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## **Why the Skill Select System needs to be overhauled**

The Skill Select system was introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 for the points tested (189, 190 and 489) visas. There have been a number of issues that DIBP urgently need to address to make it a fairer more reliable model

DIBP are apparently looking at improvements to the Skill Select system and the following 4 issues need to be addressed as a priority.

### **Double invite disaster**

The occupations of Accountant and Auditor have suffered from this phenomenon this year. In short many EOI applicants are eligible for a skills assessment and similar points for both Accountant and Auditor occupations. As a result, given the long waiting time, people are lodging MULTIPLE Expression of Interests in these two occupations to improve their chances of getting an EOI invitation for the 189 visa. (A similar scenario has played out with some of the IT occupations).

With Auditors receiving invitations generally several months before Accountants, these people are very happy to receive their invitation as an Auditor first. The problem is there is no incentive to remove their (usually) unrequired EOI as an Accountant. They may well want that to remain in case their points claims for Auditor don't work for whatever reason. However most will not take up the Accountant invitation when it finally does arrive several months later.

If they don't take it up, it sits dormant for the required 60 days. In the meantime the EOI cut off date for Accountant will progress forward. Then after the 60 days this declined EOI becomes active again and will receive a second invitation which has the effect of sending the cut off date for the EOIs at that point level "backwards" to the date when that EOI was first at that points level. Worse it means that a person has been invited once for an Auditor (which is accepted) and then twice more for Accountants (both declined as not needed). And so one person gets 3 invitations.

The quota for Accountants this year has been just 2500 and this means that 2 invitations are already wasted and do NOT get replaced. This has cost hundreds of places from what is already a very small Occupational Ceiling.

### **EOI Effect date, happy birthday !**

Most of the criteria to accept a 189 invitation has to be met at the time of EOI invitation. This means that you need an approved skills assessment at the time you accept the EOI, but not when you first lodge the EOI.

It is possible to change your occupation in the EOI system prior to accepting an invitation, and as long as you don't change your points the EOI effect date should remain the same.

So you can be waiting for an invitation for Accountant at 70 points, see that Auditor is moving quicker (partly because of the double invite mess) and obtain a new skills assessment as an Auditor, then CHANGE your occupation on that EOI to Auditor. As your points have not changed the EOI "effect date" (according to Skill Select policy material) should not change. And it doesn't change UNLESS you have a birthday sometime from when you reached 70 points (the current invitation cut off score) and the present time.

Even if this birthday does not change the points total, the EOI effect date changes to your birthday. We expect this is a fault in the algorithm as the Skill select system is programmed to recheck your points for age on every birthday. But if there are no change to your age points it should leave the "effect" date where it is. It DOESN'T !

So if you were waiting there with an EOI at 70 points for December 2016 as Accountant, changed your occupation to Auditor on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 at the same score but had your 28<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Skill Select system makes your effective date 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Tragic !

We have seen two people so far change their occupations successfully and get an earlier invite as they had not had birthdays. But we have seen at least two changes to EOIs where birthdays were recent and it has wrongly changed the "effect" date for those EOIs.

Further and even more unfair we have seen two recent EOIs where people were waiting for invitations in Pro rata occupations, did NOT change their occupations and yet the Skill select system also updated their "effect" date to their most recent birthday. Again when there was no change in age points. We have advised these people to email the skill select helpdesk to request their "effective date" be amended back to the correct date.

## **Kick in the guts after 2 years**

An EOI has a life of just 2 years. This was probably a reasonable period when the Skill Select system was introduced back in 2012. But now with the waiting times for Accountant and some IT occupations expected to be well over 12 months the two year life is very unfair.

There will be thousands of highly skilled EOI applicants in the pro rata occupations who will be patiently waiting for their ever elusive invitation date and shortly they are going to face their worst nightmare. Their precious place in the queue will simply disappear as their EOI will be erased after two years. They will have to lodge a new EOI and go to the BACK of the queue and all those other people will go in front of them.

It is going to be heartbreaking for many.

## **Pro Rata kills the 489s and overall skilled program**

DIBP had a target of 43,990 invitations for 189 visas for this program year. The Pro Rata restrictions account for Occupational ceilings totalling 16,022 of these places. Unfortunately for DIBP most of the available eligible applicants are in this group of Pro Rata occupations.

As a result DIBP look like falling MORE than 10,000 short of their target in terms of invitations for the 189.

Similarly the 489 relative sponsored program has been hammered by the Pro rata policy. DIBP continually announce a maximum number of invitations each round that is nowhere near being met. Last round it was 200 again and just 25 people were eligible at the minimum 60 points. There were hundreds more available in Pro rata occupations, but DIBP policy is to not invite any 489 Pro Rata EOIs if there are 189s still without an invite. And there are thousands in the long 189 queue.

Two targets are not being met related to the overall Skilled Migration program because of these Pro Rata restrictions.

