offered a relief package to skilled workers. SA must also look into this to lure foreign workers.

### FIRST-HOME BUYING

On a temporary visa, if someone wants to buy a property even after fulfilling the visa conditions for permanent residency, the costs are high.

First you need to apply for Foreign Investment Review Board's (FIRB) approval to buy a home, and that costs about \$5500 per applicant.

After securing the FIRB approval, an additional 7 per cent stamp duty is levied to temporary visa holders.

If the state is looking to boost the economy, at least waive the extra stamp duty so that we can be proud homeowners and further contribute to the economy.

### QUICKER RESIDENCY

After a migrant has fulfilled the conditions for permanent resi-

dency – ie, one year of full-time work experience and two years in a regional area (including SA) – the wait is a staggering 15-23 months.

If the pathway becomes quicker, it helps migrants to integrate better, start thinking of starting a business and helping the economy to thrive. Waiting for more than a year and a half makes you rethink everything. Our lives are in a limbo – we can't plan anything.

### EDUCATING SOUTH AUSSIES

The government needs to talk to companies, restaurants and universities to let them know about the different nationalities and cultures coming into the state.

Information sessions should be organised for people to know more about the different visas migrants come on.

More work needs to be done by the locals to make skilled workers feel welcomed.

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South Australia needs to open its eyes to what skilled migrants can contribute.

## THE LAST WORD

WITH MARTY SMITH



### MOUTHING OFF

- (1) In the Twittersphere: "Needs to be a national standard of layering of ingredients in rolls, so that each bite has an equal amount and you're not just left with a mouthful of lettuce as you reach the bottom of the cut". – Australian comedian Adam Rozenbachs
- (2) Newspaper headline: "Father of 10 shot dead; mistaken for rabbit".
- (3) From a list of parental observations: "Having children will turn you into parents".
- (4) Wordplay: What you seize is what you get.
- (5) Caught in the fact: While living in Adelaide in the 1950s, Rupert Murdoch owned a great dane called Webster that ate firecrackers.

### INSIGHT

"If we are what we eat, I'm fast, cheap and easy". – bumper sticker

### QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"You grow up the day you have the first real laugh at yourself". – US actor Ethel Barrymore

### KEEPING COUNT

**8920** – the total number of confirmed deaths from COVID-19 in South Korea (513), Guatemala (4099) and Switzerland (4308) to November 25, 2020. (On the same day the number of confirmed deaths in the US reached 259,880 and worldwide 1,407,873.)

### JUST A THOUGHT

Politicians wouldn't be so quick to offer us pie in the sky if they had to use their own dough.

### REMEMBER WHEN

- Today is May 7, International Tuba Day and the 127th day of the year. There are 238 days remaining until the end of the year. On this day:
- 1824:** The world premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony took place in Vienna.
  - 1915:** The Cunard liner Lusitania was torpedoed by a German submarine off Ireland and sank in 18 minutes with the loss of almost 1200 lives.
  - 1921:** At Adelaide Oval, Glenelg (6.5), in its first league football game, was defeated by West Adelaide (18.10).
  - 1930:** From The Advertiser: "It is expected that work on the Barr Smith Library building, to be erected in the University of Adelaide grounds, will begin shortly ... About 75,000 volumes will be housed in the building, which will be of brick with cement facings. It will have a portico of Murray Bridge stone. The reading room has been designed for 240 readers".
  - 1943:** Award-winning author Peter Carey was born in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria.
  - 1952:** Wirth's Circus played for one night at Tanunda.
  - 1954:** At midday, a man and a woman were seen milking a cow in Adelaide's South Parklands.
  - 1955:** From the column Trends ... In Our Daily Life in The Sunday Advertiser: "It's back with renewed force among the children; it's hit again unsuspecting parents with a penchant for tidying-up. With new 'swap cards' in the shops, the craze for collecting and exchanging these bits of pasteboard that fit so snugly into school blazer pockets is again in the ascendant".
  - 1961:** Radio station SAD listed Runaway, by US singer-songwriter-guitarist Del Shannon, as Adelaide's No 1 hit single.
  - 1969:** Princess Anne was pictured on the front cover of The Australian Women's Weekly.
  - 1983:** US singer-songwriter-guitarist John Denver performed at the Thebarton Theatre in Henley Beach Road, Torrensville.
  - 2000:** Vladimir Putin was inaugurated as President of Russia.
  - 2019:** Australian television chef and author Adam Liaw tweeted: "I can't believe Meghan and Harry named the new royal baby 'Brexite'".

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### TODAY'S THOUGHT

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

# Listen to what worries young people



MARIA PALUMBO

"CHILDREN should be seen and not heard". It's an awful old adage, but the tide is now turning – and not before time.

Increasingly, across our country and in many parts of the world, the voices of children and young people are being lifted. That said, encouraging children and young people to have a say is one thing, listening to them is another.

Advocates, including the Commissioner and Guardian for Children and Young People and our Aboriginal Commissioner for Children and Young People, have been enormously effective in this space.

What is emerging in South Australia has been a growing

commitment from the community to genuinely engage with children and young people to make decisions, especially those directly affecting them.

This means working hard to understand the issues that affect them now, what they are worried about in the future and what they think needs to be done to help pave the way for them to reach their full potential as adults.

This is important for every young person – especially the most vulnerable including those in state care.

Right now, we know from listening to young people in our care that the thing they worry about most is what happens to them when they are 18.

As it stands, government support for children in residential care is now cut off on their 18th birthday. From the time they are teenagers, this is the issue keeping them up at night.

Often, it compounds their trauma and impedes the benefits of any amount of support and counselling.

For teenagers living with their birth families, this is rarely an issue. They can stay in the family home for as long as they need. There's no deadline.

## Support for children in residential care is now cut off on their 18th birthday

That difference affects outcomes now and long into the future for the young people, our society and our economy.

If we are serious as a state at tackling big issues such as youth homelessness, crime, and the pressing burdens on our health system we need to stop tinkering around the edges.

Early in their term, the Marshall Government took the positive policy step of extending foster and kinship care

payments to support young people in foster care up to age 21. In their own words, the move is showing early signs of success, with many young South Australians opting to stay at home with their families beyond age 18. This must be extended to residential care –

to support the most vulnerable. When they leave care, it must be their choice.

We have unprecedented advocacy, momentum and expertise in this state to support our young people to speak. It's up to our politicians and policy makers to come to the table.

The power to solve problems comes from the courage to not only ask – but listen.

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