

AMSRO

ASSOCIATION OF MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Skilled Migration List
Stakeholder Engagement Team
Department of Employment

Sent by email: SkilledMigrationList@employment.gov.au

Cc: Michael Willard, Assistant Secretary, Department of Immigration and Border Control - michael.willard@border.gov.au

Permanent Skilled Policy and Labour Market Analysis, Economic Policy Branch,
Department of Immigration and Border Protection - employerpolicy@border.gov.au

1 December 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SKILLED MIGRATION OCCUPATION LISTS CONSULTATION
Market Research Analyst ANZSCO Code 225112

Thank you for providing the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) the opportunity to provide comment on the Department of Employment's ("the Department") Traffic Light Bulletin announced 20 November 2017. We note there is currently no change proposed to the ANZSCO position 225112 - Market Research Analyst - which was removed from the eligible skilled migration list in April 2017.

Before presenting the case that this occupation should be listed on the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL), AMSRO would like to commend the Department for actively seeking feedback from employers on this issue and believes that it is only with in-depth stakeholder engagement that government can effectively inform immigration policy. We therefore welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Department on this issue when appropriate.

Our submission addresses the following key areas:

- a) An outdated ANZSCO system - classification issues
- b) Frequency of updating the list – challenging business
- c) Capacity building - industry commitment to skills development in the Australian labour force
- d) The skills shortage - inadequate numbers to fill senior vacancies
- e) The value of caveats - addressing the government's concerns

Introduction

AMSRO is the national peak industry body representing over 90 market and social research companies throughout Australia. The research, data and insights industry turns over one billion dollars annually (2016). AMSRO represents approximately 70% of industry turnover with member organisations employing over 5,000 people of which, over 1,300 are full-time professionals.

AMSRO

ASSOCIATION OF MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Market and social research is an important service that benefits all Australians. From political polls and television ratings, to surveys of customer satisfaction and the development of products and services, as well as studies on public health or the income and labour dynamics in Australia, market and social research provides valuable information about the society in which we live. This information helps government, commercial and not-for-profit organisations make informed decisions based upon the interests and needs of their constituents, clients and the general public.

Since the announcement of the visa reform, AMSRO member organisation employers have raised a number of serious concerns about the removal of the **Market Research Analyst** position, and agree that its ongoing exclusion will have a significant and adverse impact on short and long-term growth, productivity and revenue for the market and social research industry.

To best inform our submission AMSRO conducted a member survey with organisations last month. The poll, of 16 of our largest employers in the industry, showed that all of them would be adversely affected by this decision and all expressed concern about its impact on their pursuit of international best practice. Market and social research is a professional services industry that relies heavily on its talent (headcount). Without the ability to hire skilled international workers, the impact on businesses will be significant, with losses to revenue, shared knowledge and the capacity to compete on the global market.

In addition to the survey results, this submission is largely based on industry intelligence with comments included from the following company (CEO's):

- DBM Consultants
- Fiftyfive5
- Ipsos
- The Leading Edge
- The Social Research Centre (ANU)
- Wallis Consulting Group
- WPP companies including the Kantar Group

Summary analysis of workforce of respondent employers				
	Number of Australian permanent resident and citizen employees	Number of temporary visa holders	Number of Australian interns employed in the past two years	Number of Australian graduates (less than two years post qualification work experience) employed in the past two years
TOTAL	1,245	121	14	52

a) An outdated ANZSCO system - classification issues

The ANZSCO Market Research Analyst classification 225112 is currently defined as:

- Determines the market for new goods and services,
- develops advertising strategies, and
- evaluates the best business sites for commercial organisations.

The market and social research industry is a service industry which relies on highly skilled, tertiary qualified, technical research practitioners. The technical skills are a cost of entry and these skills are not currently widely taught in most Australian, or global, tertiary institutions. As a result, talent is scarce both in Australia and internationally, meaning employers must actively compete for that talent and ultimately rely on visa holders.

We believe the current ANZSCO definition does not adequately describe the skilled workforce needs of the industry i.e. the level of professional, technical or communicative skills required by market and social research companies to fill these roles.

It should be noted that, given the level of expertise required in this industry, AMSRO member employers are using the ANZSCO Market Research Analyst position to fill mid to senior level vacancies.

The appended Skill shortage table which lists vacancies member organisations have not been able to fill from the local labour market in the past 12-24 months provides a snapshot of the specialist skills that are typically supplied by skilled workers on subclass 457 visas.

A more accurate description of **Market Research Analyst** would include the following:

- Tertiary degree in a relevant discipline and 4+ years' experience.
- Well-developed quantitative (and qualitative) research skills including sampling, questionnaire design, statistical analysis and reporting.
- High level competency across data analytics, modelling and programming.
- Superior leadership, presentation, story-telling and project management skills.
- Ability to run a project team and coordinate the workflows of other team members.
- Willingness to mentor and train other research and project support staff.
- Superior ability to use relevant software (SPSS, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel) and other packages relevant to projects, as necessary.
- Ability to document survey procedures and produce publication quality technical and methodological reports.

b) Frequency of updating the list – challenging business

AMSRO commends the Department on its proposal to undertake stakeholder consultation and maintain transparency in its approach, however believes the frequency of list updates (and potential changes) presents major operational issues for employers. A successful business relies on having adequate planning time, sufficient headcount and the necessary infrastructure to ensure a client's needs are met. The prospect of rolling six monthly changes to arrangements impacting human resources availability will create uncertainty and instability in hiring decisions and resources planning. AMSRO would

therefore appreciate the Department consider updating the lists less frequently, for example - every 12 months at most, to provide greater certainty and continuity for employers and their employees.

c) Capacity building - industry commitment to training

Market and social research surveys are used in Australia to identify and measure community knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, which then inform government policy and commercial business decisions, therefore practitioners and indeed **analysts**, require a high level of training and expertise. Given this, AMSRO organisations and the industry in general, invests heavily in training for all levels of employees.

AMSRO organisations work in a competitive and small industry and are therefore dedicated to continual improvement to ensure they retain talent. Member organisations conduct graduate training programs (including internships), and/or specific in-house programs to develop staff including: inductions, in-house academies, internal and external webinars, conferences, workshops, formal reviews and development plans. Formal mentoring and wider industry training (via the professional industry association [AMSRS](#)) is also widely supported.

All employers surveyed for this submission conduct in-house training programs for employees and invest in (external) professional development programs for staff. In addition, the majority of employers conduct formal internship and graduate programmes.

“We focus on building specialist capacity by shaping technical skills of promising employees and specifically targeted roles. We run developmental seminars and courses in-house, with external facilitators and workshops”. Human Resources Director.

“Staff in respective business units are trained in company IP and research techniques and develop specialist experience and capabilities over this time – either industry based or methodological specialisms”. Chief Executive Officer.

“The company has an established formal graduate program where they are trained intensively for the first 4 weeks. They are then put straight into accounts and work closely with other members of the team who provide mentorship. They are given the same training opportunities as other staff. We also have more junior staff run the graduate programs for consecutive years so that they are exposed to training others and providing mentorship as well”. Chief Executive Officer.

“The company has a large number of data analysts. The role of data analyst has some specific requirements. There is limited industry software available ‘off the shelf’ worldwide and each software package differs markedly. The software is highly specialised and is not taught in academic institutions or professional courses and is very practical in its application. All analysts in our industry need to be familiar with at least one of these software packages.’

‘The industry in Australia is small and the package we use, while being one of the market leaders internationally, is not the most frequently used in Australia. This means that we may need to look overseas for new analysts as there are few trained operators already in Australia and/or we must

train our own analysts. We have had a trainee analyst on staff for a year and that person will remain a trainee for at least another year as the software is complex and requires a lot of practical experience to reach a sufficient level of proficiency for the simplest work we conduct. More complex projects require five years of practical experience and training 'on the job' whilst gaining it". Managing Partner.

Please note - Additional information is provided in the appended sample responses to questionnaires.

d) The skills shortage - inadequate numbers to fill senior position vacancies

AMSRO understands that the Department has based its recommendation on an analysis of national labour market data. We consider that the relevance of skilled occupations lists based on an analysis of national data sets alone to these programmes is questionable. Employers will not seek sponsor 457 visa holders who do not have the skills they require.

Whilst our industry invests heavily in professional development, particularly graduate programs, there remains a critical skilled labour shortage across medium to senior levels which represents a local workforce gap and needs to be supplemented by international talent. This is evidenced by sample data presented in our appended Skills shortages table.

"Australian universities are turning out perfectly good graduates for consulting roles... where we struggle is at more senior levels. Post grad qualifications do not substitute for experience – market and social research is a very applied field". Managing Director.

Increasingly, the Australian market and social research industry is competing against high paying, low taxing, aspirational destinations like Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong, as these markets develop and demand more talent. We have always been, and continue to be, heavily reliant on skilled overseas workers to fill the gap.

"Our Industry is a services industry and relies on highly skilled, tertiary qualified, technical research practitioners. The technical skills are a cost of entry and these skills are not currently widely taught in most Australian, or global tertiary institutions. As a result, talent is scarce in Australia and internationally, meaning we must actively compete for that talent". Chief Executive Officer.

More recently, further forces have exacerbated the skills shortage:

- People moving overseas for better work and life experience opportunities (Europe, Asia and Middle-East predominantly).
- A female dominated industry - loss of female senior talent in the 10 years plus experience due to starting families.
- An ageing workforce where much of the senior talent is beginning to retire or reduce working hours.

“We are not able to train employees fast enough so that they will reach the level where we are experiencing a skills gap in the market. We have strong junior level employees who are trained in a formal graduate program and moving through the company but there is still a gap between the experience and skill level that requires talented staff”. Chief Executive Officer.

Organisationally, the industry is also quite fragmented (average company size of 20 people) and has a mix of both large internationally owned organisations through to smaller to medium sized independently/Australian owned firms. The increasing barriers around 457 visa usages will impact the smaller/medium sized local firms hardest as the larger foreign owned companies will be able to transfer skills and knowledge more easily across the organisation globally. The net effect will be an industry dominated by larger international businesses.

“It will mean that the large companies who invest in local talent and bring in talent from overseas to provide new stimulus, ideas and experience will now have to re-evaluate. It could lead to a lack of investment in local talent, with the fact that they will be poached even more than they are today as they become a rarer commodity and make it unattractive to develop people as we already have head hunters consistently trying to steal our talent because they are well trained; it will just get worse. It may drive wages up as you create a shortage and therefore put some firms out of business who employ researchers as they can’t afford the cost base for talent. Given that many of us now compete globally, we will look very local and unable to strut our stuff on the global stage as we don’t have access to new people. I think Australia has great talent, but that talent has benefitted from the influx of researchers from other markets who have brought fresh perspectives and ideas. It has also meant that Australian researchers wanting a career overseas have the experience and training to do so’.

‘Also, think of the many organisations that have sprung up from the fact that we have brought in talent from abroad, who have gone on to hire Australian researchers. Our company itself has spawned about 17 firms who provide employment’. Managing Director.

As evidenced by these comments and the appended Skills shortages table, a Market Research Analyst on a 457 visa is typically a mid to senior specialist with a minimum of 4 years of experience specialising in a range of high-level competency across areas including; data analytics, modelling, programming, strategy in multi-market projects, story-telling, project management, qualitative and quantitative moderation/facilitation skills and leadership.

Furthermore, industry feedback demonstrates that the senior market research analyst roles are often left unfilled for 4-6 months (up to 12 months in some cases) due to the severe shortage of suitable candidates in the Australian market. For details, please refer to appended Skills shortage table.

e) Caveats - addressing the government’s concerns

In support of comments regarding the seniority of current temporary visa holders employed in the industry, member CEO’s surveyed for this submission agreed (in principle) to the following caveats:

AMSRO

ASSOCIATION OF MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

- A minimum base salary of \$80,000
- At least two years relevant work experience
- The business has annual turnover of at least AUD 1 million
- The business has at least five employees

Additionally, to alleviate any concerns of government and ensure integrity a further caveat could be developed to exclude duties associated with the following occupations;

- Market Research Field Interviewer
- Data Entry
- Field Manager
- Coder

We would welcome the opportunity to review this suggestion more fully with the Department and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Conclusion

In summary Market Research Analyst should be listed on the MLTSSL for the following reasons:

- The industry which contributes one billion dollars per year to the economy relies on a small number of highly skilled specialists to supplement the local workforce by filling mid to senior roles, despite genuine and ongoing investment in capacity building.
- Market Research Analyst roles at this level are typically left unfilled for 4 to 6 months.
- Caveats may be implemented to ensure roles filled by visa holders are highly specialised.
- Listing the occupation on the MLTSSL provides the industry with the ability to recruit and retain talent in a highly competitive global market.

Thank you for opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Should you require further information please don't hesitate to contact me. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss in detail.

Kind regards,



Sarah Campbell
Executive Director
AMSRO I T: (02) 8017 6717
E: sarah@amsro.com.au

Appended:

- Sample responses to questionnaires on analysis of labour market and capacity building
- AMSRO Organisation Case Study (attached separately and not for publication)
- Skills shortage table (attached separately)
- AMSRO member company information (taken from poll respondents and attached separately)

Appendix: Sample responses to questionnaires on analysis of labour market and capacity building.

<p>Why are Australian universities not producing sufficient number of graduates or the right graduates?</p>	<p>Australian Universities are turning out perfectly good graduates for consulting roles and we have no trouble recruiting at the entry level. Where we struggle is at more senior levels. Post grad qualifications do not substitute for experience – market and social research is a very applied field.</p> <p>However, the industry is growing in the area of data analytics. This is very new field and universities are not yet providing appropriately skilled graduates. In fact no-one is.</p>
<p>Why are Australian employers not able to train sufficient numbers of graduates as Market Research Analyst professionals?</p>	<p>The skills shortage is particularly acute in the area of data analysis. While the base skills needed are transportable, there are many different specialist software packages that take time to learn. For example, 6 years ago we were the first commercial research company in Australia to introduce multimode interviewing allowing research participants to take part by telephone, in person or online. There was no-one trained in this software in Australia and we had no option but to train our own people. Other relevant software is in regular use in North America and Europe. There are people in those places who can use this software, but once again, we have few options in Australia. This makes keeping ahead of the pack quite expensive and it takes us longer than necessary to get up and running.</p>
<p>What other labour market factors contribute to the limited size of the talent pool in Australia?</p>	<p>The small size of the market. The commodisation of the industry. Procurement departments in both public and private sector are buying research based on cost not quality and this doesn't leave money for re-investment. We have managed to keep ahead by specialising still further, but this move has forced consolidation in the industry and that means there are even fewer staff, especially in supporting operational areas to choose from.</p>

<p>Why are Australian universities not producing sufficient number of graduates or the right graduates?</p>	<p>From speaking with our interns and graduates the feeling is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlike with Finance or Law etc there is no set pathway with taking a business degree. Most people don't know what they want to do after it. - Unlike abroad Marketing cannot be taken as a subject on its own merit and is taken in conjunction with a wide array of other subjects and so we're not creating knowledgeable specialists - Market Research is one module in three years of study - Market Research is not really known to graduates when compared to other areas in Marketing such as PR, Advertising etc. It's not talked about a lot. - A lot of students avoid Market Research for the association with Maths. Although 50% of our company is quantitative based the other 50% is qualitative and so it's very difficult to pick up students that have gone into psychology or other areas of business that require more softer skills. We wouldn't be their preference. - Unlike abroad there are no yearly placement in industry schemes at university.
<p>Why are Australian employers not able to train sufficient numbers of graduates as Market Research Analyst professionals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market Research not normally the top student's preference. Not talked about as much and seen as the less 'sexy' side of Marketing. - As they don't come from a background of knowing much about Market Research at all they require timely/expensive training so as a small to medium sized business there is only a certain number of graduates we can take on before it drains our resource and has a negative impact on our work. As well as this there is only a certain amount of work we can give them at that level. - Our Industry is a services industry and relies on highly skilled, tertiary qualified, technical research practitioners. The technical skills are a cost of entry and these skills are not currently widely taught in most Australian, or global, tertiary institutions. As a result, talent is scarce both in Australia and internationally, meaning we must actively compete for that talent.
<p>What other labour market factors contribute to the limited size of the talent pool in Australia?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High living costs compared to other cities with benefits being taken off them compared to say Dubai who has tax benefits. - Market Research behind times compared to London/NY. - People moving overseas for better work and life experience opportunities (Europe, Asia and Middle-East predominantly) - Female dominated industry - loss of female senior talent in the 10 years plus experience due to starting families - Ageing workforce where much of the senior talent is beginning to retire or reduce working hours

AMSRO

ASSOCIATION OF MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Why are Australian universities not producing sufficient number of graduates or the right graduates?	Australian universities are not producing the right graduates I believe because of the lack of recognition by universities to recognise the research profession as a specific career path. Further trained and professional market and social researchers are not joining academia.
Why are Australian employers not able to train sufficient numbers of graduates as Market Research Analyst professionals?	Australian employers do not have sufficient resources to bridge the gap between university graduates and practical researchers. It takes too long to train and even then, there is no guarantee that the graduate will stay.
What other labour market factors contribute to the limited size of the talent pool in Australia?	High competition of strong graduates from other related sectors such as management consulting, marketing and corporate management who are all paying considerably more.

Why are Australian universities not producing sufficient number of graduates or the right graduates?	Generally, for XXX, graduate positions are not difficult to fill and we do not rely on 457 for these roles. Other roles – mid-level experience and specialist skills are where there is an issue.
Why are Australian employers not able to train sufficient numbers of graduates as Market Research Analyst professionals?	I suspect that given unemployment is overall at low levels, where there is a particular general shortage of skills and tight competition is in professional services skillsets with 5-8 years' experience, and with specialist roles – industry-specific experience.
What other labour market factors contribute to the limited size of the talent pool in Australia?	The economy is shifting to knowledge-based businesses and therefore professional services skills are in high demand – look at the yoy growth of PwC, KPMG, EY, Deloitte – they're all growing 10%+

Why are Australian universities not producing sufficient number of graduates or the right graduates?	<i>We believe that the Universities have really only started in the past few years partnering more with Market Research companies to promote roles in the market research industry. We find that the reputation amongst students still exists where they believe the only jobs available in the market research industry involve sitting in a phone room. This outdated view has previously not encouraged graduates to seek work in the industry and move towards a more "marketing department" position from their degrees. The more involvement that our company has had with the top universities in Australia, going to guest lectures, recently working with University of Sydney on a new Capstone subject in marketing, being part of case study competitions with University marketing societies and advertising online in the Universities Career Hubs has increased our exposure rapidly and helped to source strong graduates for the companies. The problem we have is that the roles where we find there is a skills gap and where it's harder to recruit for is for the mid to senior level roles, where potentially the more traditional view of market research as an industry had been seen by graduates around that time and not many entered the industry in the past.</i>
Why are Australian employers not able to train sufficient numbers of graduates as Market Research Analyst professionals?	<i>We are not able to train them fast enough so that they will reach the level where we are experiencing a skills gap in the market. We have strong junior level employees who are trained in a formal graduate program and are moving through the company but there is still a gap between the experience and skill level that we require talented staff. As the industry is experiencing a downturn in recent years it is harder and harder to bring on a large number of graduates each year. If we can hire between 2-4 graduates each year the natural attrition often does not leave us with a huge pool of employees to promote within.</i>
What other labour market factors contribute to the limited size of the talent pool in Australia?	

Appendix: Sample responses to capacity building.

<p>Describe your business's investment in training junior employees:</p>	<p>We have our own training program for consulting staff which rotates them through the business over an approximately two year period. We also take interns from local universities. Every year we train at least 70 new telephone/personal interviewers who work in our call centre and talk personally with research participants. We provide ongoing monitoring and training. While interviewing staff are employed on a casual basis, many of them stay with the company for many years and the additional income supports many people who attempt to set up their own businesses. Others have progressed to senior management roles – therefore we take our training duties for all staff very seriously – especially those at the junior level. When we recruit any staff member we consider them to be potential long term staff.</p>
<p>Describe your business's investment in building specialist capacity among all employees:</p>	<p>Aside from continuous Professional Development for staff at all levels, we have some specialists in areas such as data analysis and statistics. We sponsor some students to continue postgraduate studies, support our industry associations in the specialised PD they provide, send staff to conferences in areas in which Wallis specialises, talk at conferences and undertake bespoke training eg We are currently building a training program aiming at bridging the gap from junior to more senior consultants and we do specialist training with our software vendors. Our senior staff are required to obtain and maintain Qualified Practicing Market Researcher accreditation which ensures they continue with relevant and specialist training.</p>

<p>Describe your business's investment in training junior employees:</p>	<p>Junior employees are provided with 3 types of training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. XXX Academy: an in-house program to teach researchers on all core aspects of research theory and practice 2. External courses run by the Professional Development team of the Australian Market and Social Research Society 3. On-the-job training working closely with a XXX Group Account Director of Account Director
<p>Describe your business's investment in building specialist capacity among all employees:</p>	<p>All employees are provided with 3 types of training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. XXX Academy: an in-house program to teach researchers on all core aspects of research theory and practise 2. External courses run by the Professional Development team of the Australian Market and Social Research Society 3. On-the-job training working closely with a XXX Group Account Director of Account Director. <p>Senior managers are also provided with executive coaching and have access to external professional programs</p>

<p>Describe your business's investment in training junior employees:</p>	<p>We find some of our most passionate social research employees are our most junior, and focus on supplementing their interests with specific development planning to their roles and career trajectory.</p> <p>We have a formal mentoring program, formal development plans (between direct reports,) internal workshops and course facilitation (hosted by both external individuals and internal employees,) webinars, and access to study allowances (such as leave and financial support.)</p>
<p>Describe your business's investment in building specialist capacity among all employees:</p>	<p>We focus on building specialist capacity by shaping technical skills of promising employees and specifically targeted roles. We run developmental seminars and courses in-house with external facilitators and workshops, with managers selecting employees to attend and upskill their current knowledge.</p> <p>We also have our own employees run information sessions and skill sharing programs, with facilitators growing their own teaching capabilities and servicing experience while employees learn specialised skills from them independently – these are open for all employees to attend.</p> <p>Also, employees can voluntarily attend industry meetups and conferences to keep abreast of current trends and new skills that shape their specialised skills and knowledge.</p> <p>All our employees can access workshops, programs and undergo developmental plans (just like our junior employees) so opportunities for advancement and specialist skill-planning are constantly and consistently identified by departments.</p>

<p>Describe your business's investment in training junior employees:</p>	<p><i>The company has an established formal graduate program where they are trained intensively for the first 4 weeks. They are then put straight into accounts and work closely with other members of the team who provide mentorship. They are given the same training opportunities as other staff. We also have more junior staff run the graduate programs for consecutive years so that they are exposed to training others and providing mentorship as well.</i></p>
<p>Describe your business's investment in building specialist capacity among all employees:</p>	<p><i>We invest in external and internal training programs to build the specialist skills of our staff. We have run strong consulting training programs over the last few years to build that specialist capacity within the company. We also offer opportunities for global secondments so that individuals can be trained expertly in our tools so that they can become regional specialists for those tools.</i></p>

<end>