AUSTRALIA'S GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FAVOR SKILLED MIGRATION PROGRAM

The Department of Foreign Affairs reported on a news article published by *The Australian* on 03 January 2014 citing Immigration Minister Scott Morrison's support for the government skilled migration program. According to Minister Morrison, "the Australian government is right to prioritize skilled migration over family migration as new parliamentary research showed that family stream is becoming an increasingly small component of Australia's migration program. An analysis of trends in the family migration scheme indicated that it has shrunk to about half of what it was in 1987-88, having been surpassed by a steady growth in skilled migration." Minister Morrison also cited the economic contribution of skilled migration, which according to him "exceeds all forms of migration."

On the same issue of *The Australian*, New South Wales Senator Sam Dastyari (Labor Party) urged his party to support a "big Australia" scenario and welcome a population of 35 million by 2050. According to Senator Dastyari, increasing the country's population is a "sensible economic decision," which will positively impact the economy, turbo-charge growth, generate tax revenue and build wealth. He also called for "Australians to be more welcoming to migrants and refugees and calls for a new bipartisan approach to immigration as well as support for an increase in the annual migration intake."

For the period 2013-2014, Australia's planned migration program has been set at 190, 000 places, of which more than two-thirds (128,550) is allocated to skilled migrants while less than a third (60,885) is for family migrants. Seventy-eight percent of the family scheme will go to foreign spouses of Australians.

These positive developments are welcome news for Filipinos interested to work in Australia in the future.

Source: ASPAC-DFA

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