

I am sending this submission as I have become aware of a situation involving a single mother, aged 34 years, living in the Philippines, having a 12 year old daughter who is an Australian Citizen by Descent. The Australian father has abandoned them, although he still provides financial support. The parents decided recently to send their daughter to Australia to live with family friends in Melbourne where she can receive a better education. She currently averages 93% in all her examinations from Grade 1 thru Grade 7.

It was thought the daughter could sponsor the mother for a Parent Visa (Sub Class 103) to join her in Australia, however on looking into the requirements, cost and queue time for this Visa, it has caused heartbreak and despair for both mother and daughter. For example, the wait period before the daughter can sponsor her mother is, to be a resident in Australia for 2 years and must be 18 years old. The Application Fee is \$2,370.00 with a further fee of \$3,870.00 payable at a later date. Time to allocate the Application to an Officer, 18 months, queue time 30 years or more. Total cost \$6,240.00, wait time more than 37 years and six months. By that time the daughter will be over 49 years old, the mother over 71 years old, if she lives that long. According to WHO in 2012, average life expectancy in the Philippines is 68.55 years.

It is noted the cap on Applications is 1500 this current year, meaning 45,000 people are in the queue ! And an Application cannot be made until the Sponsor, a 12 year old, has resided in Australia for 2 years and reaches 18 years of age.

There is of course the Contributory Parent Visa, (Sub Class 143) with no cap, Application Fee \$3,695.00 and a further fee payable of \$43,600 plus an Assurance of Support payment of \$10,000.00. This is a Millionaire's Visa !!

Realistically, how can ordinary people afford to pay these exorbitant fees ? Is this a humane situation ? Where is the compassion. A 12 year old separated from her mother during the formative years of her life. These outrageous fees are only to prop up the Budget. Surely other measures can be found rather than breaking the hearts of ordinary families. China's slowing economic growth might affect our economy but should not be a reason for depriving families of being together. This mother is more than willing to call Australia home, join the workforce and contribute to the economy and community. Mother and daughter just want to be together, which is completely natural. There's no love more precious and rare than the love a mother and daughter share.

Of course you might say "Why didn't the daughter stay in the Philippines" The reason being it is a third world country, graft and corruption are rife, schooling is of poor quality and the future of young people with good education is limited. The concern now is whether she can keep up her excellent school results because of her fretting for her mother.

I lived in the Philippines for almost 20 years and was a Warden for the Australian Embassy for the Province in which I resided, so I am fully aware of the overall situation in that Country.

My inquiries reveal that most Parent Visa Applications are sponsored by adult children who are married to Australian citizens and live in Australia as Permanent Residents or Citizens. These Applicants should have no priority over Australian children and their parents, regardless of queue position or date on which Applications were lodged. I therefore suggest a Tier system.

Visa Comparisons between Australia and USA. Processing time and Cost:

Details:	Australia:	USA:
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Sub Class 103 (Parent) Cost	\$3870.00 (1)	
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	\$2065.00 (2)	
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Processing time: minimum	33 + years.	
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Sub Class 143 (Contributory Parent)

First payment:	\$ 3695.00	
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Second Payment:	\$43600.00	
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Processing time: minimum	2 years.	
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IR5 and I-130 (Parent)		\$745.00
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(U.S.) (I-130 \$420.00, IR5 \$325.00)		
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Processing time:	3 to 8 months.	
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IR meaning Immediate Relative.

Information taken from:

<https://www.border.gov.au/>

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Our cousins across the Tasman have a Parent's Visa in 2 Tiers. Both require an Expression of Interest Form to be lodge, cost NZ\$420.00 and the Application fee for Tiers 1 and 2 varies between NZ\$930.00 and NZ\$1,600.00. Tier 1 has a wait period of approx.. 1 year and Tier 2 up to 7 years.

My suggestions are:

Parent Visas – Affordable, not more than \$1,000.00 in total, Application Fee with response time 3 to 6 months maximum

In addition to the above, priority be given to parent/s of young children under 18 years of age, who are Australian Citizens residing in Australia. This can be achieved by following the New Zealand example with Tier 1 for mothers/parents of Australian children under 18 years, low Application fee and fast resolution, with no financial penalty. Tier 2 for the remainder.

Bonds: The requirement for a Bond payable to the Federal Government be discontinued. The bond is only to re-imburse the Government for costs incurred by the Applicant at Centrelink or with Medicare. Simple solution, Centrelink be instructed no welfare for these Applicants until after 2 years in residence. Applicants be required to take out private health insurance with Medibank or Bupa, solving the Medicare problem.

Other Benefits: Access to Centrelink and Medicare benefits be given after 2 years.

Contributory Parent Visa: This Visa be discontinued. It's directed towards millionaires..

A Government statement suggests \$373.6million will be raised by these unreasonable fee increases for Parent Visas. That's depending on the present rate of Applications being lodged and maintained this financial year. I dispute that. If ordinary people can't afford the fees, Application numbers must inevitably fall along with revenue. I am aware the Budget needs urgent repair, but please not at the expense of families and young children.

It is also interesting to note that fees paid to the Department of Immigration for processing visa applications are not refunded if the application is unsuccessful and as we know they are terribly expensive.

Our Government is keen to allow 12,000 Syrian refugees or more enter the country, but disregards families the right to be together. There are enormous problems now in Europe and England with terrorists being concealed with genuine refugees entering Europe and Australia is wide open to great risk. The other concern is the Muslims taking over other Countries, setting up their own areas in cities, building many Mosques, introducing Sharia Law, detailed information can be obtained thru Google. Holland, France and England are examples.

The one thing that sets Australia apart from almost any other Nation on Earth is the Aussie spirit. It can be seen as a she'll be right mate attitude that suggests apathy; or she'll be right mate because we will take care of it.

I am hoping that the Aussie "She'll be right mate" translates to "don't worry, we will take care of it" and rise up and say that this is our country. Many of us came from convict backgrounds, sent in to exile for stealing a coat or a loaf of bread or a silver spoon.

Some came for murder and robbery or prostitution. Tough people. Many came from China to work on the Gold Fields. Some came from Italy to work on the Snowy Mountain scheme. Some came from Hungary during the Revolution. Some came from Vietnam during the Vietnam War. But they came for a chance to work and start a new life. And they worked hard. The Greeks, Italians, Vietnamese, Chinese and so many more that it would be impossible to name. There were no hand outs, no privileges offered. These people were given a chance to start a new life, in Australia, to become Australians.

And Australians they became.

They learned English and embraced our country while offering the gift of their food and culture and music.

We accepted that gift and sat together at the same table and laughed and drank their wine, ate their food, danced to their music and married and loved their people. As they did us.

I have spoken with friends from Hungarian, Italian etc. backgrounds and while they embrace and celebrate their roots, they consider themselves Australian.

The common denominator with this terrible situation that we find ourselves in today, is that our current immigrant population do not want to embrace our culture but to destroy it.

They do not want to learn our language, but to annihilate it.

They do not want to work but to get us to work for them.

This information is readily available on Google.

I trust my submission on Parent Visas has some merit and can be recommended to Government for their consideration.

Regards,

Ken Duncan.