Do Your Employees Have a Valid Visa to Work in Australia?

Local councils and business owners in local communities across Tasmania are being encouraged to check a person’s work entitlements to ensure they have a visa that allows them to work in Australia.

You can check work entitlements through Internet and faxback services provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, has said, “Checking work entitlements make good business sense. The last thing a business owner wants is to lose a worker because they do not have a valid visa to work in Australia.”

If you are convicted of these offences, you could face fines of up to $13,200 and two years’ imprisonment per illegal worker hired. Companies face fines of up to $66,000 per illegal worker. You may also come under the scrutiny of other government agencies, such as the Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink, that work with DIAC to reduce the incidence of illegal work.

To confirm a job applicant’s Australian citizenship you would need to witness any of the following documents - an Australian Birth Certificate, an Australian passport, citizenship certificate or certificate of evidence of Australian citizenship. Experience shows that birth certificates are the most commonly held document from this group, but note that for those job applicants born after 20 August 1986, their birth certificate should show that at least one parent was born in Australia.

It is easy to check the work entitlements of a prospective employee who is not an Australian citizen. If you have internet access, you can check their work entitlements through DIAC’s Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) website service. VEVO is a free service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, enabling you to determine whether someone has an entitlement to work within a matter of seconds.

Finding the right people remains a major challenge for Local Government in Tasmania. Key executive appointments, particularly at general manager level, are among the most important decisions any council can make and a vital component in achieving business outcomes.

Attracting and retaining leaders with the specialised knowledge and experience to lead Local Government is critical, especially while issues at the top of the agenda include financial stability, water and sewerage reform and resource sharing. These types of issues require management of significant organisational change, particularly in relation to financial and human resources, and restructuring due to realignment of core business.

People remain an organisation’s most important asset. It is imperative to take a strategic and professional approach to the process of recruitment. Identifying the right executive or professional requires industry knowledge, well-established search and research systems, and relevant business networks. A comprehensive approach to candidate evaluation - including technical competencies, professionalism and organisational fit - will help to identify and secure the most suitable professional. A critical component in any senior appointment is thorough due diligence. Reference checks and forensic screening provide confidence in the final appointment.

Upon appointment of a general manager, it is imperative that the elected members and the general manager work together to agree on performance expectations, targets and goals - covering what should be done and how it should be done. In accordance with the general manager’s employment contract, a formalised performance review of the general manager would then be conducted annually.

The performance review process must be thorough and robust, ensuring that not only elected members have the opportunity to provide feedback and comments, but also the executive management team and any relevant peers of the general manager. The general manager would also complete a self-assessment.

The general manager’s performance review allows for a fair, balanced and honest structured conversation between the elected members and the general manager in relation to performance and achievement of the council’s strategic objectives. It is an opportunity to assess leadership behaviours and competencies, set objectives for the upcoming year, and provides an important opportunity to continue the ongoing dialogue between elected members and the general manager. Professional recruitment practices and a comprehensive performance review structure are critical stepping stones in securing and supporting a general manager striving to successfully lead and effect change at an important time in Local Government.

KPMG provides a range of financial, advisory and human resource services to local councils in Tasmania. To find out more, phone 6337 3737, or visit kpmg.com.au.

Do you want to inspire, energise, and connect more as a leader?

The Change Forum’s coaching clinics equip leaders with the conversational, relational and emotional skills to create constructive, connective work cultures and bring out the best in themselves and their teams. Coming to Hobart and Launceston this year:

- **Personal Mastery: Leading with Emotional Intelligence**: A critical competency for all capable leaders. Down-to-earth insights & practical tools to apply 7 key EI practices for energising your leadership and connecting better with the people you lead.
  - Hobart: April 21-22, Sept 24-25
  - Launceston: June 22-23, Nov 5-6

- **Emotional Intelligence at Work**: Positive feelings are pivotal for achievement, motivation, focus, optimism, joy, purpose, performance. This lively seminar shows staff what EI is, why it matters for good work and what they can do to create a more positive culture at work.
  - Hobart: June 24; Nov 2
  - Launceston: April 20; July 17

- **Dealing with Difficult Discussions**: They’re something every leader has to handle. This 2-day clinic equips you with an ‘easy-to-use’ set of tools and steps to convert destructive confrontation into constructive conversations.
  - Hobart: May 19-20; Nov 3-4
  - Launceston: July 15-16; Sept 28-29

- **Compassionate Leadership**: Building on our Leading with EI program, this advanced clinic shows you how to lift your level of EI by mindfully cultivating compassion, empathy, connectivity and resonance.
  - Hobart: August 3-4
  - Launceston: August 5-6

- **Learning to Lead: Laying Foundations for Leadership**: Fast-tracks new and emerging leaders through the fundamentals they need to really lead: vision-setting, culture-creating, relationship-managing and change-making.
  - Hobart: Sept 30-Oct 1

The Change Forum’s programs translate theory and concepts into practical, down-to-earth tools and techniques to apply for yourself and with others. All clinics include comprehensive self-coaching guides/toolkits to support workplace applications and your ongoing learning back at work.

For full program profiles and course registration go to www.thechangeforum.com, CALL 0429 687 591 or e-mail: leadership.clinics@thechangeforum.com. Early bird, group, school & NFP discounts available.

…And if dates don’t suit, why not call us to talk over arranging an IN-HOUSE clinic for your team?

**BILL CROPPER** – Director  •  **LEIGH BENNETT** – Associate  •  www.thechangeforum.com
The single most important element of building strong communications is knowing who you are speaking to. This applies from the most basic situation of knowing and acknowledging an individual’s name, to the more complex, such as knowing and acknowledging stakeholders on a specific issue.

At that basic level, knowing names and using them correctly builds a sense of respect, laying the groundwork for open and honest discussion. It also promotes one-on-one conversation, which is the most effective form of communication with stakeholders. For council representatives, this means mastering the skill of remembering names as well as getting to know ratepayers and your community in a wider context.

There are many people, particularly in the political sphere, who appear to have a ‘knack’ for remembering names. This ability makes them ‘charming’ and able to enter easily into conversations with a wide range of people. Names are key to building relationships and therefore a cornerstone of work as a Local Government representative or, indeed, a public relations consultant.

There are dozens of techniques to help executives and others remember names. They all start with the idea that you must first make a commitment to remembering names and mentally noting them when you are introduced to a person. The next step is confirmation through use and repetition of the name to the person in conversation. This allows for the name to settle in your mind, become associated with a specific topic and also gives the person the opportunity to correct you if you’ve somehow mispronounced, or misheard their name in the first instance. Associating the name with a famous person, or rhyming word may also assist. Some people even imagine the person’s name stamped on their forehead. Ensure that you make note of new acquaintances in a database, or other list, as soon as you return to your office.

Names may seem a trivial concern in some ways, but being able to speak to someone at a personal level, and recognising their needs, is the basis of all good communications and the cornerstone of trusting relationships.

At that more general level of engagement, when you may wish to deliver potentially unwanted news, such as a rise in rates, you are better off knowing who you are speaking to and addressing the specific concerns of that individual or group, than to deliver the same generic messages to everyone.

The situation is expanded but the principal is the same - giving someone a name acknowledges that they exist and are deserving of attention.

Local Government workers and elected members are in the box seat as far as their ability to get to know their constituency, its various characters and issues of concern. This is because you have the distinct advantage of being able to truly reach your target audiences through effective communications. This is also true from a public relations perspective, as the ideal situation for achieving successful communications is one-on-one discussion. Although this is rarely possible, both logistically and in the context of budgets and time constraints, but it is the right starting place for building an effective communications strategy that will truly talk to people and allow you to get to know them.

The most successful communications strategies take small steps back from this ideal but keep that goal in mind. Ask yourself, if I could speak to each constituent one-on-one and address them by name, what would I tell them? Using this principle as a starting point ensures your messages are genuine, and therefore believable, as well as clear, targeted and relevant to your audience. While not everybody is going to agree with what you say, they will at least understand that you have genuinely attempted to respond to their concerns and for this, in most cases, they will respect your view regardless of whether they agree with it.
It goes without saying that good governance is a key concern of all councils.

The functions and powers of councils, set out in section 20 of the Local Government Act, are as follows:

- To provide for the health, safety and welfare of the community;
- To represent and promote the interests of the community; and
- To provide for the peace, order and good government of the municipal area.

A council can only achieve these aims if it has a good relationship with its electors. Public trust and confidence in Local Government are of paramount importance. Two-way communication with the community, through prescribed formal activity but also in the day-to-day ‘rubbing of shoulders’, helps build trust. Maintaining trust comes with impartial and fair decision-making by both council staff and councillors.

The Local Government Act provides some direction on how to achieve these things. It requires each council to have a code of conduct and a customer service charter. Together, these set the ethical and service standards of a council. Taken seriously, they can help avoid complaints arising and, if complaints do arise, they ensure that these are handled properly. At their best, these documents promote strong communication and sound relations with the community.

The Act also sets high standards for councillor behaviour. It makes clear that failure to declare a pecuniary interest, unauthorised use of Council Arms, disclosure of confidential information, improper use of information, and misuse of office can lead to serious penalties for councillors. These activities can also ruin the reputation of councils and their decisions. Of course, the line between good and poor conduct is sometimes blurred.

All councillors, from time to time, are required to wear different ‘hats’, operating in regular employment on a day-to-day basis and, at other times, acting as a councillor, or as an unbiased planning authority. In any local community, and particularly in Tasmania’s small municipalities, it can be difficult to differentiate between those roles and to explain that separation to electors. Understanding the Local Government Act and the council’s code of conduct is a first step but, when in doubt, seeking independent legal advice may be the surest way forward.

Promoting good governance is an important part of the Stronger Councils, Better Services program, run by the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT). Already, a series of information sheets to guide council behaviour and activity has been prepared - visit www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/lgd/resources_for_councillors. In addition, the good governance team from LGD and LGAT is available to conduct seminars for your council or region on request and is now looking to identify the areas of greatest need for good governance training.
Now is the Time for Change

ANDREW REIMER
LG Performance Tasmania

Changes - the economy, recruiting talented staff, coordinating and allocating resources, water and sewerage infrastructure, legislation, resource planning, environmental health, sustainable development - the list for councils keeps growing. Managing that change is a key competency for all council general managers and directors.

The ones that succeed are the ones who prepare and invest in specific communication strategies. These strategies are real at every level: general managers and directors must communicate their visions and goals; middle managers must translate these new or revised goals and visions to staff; staff feelings and needs must be clear to the general managers and directors. This is what keeps the process of change moving. Without this real process, changes stall and new challenges result.

Of course, change focuses on the necessary details and challenges within and around key council issues. But what is your communications strategy for taking staff and community with you? Making change happen means staff need to be positively focused through the process. This requires key leadership and management practices. Communication builds participation and ownership, and is the foundation of leadership.

There are four types or “degrees” of change:

1. **Fine Tuning**: adjusting the fit in terms of teams, people, or systems;
2. **Incremental Adjustment**: modifying structures, strategies and systems in response to changing environments;
3. **Modular Transformation**: radical change focused on parts of an organisation - rather than the whole; and
4. **Corporate Transformation**: radical change in purpose, vision, and/or values requiring new planning and decision-making throughout the organisation.

Each degree of change requires key action steps by directors and council managers to manage the process of change.

Each of these steps needs to be clearly communicated to all involved. Where is the pressure coming from to change and why do we need to change? What ideas are proposed and which are we going to take on board? Positively implementing new ideas is underpinned with a reality check that we might need to modify, or adjust our approach. After adjustment, change is then concretised - the final adaptation draws the line in the sand and change has occurred.

Councils and organisations that effectively manage change focus on the three keys to success: sound preparation; clear communication; and cooperative participation with those involved, or those affected by the change. A council’s communications strategy for change considers the following:

- How will we consult and ensure collaboration at all levels affected?
- How will we create an open discussion and demonstrate management interest while really listening to issues, concerns and ideas?
- How will we gain everyone’s contribution (in their own way - “communication styles”)?
- How will we address the concerns that are raised by those affected?
- How will we properly resource (time, staff, budget, etc.) the team throughout the change process?
- How will we involve those that are affected by the change in the planning process?
- How will we ensure that management or the directors will make informed and timely decisions as required during the process?
- How will the leaders of this change demonstrate genuine enthusiasm to ensure the success of the outcome?

Addressing these issues will clarify who will do what and how they will approach it. This is the key to achieving positive outcomes. The technical, procedural and legislative aspects of change are important, yet success often resides in the communication strategy. It is often not what we need to do; but how we need to do it.

LG Performance Tasmania works with councils to maximise their success in change management, teamwork and communication. For further information, phone 6236 9055, or visit www.highperftraining.com.au.
Powerful Presentations

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Presentation is the vital skill of the noughties (00’s). Whether you are presenting to Council, pitching an idea to your boss, seeking a loan from the bank, or even telling a story for your kids, it’s all about presentation.

Those who learn this skill will succeed and those who don’t have a major uphill battle on their hands. It’s a bit like not being able to read and write, or use a computer, or ride a bike. Presentation is a basic skill everyone needs.

There are famous people that have been fantastic at presentation such as JFK, Al Gore, Adam Hills, Michael Palin, Churchill, Hitler and, my all time favourite, Alan Shaw, a character played by James Spader in the TV show Boston Legal. They all truly have the gift of the gab, the art of storytelling and a powerful skill. Look where some of them have ended up!

My husband introduced me to a short video by Garr Reynolds called Presentation Zen and another by Nancy Duarte called Slide-ology. They made me see that, as presenters, we have been brainwashed into producing lousy results. Nancy made this abundantly clear in a simple demonstration - she told “Little Red Riding Hood” with PowerPoint. Once you’ve seen this, your presentations will never be the same again.

PowerPoint encourages us to take our great story and turn it into dot points. Then we put the dot points up on the screen and read them out loud, slowly, to our audience. Strangely enough, our audience can read for themselves and once they’ve read the dot points and we’re still talking, they doze off. No doubt we’ve all experienced “death by PowerPoint” or other horror presentations. I sit through plenty of them. Instead of telling the story or getting their message across, the poor speaker reads a bunch of slides and we all sit there in silence, or play with our phones.

So the answer is to re-invent the art of storytelling - to get our message across with words and leave the slides to provide the visuals, using images or diagrams that support our message. Forget dot points and text - use them only on our screen (or notes) to prompt us. Keep the text away from the audience. Most laptops allow you to display different images on the laptop and projector screens. So your slides (with your images) go on the projector and your speaker notes (dot points) go on the laptop screen facing you - the teleprompter.

Be sure to select great images - pictures that support your story, set the mood, or reinforce your message. Graphs can be used to show what you are talking about but what you don’t want is a diagram so complicated, that you have to explain it. The visuals should support you, not take over. If you are talking about parks, a picture of an empty playground and a broken swing will say more about your topic than a chart full of figures on vandalism. Garr Reynolds calls it Presentation Zen because he strips the visuals down to basic pictures using a minimalist approach, leaving plenty of empty space.

The biggest change you can make is to learn your words, practice your talk and know your subject matter. Then speak naturally and don’t read it. Have your prompts on your screen and, if you have to use slides (not using slides IS a valid option), make them support your words, not be your words. Remember that your audience can read too.

The place for your facts, figures and diagrams is in the hand-outs that your audience takes away.

For further information, visit www.presentationzen.com. Search YouTube for “Garr Reynolds” or “Nancy Duarte” and there are several Google talks available free.