



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Migration Amendment (Temporary  
Sponsored Visas) Bill 2013**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 26 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Wednesday, 26 June 2013	<b>Source</b> House
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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Katter, Bob, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

**Mr KATTER** (Kennedy) (17:39): by leave—I move amendments (2) to (4), as circulated in my name, together:

(2) Schedule 2, item 1, page 5 (line 7), omit "or 140GBC".

(3) Schedule 2, item 1, page 5 (lines 12 to 15), omit "Section 140GBC provides for exemptions from the labour market testing condition to apply in relation to the required skill level and occupation for a nominated position.".

(4) Schedule 2, item 2, page 8 (line 22) to page 9 (line 28), omit section 140GBC.

The purpose of these amendments is to extend the labour market testing exception for all skilled workers, doctors and anyone with a degree. I do not wish to take up the time of the House extensively on these issues and will not repeat what I have said in a number of speeches in this place.

I live in my home town of Charters Towers—I feel very embarrassed with the great congratulations going on with the member for New England. Most certainly it is the passing of an era. But my home town is a good example; we have lost 1,500 jobs with the closure of mines there. We were looking forward to having numerous jobs in the Galilee Basin coalfields, but the operators there are continuously asserting that they will man these mines with fly-ins from overseas. Even if they are not saying it, that is the way I think it will end up. Those 1,500 people have been left with homes they cannot sell, because prices for homes are down in Charters Towers. They cannot get jobs or starts anywhere. Companies operating out west say you have to go and live in Townsville. In Townsville, again, many people come loose from the Army every year. They are desperate to get starts in the mines and, once again, they cannot get starts in the mines. The copper stream in Mount Isa is arguably partly closing—maybe even totally closing—so the people of Mount Isa and Cloncurry, my homeland, are also desperately short of jobs. We do not want to see these jobs taken by overseas people. We believe that bringing them in will undermine our pay and conditions in Australia and we simply will not have the jobs to go to.

Nearly 200,000 migrants come into Australia a year, and some 1.3 million or 1.4 million people are seeking full-time employment. There is an inadequate pool there that can provide jobs that will enable us to go on as we have in the last hundred years in Australia: providing our own workforce in these areas. If people say to us, 'We brought large numbers from overseas,' that is not true compared with what we are doing now. People from Australia could get starts in the mines. I got my first start there. There were a lot of what we then called New Australians working in the mines. There were an awful lot of First Australians working in the mines as well. For a lot of my First Australian brothers, in a very real sense they will not be able to get the golden opportunities that were available to us when I was a young person, because the new jobs are being taken by these contractors.

I think there are four steel fabricators in Cloncurry, my home town, and one does a lot of fly-in. They have all lost their contracts at Cloncurry, and those positions have been taken by one company employing section 457 workers. So I am not talking about something that is unreal to me; I am talking about an issue that is immediate and real. Again I praise Andrew Forrest in Western Australia, who has trained up nearly 2,000 First Australians over the last 10 or 15 years; 400 or 500 are still employed in his mines as we talk, and many have gone off to jobs elsewhere, but they had a start in life which he afforded them. If you say we cannot get people, there would be at least 40,000 or 50,000 people of First Australian descent across the top of Australia who would give their eye teeth to get a start and have a job in the mines. So I commend the amendments to the House. I have broken them into two. The first one is to extend labour market testing exception for all skilled workers. I move that amendment first.