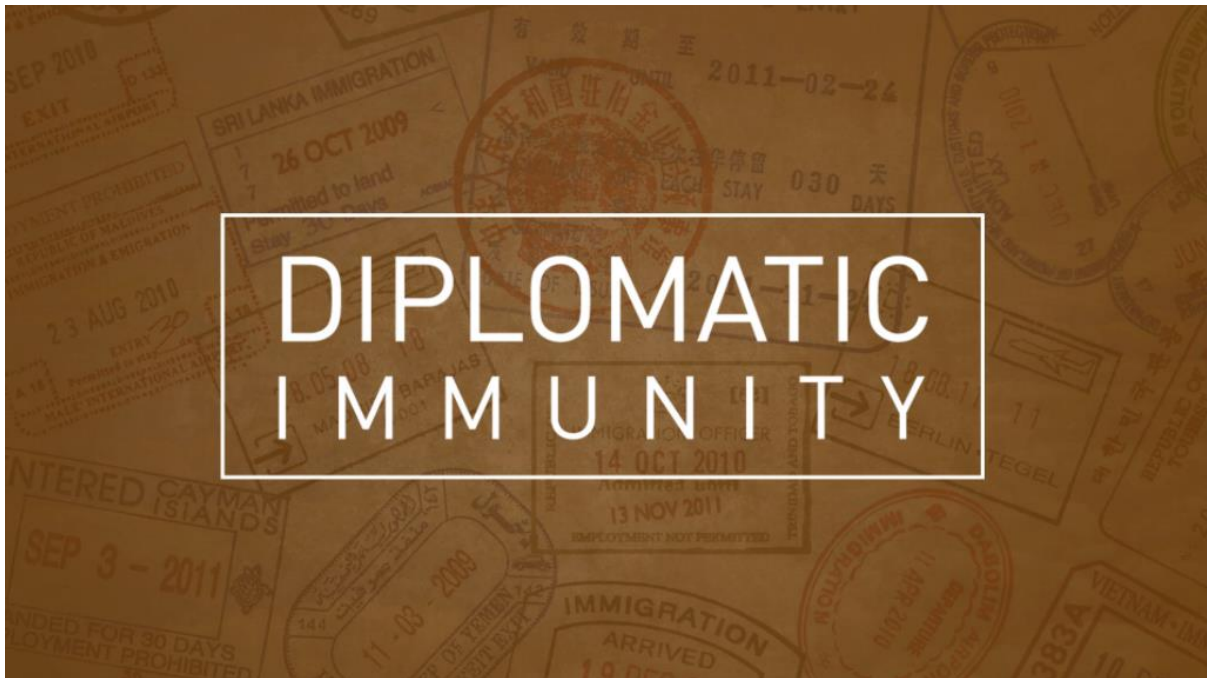

PIA NEWS FORTNIGHTLY

The official newsletter of Pakistanis In Australia Inc.



Dear all,

The most important news last week was the community outrage in response to the ABC Four corners report. As social media turns into moral police, there were so many perspectives that truth got hidden somewhere. We did turn off the comment on our social media as there are clearly no boundaries when members are angry which is unacceptable and does not justify use of abusive and offensive vocabulary. This is an issue that Foreign service of Pakistan and Overseas Employment Agency of Pakistan need to deal as the priority. At the same time Commonwealth of Australia needs to play its role. **Pakistanis in Australia Inc. supports all the recommendations proposed in the report entitled *Hidden in plain sight: an inquiry into establishing a modern slavery act*, that was tabled in the parliament in December 2017.** There is a separate section for diplomatic officials, ref: 7.111 – 7.117 page 210 – 212 which reads as follows;

Diplomatic officials

7.111 During its visit to the UK in April/May 2017, a delegation from the Committee heard that in the UK there is a particular problem of domestic workers employed by diplomatic missions being subject to modern slavery. The Committee heard that law enforcement officials are limited in their ability to investigate such cases and victims have limited access to support due to the diplomatic immunities granted to diplomatic staff and

missions.

7.112 The Committee heard that there have been incidences in Australia of domestic workers in diplomatic missions being subject to forced labour who have faced similar challenges. Ms Heather Moore from the Salvation Army Freedom Partnership told the Committee:

The Salvation Army safe house has assisted many domestic workers who have escaped from embassies. The main concern there is that all of the onus to escape, all of the onus to get away, is on the victim himself or herself—and there have been male victims in this type of exploitation. Because of the rules around entering diplomatic residences, it is impossible for the AFP to go in ... It is difficult for most victims to get out of these situations. It is even more difficult for this group, because there is nothing that requires them, obligates them or enables them to leave the premises once they are on the premises.¹

7.113 Representatives from the Australian Government noted that any suspected victim of trafficking, including those in diplomatic missions, can access the Support for Trafficked People Program. However, law enforcement officers must respect diplomatic immunities granted to diplomatic staff and missions in Australia:

... the Australian Government is required to respect the diplomatic privileges and immunities accorded to foreign diplomatic staff and foreign missions in Australia. This can include immunity from Australia's criminal jurisdiction for acts performed in both personal and professional capacities. Foreign diplomatic missions and their documents are also inviolable. This means that where an alleged victim or offender enjoys diplomatic immunity, the Australian Government may be unable to progress a criminal investigation unless the sending State agrees to waive immunity.²

7.114 Representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) told the Committee that private domestic workers in diplomatic missions have been identified as a vulnerable group and that the Australian Government has undertaken a series of initiatives to raise awareness among the diplomatic and consular corps about Australia's employment laws and minimum working conditions. Ms Lyndall Sachs, Chief of Protocol, told the Committee that these initiatives include:

- establishing a working group to develop a range of measures to protect private domestic workers;
- preparing a suite of awareness-raising materials for private domestic workers, foreign diplomatic and consular officials, immigration and other frontline officers;
- reviewing the clarity of the protocol guidelines 'to remind the diplomatic community of what the entitlements and rights are of domestic workers here in Australia';
- introducing a declaration for employers that states the employer will employ the private domestic worker in accordance with Australian employment conditions;
- implementing a requirement for a pre-departure interview for all domestic workers who are proposing to come into Australia;
- introducing annual renewal of ID cards, which gives DFAT officials an opportunity to discuss ongoing working conditions with private domestic workers; and

¹ Ms Heather Moore, National Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Salvation Army Freedom Partnership, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 2 August 2017, pp 41–42.

² Australian Government, *Responses to Questions on Notice*, 11 August 2017, p. 3.

- holding an annual briefing with the diplomatic corps and consular corps on their obligations as employers of private domestic workers, involving WorkSafe Australia and the FWO.³

7.115 Ms Sachs told the Committee that when DFAT does become aware of alleged mistreatment, the department's role:

... is that we can act as a mediator between the foreign mission or official and the private domestic worker. For example, if there is an issue involving disputed wages, we can place bans on individual officials or foreign missions preventing them from employing further domestic workers. We're also working with NGOs to provide assistance to private domestic workers, as well. In the most serious cases, we can seek the removal of the offending official, as well. As you can see, we're taking this matter very seriously. We acknowledge it is a vulnerable group. We're keen to put in as many protections as possible.⁴

Committee view

7.116 The Committee acknowledges that domestic workers in foreign missions in Australia may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

7.117 The Committee welcomes the proactive approach DFAT has taken to addressing the possible exploitation of domestic workers in foreign missions in Australia. The Committee considers that these measures will assist in increasing awareness of Australian employment law among the diplomatic corps and provide more avenues for foreign domestic workers to report cases of exploitation.

At the same time we also acknowledge that there are instances where the “vulnerable victims” have also exploited the system and the transparency is required. In the same case while there is one section constantly criticising the High Commission of Pakistan, the other section was abusing the “victim” and news were circulated on media about his brother in Malaysia and the photographs of his accommodation.

One thing that as community members, we need to be mindful of is to keep our eyes open and offer help if required. While this was an incident that got everyone talking and commenting, there are numerous instances where community has observed mistreatment at homes in the hands of someone they know and prefer to remain silent. Silence is never the option and your help and support, how little it may be can go a long way so Speak Up.

³ Ms Lyndall Sachs, Chief of Protocol, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 19 October 2017, p. 5

⁴ Ms Lyndall Sachs, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 19 October 2017, p. 5

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS MEDIA SKILLS TRAINING WORKSHOP

Several nominations were received from members were received at a very short notice. Ms. Kehkashan and Ms. Natasha De Sousa have been nominated because of their involvement with our Group and support for members. I hope that we also have a succession plan with these ladies in place for Pakistanis In Australia as a group.

STUDY PERTH



In collaboration with city of Perth, an exciting event is planned by the Study Perth for international students and is a great way to connect with each other specially for those who have just started the studies in Perth. We also had a chance to attend an event arranged by the Study Perth Group and to understand how this organisation works and the support available to international students. MATEINOZ is one group that offers a range of services and if you know of an international student in Perth, please do recommend to download the app and interact with the friends who are ready to offer help.



MELBOURNE CONSULATE IS **NOT** ACTIVE

Consular Services facilities are not available in Melbourne as yet.

UPDATE ON GRANTS

The meeting was postponed with the WA Police and will be rescheduled. We have also submitted another grant application to have some interstate guests this year for our annual literary evening "Matters of the Heart".

MEANWHILE ON FACEBOOK

We have just crossed 11, 000 mark and very pleased with this achievement of an open group with meaningful interactions rather than unnecessary posts. There were more than 10 jobs posted last week, 5 accommodation offers and the most beneficial was the tips provided by members to apply for jobs. Will try to compile them as one document for next issue.

PAKISTAN DAY

We will be organising an event for 23rd March Insha Allah, however need a bit of planning. Earlier the High Commission of Pakistan has requested us to bring the event forward as the Commission has funded a mega event in Perth but now it has been postponed so we will be deciding soon as to what we can do in the short time frame.

EIDUL FITR EVENT

Is planned for 17th June and will keep you posted but do book your diaries now. We will try to launch our annual report at the same time with the Annual General Meeting if at all possible.

KEY CHANGES IN AUSTRALIAN WORKING VISAS FROM MARCH 2018:

- **March 2018 - TSS:** introducing the TSS visa, with new requirements, including but not limited to:
 - a requirement for visa applicants to have at least two years' work experience in their skilled occupation
 - mandatory labour market testing, unless an international trade obligation applies,
 - capacity for only one onshore visa renewal under the Short-Term stream
 - capacity for visa renewal onshore and permanent residence eligibility after three years under the Medium-Term stream
 - a non-discriminatory workforce test to ensure employers are not actively discriminating against Australian workers
 - a requirement to pay a contribution to the Skilling Australians Fund (subject to legislation passing).
- **March 2018 - Permanent:** tightening eligibility requirements for employer sponsored permanent skilled visas, including but not limited to:
 - tightened English language requirements
 - a requirement for visa applicants to have at least three years' work experience
 - applicants must be under the maximum age requirement of 45 at the time of application, (unless exemptions apply)
 - employers must pay the Australian market salary rate and meet the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT)²
 - a requirement to pay a contribution to the Skilling Australians Fund (subject to legislation passing)

Reference <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/work/457-abolition-replacement>

Acknowledgment: Rehan A Alavi of SBS

IN MELBOURNE:



Tayyar hojayan for amazing food

Pakistan Welfare Organisation in Australia

Bringing you the

HALAL FOOD CARNIVAL

**On Sunday 25 March 2018,
01:00pm to 06:00pm**

Venue: Epping Memorial Hall

Address: 827 High Street, Epping VIC 3076

Celebrate Pakistan Day with varieties of Exotic Food, Cultural Shows, Neelam Ghar, Massive Prizes, Market Stalls, Kids Rides, Face Painting, Pony Rides, Meet Manny the Wizard, Drama, Comedy, Games, Suspense & Much Much More...!

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