

## CCAT meeting with Department of Home Affairs

When: Wednesday 11 April 2018

Where: CCAT Community Centre, North Hobart

Time: 12.00 midday

Who: Daniel Chan, Lily Chan, Brian Chung, CCAT

Mr Michael Pezzullo, Secretary

Mr Damien Kilner, Assistant Secretary, Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs

Mr Justin Clifford, Community Liaison Officer, Tasmania

### Discussion items:

1. Michael is one of the most senior public servants in Canberra and is often in discussion with his Ministers as well as with the PM. Michael is a second generation Australian with Italian parentage. For more information on Michael, see link below:  
  
<https://bordnet.immi.local/Executivehub/Pages/michael-pezzullo.aspx>
2. Damien Kilner is responsible for citizenship and multicultural matters on a national level so he is responsible for the rules governing visas and citizenship applications etc. Damien has a very good understanding Chinese Australians and China as he spent three years in HK as a part of the immigration Department.
3. Justin Clifford is a Tasmanian, born in Ulverstone, and is the local Tasmanian Liaison Officer for the Department of Home Affairs. Justin is keen to meet and discuss issues of interest with CCAT members and he is very interested to attend our community events such as the Dumpling festival luncheon etc.
4. Immigration policy, citizenship
  - The current rule is that an applicant must have lived in Australia on a valid Australian visa for 4 years immediately before applying for citizenship, and not have been absent from Australia for a total of 12 months within this 4 year period, including no more than 90 days in the 12 months before applying.

- The Government have proposed stronger conditions for residency prior to the application for Citizenship application and these amendments are currently before the Senate.
- Currently, all applicants who apply for citizenship must pass the Citizen test, except for those aged under 18 years old and those who are 60 or older. All of the questions asked in the test are in the book called “Our Common Bond” which is available on the Department web site in English, Chinese and many other languages. CCAT has copies of this book and it is well worth reading by all CCAT members!!!
- The current immigration program allowed 186,515 immigrants to enter Australia during 2016-17 and the same number is being allowed during 2017-18. The government has no plans to change these numbers at this time. 68% (128,550 people) of the immigrants enter on the skill basis whilst 30% (57,400 people) are entering on the family basis.

#### 5. Relationship with China

- Chinese influence in Australia?? Michael Pezzullo stressed that the government has absolutely no concerns with the loyalty of Australian citizens of Chinese descent. Michael is on a high level committee that **oversees** all existing serious commercial/financial crimes and terrorism investigations and he has absolutely no concerns at all with the Chinese community in Australia.
- Foreign Review Board re Chinese companies buying local businesses. Michael Pezzullo is on high level committee that provides guidelines to the Foreign Review Board and he is very aware of all major cases that **are** reviewed. The Australian government is very firm in ensuring that large Chinese companies that **are** owned/**have** strong links with the Chinese government are not allowed to purchase/control key infrastructure/security components of the Australian economy. There is a distinct difference between foreign companies that is not owned by a foreign government and some Chinese companies that is partly or totally owned by the Chinese government.

Brian Chung (with input from Justin Clifford)  
11 April 2018

## STATISTICS:

In the 2016 Census, 7,133 people in Tasmania stated their ancestry as Chinese, the fourth largest non-Anglo group after German (18,388), Dutch (10,287), and Italian (7,353).

In the 2016-17 program year\* total Migration Program Outcome for Chinese nationals in the Skill stream was 17,621. Of these

- Outcome for Chinese nationals where intended residence state was Tasmania - 336
- Outcome for Chinese nationals in the Employer Sponsored category where intended residence state was Tasmania - 34
- Outcome for Chinese nationals in the General Skilled Migration category where intended residence state was Tasmania – 291
- Outcome for Chinese nationals in the Business Innovation and Investment category where intended residence state was Tasmania – 11.

*\*Note: Data includes both primary and secondary applicants.*

## Visitor visa program

- China continues to be the largest source country for Visitor visa applications to Australia.
- In 2016-17, 941,088 Visitor visa applications were made by Chinese nationals, representing an increase of 11 per cent compared to the corresponding period in 2015-16 (848,320).
- Already in 2017-18 to 31 March 2018, 796,499 Visitor visa applications were made by Chinese nationals, representing a 14 per cent increase compared to the corresponding period in 2016-17 (701,734).
- At current growth rates, the number of Visitor visa applications from Chinese nationals is expected to exceed one million this financial year.
- **Priority Consideration service (fast-track):** In March 2016, the department commenced a trial of a fast-track Visitor visa service (48-hours) for eligible Chinese nationals lodging through Service Delivery Partners in China for a fee of AUD1,000 in addition to the application fee of AUD135 (now AUD140).
- **Frequent Traveller Visitor visa:** Since December 2016, longer validity multiple entry visas (10 years) and allowing visa applications to be lodged in Chinese are helping Australia remain competitive in China's booming outbound tourism market.
- **Simplified Chinese lodgement:** In December 2016, the Department commenced a trial of online Visitor visa lodgement in Simplified Chinese for Chinese tourists through a Service Delivery Partner.
- **Online lodgement:** Since 20 February 2017, Chinese nationals can lodge Visitor visa applications online.

### **International Students in Tasmania**

- The number of visas granted to Chinese nationals who are studying at an education institute registered in Tasmania has been growing in the last two years.
- Between 2014-15 and 2015-16 student visa grants grew by 21.3 per cent and between 2015-16 and 2016-17, by 76.7 per cent.
- This rate of growth is much higher than the national rate for Chinese nationals (7.2 per cent and 14.1 per cent, respectively).
- The growth in student numbers for providers registered in Tasmania is driven by the Higher Education sector.
- Of the total number of student visa grants to Chinese nationals in 2016-17, 1.5 per cent were to students who had enrolled in an education provider registered in Tasmania.

**Table: Student visa grants (onshore and offshore) to Chinese nationals for education providers registered in Tasmania\***