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Executive Search & Board Advisory

## **BLENHEIM PARTNERS 457 VISA CAMPAIGN – POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

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Blenheim Partners would like to thank everyone who participated and supported our 457 Visa Campaign.

It is pleasing to say that the large number of signatories have been instrumental in Blenheim Partners gaining face to face meetings with Government Ministers and staffers and most importantly, achieving constructive changes.

We would also like to thank the Government Representatives who made time to meet with us, and for being receptive to our cause.

We have attached our initial letter and summary of the changes to the 457 Visa.

We will continue to keep you informed of the developments.

## ***Letter to the Prime Minister - Turning our back on global talent could be more costly than we think.***

As it relates to C-suite executives, it is hard to fathom the logic of changes to the 457-visa and how it will benefit the economy in the long term. As a country, if we are going to prosper, we need leaders and skills. C-suite executives create opportunities, growth and jobs. The idea of penalising the country by lessening our chances of attracting leaders who can help us seems short sighted. It could create a potential vacuum of leadership talent and will accentuate Australia's competitive disadvantage. Australian companies are withdrawing offers and opportunities to C-suite executives off-shore, as they are now only permitted a two year work visa, with a possible further two years. International C-suite executives are not eligible for a four year visa and have no hope of being granted Australian residency, let alone citizenship.

Many Australians take the opportunity to build their careers offshore and return with new skills and new ideas. We should want this to continue and encourage other countries to employ Australians. At the same time, surely we as a nation could benefit by having the opportunity to select the very best the world has to offer to help us compete in the very tough global markets.

The essence of diversity in leadership is in having individuals with different perspectives, built on varied backgrounds, exposures and experiences, which can only contribute to Australian business and economy. As it currently stands, more than a third of Chief Executive Officers in the ASX100 were born overseas. With the amendments to the 457-visa, companies are now discouraged to even consider off-shore talent let alone as a minimum to benchmark it against the Australian landscape. The consequence of such thinking could well be an inward facing business community that only considers Australian capability which in turn leads to the same thinking and the potential spiral into mediocrity.

Australia has an abundance of talent who should be free to pursue their executive careers both in Australia and abroad. As a nation we need the skills, expertise and leadership to allow us to compete on the world stage. If there are better qualified or more experienced executives, who can bring global experience, why should we be forced to turn our backs on them?

Rather than follow the world's nationalistic rhetoric why don't we as a country be the contrarians and seize the opportunity to capture the global talent and hang out the welcome sign. One could argue if the US, Europe and the UK are limiting the immigration of skilled executives why don't we then seize the opportunity and offer Australia as a home for global executives. We are only 25 million people with a limited executive talent pool. We are isolated by geography. Do we want to isolate ourselves from capability, diversity, innovation and jobs growth?

How many C-suite executives are going to move their families and take an incredible risk in regards to their career and futures by accepting the amended 457-visa for a two year role in the most remote country in the world with no guarantees of securing a role on their return? How much can a senior executive achieve in a two year period?

In the last few days companies have been struggling to understand the new processes and sense behind the amended 457-visa. If we follow the new amended policy we may lose the opportunity to build careers ourselves offshore as well offering careers to others from the four corners of the

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world. The concern is in pursuing such a policy is that it has the potential to keep us firmly as an island, disengaged from the global executive talent pool; a prospect that could have long term consequences for every Australian's future and living standards.

In pursuing a one-size-fits-all policy there is a real danger that Australia will be deprived of the leaders whom we need to enhance jobs and growth. At a very minimum, there should be the opportunity for a robust review on a case-by-case basis to minimise any unintentional consequences of these new rules.

This is a critical discussion which needs far more debate and thought around the potential impacts for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory W. Robinson', enclosed within a circular scribble.

**Gregory W. Robinson**  
**Managing Partner**  
**Blenheim Partners**

### **Outcomes of submission to the Australian Government on the Government's recent changes to the temporary work (skilled) Visa (Subclass 457) – Revised occupation lists announced effective 1 July, 2017**

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On Friday 30 June 2017 the Australian Government released the updated Short-term Skilled Occupation List (STSOL) and Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL) that will be effective from 1 July 2017. These lists were the subject of our submission to the Government to move Selected Occupations from the STSOL to the MLTSSL and Reinstating Selected Removed Occupations to the MLTSSL.

It is pleasing to say that the large number of signatories (over 85), have been instrumental in firstly gaining face to face meetings with government ministers and staffers, and secondly, and more importantly, achieving constructive changes to the lists.

We are very happy to report that based on our submission the following positive outcomes have been achieved:

- 8 key position identified in our submission have been successfully moved from the STSOL to the MLTSSL. These positions are:
  - Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director – ANZSCO 111111 (with revised caveat that the nominated base salary must be over \$180, 001 coinciding with top marginal tax rate, something that was discussed when we were in Canberra)
  - Corporate General Manager - ANZSCO 111211 (with revised caveat that the nominated base salary must be over \$180, 001 coinciding with top marginal tax rate, something that was discussed when we were in Canberra)
  - Faculty Head – ANZSCO 134411
  - Chief Information Officer - ANZSCO 135111
  - Statistician - ANZSCO 224113
  - University Lecturer (including Research Fellows)— ANZSCO 242111
  - Multimedia Specialist – ANZSCO 261211
  - Software and Applications Programmers – ANZSCO 261399
- Significantly 6 positions that were removed from the lists entirely have now been reinstated and more importantly to the MLTSSL:
  - Food Technologist – ANZSCO 234212
  - Life Scientist (General) – ANZSCO 234511
  - Biochemist – ANZSCO 234513
  - Biotechnologist – ANZSCO 234514
  - Life Scientist NEC – ANZSCO 234599
  - Natural and Physical Science Professionals NEC – ANZSCO 234999

As you would be aware both the STSOL and the MLTSSL will be updated on a 6 monthly basis. Therefore for other occupations that you believe should be moved to the MLTSSL in the next review, it is important that these be highlighted and put to Government and more comprehensive explanations developed as to why they are needed and should be moved to the MLTSSL.

We would be pleased to again co-ordinate this effort and to this end so we will be in contact and would like to thank everyone again for their support. We will continue to keep you abreast of developments.

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- Non-Executive Director Search;
- Board Strategy and Structure Consulting;
- External Succession Planning; and
- Executive Re-Engagement / Transition.

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