

Department of Employment

Skilled Migration Occupation Lists Consultation

Sent by email – SkilledMigrationList@employment.gov.au

20 October 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SKILLED MIGRATION OCCUPATION LISTS DRAFT METHODOLOGY CONSULTATION

Thank you for providing the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) an opportunity to comment on the draft methodology used by the Department of Employment to provide advice on the composition of the STSOL and MLTSSL.

Introduction

The Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) is the national peak industry body representing over 95 market and social research companies in Australia. The research, data and insights industry turns over more than one billion dollars annually (2016). AMSRO represents approximately 70% of the industry with member organisations employing over 12,000 people, of which over 5,000 are full-time professionals.

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 government's announcement regarding changes to the migration occupation list, AMSRO members have raised a number of concerns about the removal of the ANZSCO occupation **225112 Market Research Analyst**, and agree that its exclusion, given the skilled labour shortage, will lead to significant short and long-term growth and productivity issues for the market and social research industry.

For the purpose of this letter however, AMSRO will address the Department's draft methodology only (with a more detailed submission to come later).

A New Approach to Skilled Occupation Lists

AMSRO appreciates the need for an evidence based approach however is pleased to acknowledge that the Department also intends to conduct in-depth stakeholder consultation as part of this review. As a national peak industry body whose member organisations have been significantly affected by these changes, AMSRO would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss (in detail) the impact of these reforms.

Frequency of updates – AMSRO commends the Department on its proposal to undertake stakeholder consultation and maintain transparency in its approach, however believes the frequency of 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 to provide greater certainty and continuity for employers and their employees.

Labour Market Factors - AMSRO supports the Department's proposal to consider a wider range of labour market supply and demand. AMSRO recommends real-life data sources and stakeholder views are sourced from industry leaders to better inform future changes to the occupation lists. Employers recruit candidates using a variety of sources and means which is not necessarily reflected in the current national datasets and or classifications.

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) – Whilst we recognise that the ANZSCO classification lists perform a function, the current definitions under the ANZSCO do not sufficiently reflect the skillset required to fill particular roles.

The market and social industry is a professional service industry which largely relies on highly skilled, tertiary qualified, technical research practitioners. A high level of technical skills are required for most mid-level to senior research positions and these skills are usually learnt on the job over a period of several years. Such skills are not widely taught in most Australian, or global, tertiary institutions, meaning the local pool of talent is often inadequate to supply the need for mid to senior level research practitioners. This shortage is exacerbated by a trend towards increasing specialisation in the research industry – e.g. the need to have researchers with technical skills and deep experience in specific industries. Australian staff are in demand overseas, especially in the UK and Asian markets. This creates further shortages within the local talent pool, meaning employers must actively compete for that talent and ultimately rely on visa holders from overseas to supplement the employment of skilled local staff.

The ANZSCO Market Research Analyst classification is currently defined as:

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

AMSRO believes the current definition does not adequately reflect the true breadth of the market research analyst role, nor the level of professional, technical or communication skills required by candidates.

A Market Research Analyst on a 457 visa is typically filled by a senior candidate with a minimum of 4 to 5 plus years of experience in the role, specialising in a range of high-level competency across areas including; data analytics, modelling, programming, strategy, story-telling, project management, qualitative moderation and quantitative analysis skills and leadership. Industry intelligence demonstrates that senior market 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.

The use of Caveats - AMSRO supports the introduction and use of caveats. As stated previously, a majority of successful candidates filling the labour shortage in the market and social research industry are highly experienced, senior practitioners.

Thank you for opportunity to comment and we forward to further consultation on this important issue. In the interim, should you require further information please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,



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