

JOBS — SKILLED MIGRATION LIST

1162. Hon CHARLES SMITH to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the commonwealth Department of Jobs and Small Business “Historical list of skill shortages in Australia” report, which states that none of the top four occupations listed—namely, accountants, software engineers, registered nurses and developer programmers—has been in shortage over the four years to 2017.

- (1) Why are the above occupations listed on the graduate occupation list, with eligibility for permanent migration, if there is no skill shortage?
- (2) Does the government concede there is no evidence of widespread skill shortage in WA, based on weakness in wages growth, as released this month by the Australian Bureau of Statistics?
- (3) Does the government now concede that its skilled visa program is a giant fraud and is actually about lowering labour costs for employers by crushing wages and feeding the growth lobby more consumers?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

It is a good thing there is no pejorative language in that question! I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The purpose of the graduate stream of the state-nominated migration program is to support the growth of the international education sector in Western Australia by providing a small number of the best and brightest international university graduates with a pathway to skilled migration under the existing state-nominated migration program. The graduate occupation list does not indicate occupations for which there is a shortage of Western Australian workers, but rather provides a range of occupations to attract the best and the brightest to Western Australia. This supports the McGowan government’s plan to create a more vibrant and diversified economy with a broader range of industries and jobs.
- (2) According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the wage price index for Western Australia increased by 1.6 per cent in the year to September 2018, which is lower than the national wages growth rate. This is an aggregate measure of wages growth for the whole of Western Australia and there may be pockets of market-driven wages growth for certain occupations or specialisations.
- (3) No. The program is capped, which will minimise any impact on the employment or wages of residents.