

Migration consultant helps foreign workers get the magic tick from Immigration

Helping hand on work visas

Josh Robertson

A BEEKEEPER from the Philippines is probably the most unusual case of a foreign worker filling a local gap that Alex Andrews has come across.

But the Tarragindi, South Brisbane-based migration consultant is likely to encounter a few more.

Employers are increasingly calling upon Ms Andrews, a law graduate with experience working in state bureaucracy, for help getting the magic tick from Immigration on 457 work visas.

They range from multinationals looking to transfer staff to small businesses in IT, construction and mining services.

One medical legal company even placed its fate in her hands, banking on importing a foundation staff member in a perilously short period of time.

Fortunately, Ms Andrews got the visa priority processed, the employee got the stamp and the business got off the ground.

The greatest demand now is for tradespeople and engineers in construction and mining, she says.

Ms Andrews says the 457 visas are popular but the necessary paperwork and associated processes can be a real headache for a business to organise.

"They find it very difficult because it's a lot of paperwork and quite complicated forms to fill in," she says.

"There's also a number of ancillary processes, like the medicals and police clearances, language tests, and a lot of employees they can fall over with these sorts of things if they don't know the requirements."

Employers themselves need to demonstrate a satisfactory record of recruiting and training Australians, for example, by showing training budgets.

They also need to show that hiring workers from overseas will benefit Australia in some form.

It could be that it will lead to more jobs for Australians, more local competition or international trade links.

"There are some arguments employers need to put together and I think some of them look at those requirements and find it a little daunting and don't quite know how to answer those sort of questions," Ms Andrews says. "I can help them with those sorts of things and give advice on how to answer those sorts of questions."

Ms Andrews, who began Clear Path Migration Services two years ago, says 457 applicants are increasingly coming on working holiday visas before job scouting.

She says workers from some countries find it more challenging to show certification of their skills.

Also, all tradespeople must now sit the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), which advantages those from the UK and other English-speaking countries.

Interestingly, professionals such as accountants are not required to sit the test.



CHALLENGES ... migration consultant Alex Andrews.

Picture: Megan Cullen

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