# Council commends the suggestions made in regard to Immigration numbers.

**MEDIA RELEASE**

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA commended some of the discussion currently occurring in respect of Australia’s immigration program. Suresh Rajan, President of the Council said “The comments coming from former senior Public Servants and Former Heads of the relevant Federal Government departments, Martin Parkinson and Peter Shergold have been extremely illuminating and worthy of commendation. Both of these learned gentlemen have called on the Federal Government to seriously consider the careful planning of an Immigration program that targets particular groups and urges the expansion of the numbers that we can comfortably accommodate here in Australia. We clearly endorse those comments. The positive economic impact of Immigration to this country over the last 200+ years since colonisation has been well documented”.

Professor Shergold, who ran the department in the 2000’s, is quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald today as follows: "At first blush you think probably, if we're going to bring in new migrants, we should focus on the skills we need," he told *The Sun-Herald* and *The Sunday Age*.

"But it may well be that the best thing to do as we start to open up is to allow family reunion to support those migrants who have already made Australia home.

"It isn't just skills. We also need to consider the needs of those who are already here to have their families join them." Professor Shergold, now chancellor of Western Sydney University, also urged the government to offer a "clear pathway" to permanent residency for temporary migrants who are already in Australia. "That should be a priority," he said.

Mr Martin Parkinson, who ran the department between 2016 and 2019 and is now chancellor of Macquarie University, urged the government to "double down" on skilled migration after the crisis. "You really try and go for broke on the skills side," he said. "We've got an opportunity to reorient the program even more than it is now to getting highly skilled migrants who can help drive economic growth and innovation and agility.

"But it really needs to be skills that are going to be important for the jobs of the future. You really want to think about these things not so much as where job vacancies are but where job vacancies will likely be."

“Irrespective of the fact that these two learned gentlemen have taken very different perspectives they have come to the same conclusion – that this is the time to increase our Immigration numbers so as to kick start the moribund economy. And Prof Shergold does caution that we need to cater for the temporary migrants that are already in the country and transition them to permanent residency. This is quite a contrast to the position taken by Labor Spokesperson Kristina Kenneally who called for a focus on Australian labour in our next program post pandemic revamp” said Suresh Rajan. ”We urge the government to take heed of the views of Shergold and Parkinson when undertaking their deliberations herein.”

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