

Helen Innes
Branch Manager, Migration, Gender and Social Policy
Department of Employment
50 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra, ACT 2601

Online submission

Re: Skilled Migration Occupation List Consultation

Dear Ms Innes

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the methodology underpinning six-monthly reviews of the skilled occupations lists. The Innovation, Science and Australia (ISA) Board would welcome the opportunity for direct engagement with your Department on this issue, including through participation in future reviews of the skilled migration occupation lists.

ISA appreciates the government's willingness to respond to ISA and other stakeholder feedback regarding changes to the skilled occupation lists in April 2017, starting with the reintroduction of 36 occupations on 1 July 2017 (including science, management and ICT-related) to the Short-Term Skilled Occupation List (STSOL) and Medium to Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL).

The Board are particularly pleased to see consideration of occupations which have been identified as supporting Australia's science and innovation agenda in your current methodological review. They are separately providing their advice about occupations they believe contribute to the innovation and science agenda via the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

ISA's *Performance Review of the Australian Innovation, Science and Research (ISR) System*ⁱ found that Australia's desirable lifestyle opportunities represent a significant competitive advantage in recruiting the highly skilled talent the Australian ISR system needs. Therefore ISA's recommendation is for individuals with skills relevant to the innovation and science agenda to have access to the MLTSSL in preference to the STSOL. ISA believe the STSOL (two years, renewed once) will be insufficient incentive for world-class talent to choose Australia as a place to work and live.

ISA believe the current occupation-list system is constrained by drawing on historic data, and linked to a field of occupation over an individual's skills and experience. The growing field of data science (supporting 'big data') is one example of a rapidly evolving field where domestic experience has had limited opportunity to develop and may therefore need to be supplemented with international experience. In addition, the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) is unable to identify entrepreneurs – both professionals and experts – who are critical to the development of innovative ideas into commercial realities. ISA would be happy to work with you to identify entrepreneur-like occupations.

As an alternative (or supplement) to the skilled occupations list, ISA recommends a salary threshold (of \$180,000 per annum) as a proxy indicator of employer demand, with an initial quota of 100 places. This recommendation has been raised in ISA's recent submission to the Transforming Australia's visa system review, which I am happy to share with you on request.

Regarding new approaches to the skilled occupation lists raised in your methodological review consultation paper, ISA commend the proposed traffic light system as it will help them and their stakeholders to more easily track occupations included in, or moved from, the new temporary (STSOL) and longer term (MLTSSL) lists.

Thank you again for engaging with stakeholders in your review of skilled occupation list methodology and for including a consideration of Australia's Innovation, Science and Research system.

Yours sincerely



Dr Charles Day

Chief Executive Officer
Office of Innovation and Science

20 October 2017

ⁱ Innovation and Science Australia (2017) *Performance Review of the Australian Innovation, Science and Research (ISR) System*. Page 82 www.industry.gov.au/ISA