**18/558: ACT Skilled Migration Program Review**

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| **Summary of Impacts** |
| * The review is an opportunity to ensure the Skilled Migration program is better aligned to meet ACT’s skills needs and equipped to target applicants who are likely to make a strong contribution to the ACT economy and show a commitment to living in Canberra.
* The transition away from a ‘first come, first serve’ process towards a more merit-based selection of applicants will ensure successful nominees are meeting the most pressing skills needs for the ACT economy and more likely to live in the Territory over a longer period.
* Impacts on housing affordability and the environment are negligible.
* There remains concern over the impact of the review on some individuals and communities who have experienced disruption from program restrictions.
* The economic impacts of the review are seen to be largely positive, with changes to the program aiming to better suit employment and investment needs in the Territory.
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*Key to impacts: Red – negative, Blue - neutral and Green - positive.*

**Social**

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| **Community** | Recent changes to the Skilled Migration program, including the tightening of restrictions on 29 June 2018, prompted concern from prospective applicants, migration agents, local employers and education providers about the current and future status of the program. Among the concerns voiced by stakeholders to the Government was the disruption that program restrictions had on families and communities in Canberra. Any prospective applicants who are dealt an unfavourable outcome by the review with regards to their eligibility for the program will continue to voice such concerns. |
| **Housing and affordable housing** | Migration is a significant contributor to the growth of the ACT population and consequently has an impact on the demand for housing. However, the review is unable to consider increases to the allocation of skilled migrant numbers, as this is pre-determined by the Department of Home Affairs. Therefore it is not expected changes to the program will directly impact housing prices.  |
| **Government Services** | The program parameters asses the financial independence of applicants seeking migration in Canberra. The review focuses on this area to ensure the criteria are aligned so that migrants are well placed to be self-reliant and positive contributors to the economy, minimising the strain on government services. |

**Economic**

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| **Skills, Education and Employment** | The Skilled Migration program identifies certain skills gaps not being met by the existing workforce and adopts a targeted approach in attracting and nominating skilled migrants to fill the demand. The program review will ensure applicants are meeting the most pressing skills needs of the ACT economy. These are often in areas where there is insufficient supply in the skills base of the existing labour force, and therefore the impact on ACT jobseekers is lessened. |
| **ACT Government Budget** | Changes to the ACT Skilled Migration program will be made within the existing budget for the program with no additional resources to be allocated to its strategic management or implementation. |
| **Competition** | The ACT Government’s decision to restrict the program to only ACT residents with occupations in demand was a measure of managing increased demand that strictly prioritised the skills currently needed by the Territory. Maintaining the ability to limit applications from the ‘closed’ occupations list prevents the oversaturation of skills in industries that are not in demand.  |
| **Investment** | Applicants are typically selected for nomination by their commitment to the Territory and their potential to contribute to the ACT economy. Skilled migrants are generally of ‘established career age’ and bring significant funds to support their settlement. As well as delivering essential skills in demand in the ACT, there is a potential economic benefit of $249 million in nominated settlement assets being transferred into the ACT (as declared by the ACT nominated applicants within the last three years). |

**Environmental**

Nil impact