

To The Hon Lockwood Smith,

I am employed as an immigration officer with Immigration New Zealand. It is heartening to hear that the Government has requested an investigation into our former Deputy Secretary Mary Ann Thompson, the Pacific Division and "other" aspects of the Immigration Service. However I urge you to conduct a *much more far wide ranging investigation into the work practises of the Immigration Service as a whole.*

Within the branch I work in, I and my work colleagues are under enormous work pressures placed upon us by all our managers. There is an ingrained culture with the managers where they are more concerned about the volume of applications that staff can finalise than they are concerned about the risk that some overseas applicants pose to New Zealand. All the managers have little concern regarding the quality of the work the staff do, the managers are purely focused in the quantity of work done rather than quality and they place threatening pressure on staff. The managers are solely focussed on each individual staff members target. The target meaning work output.

Staff are stressed and some staff fear for their jobs if they do not meet their daily or monthly work targets. The managers place unreasonable work expectations on staff and either verbally or through emails will pressure staff to achieve higher work targets. *It is rumoured that our managers are on individual bonuses if they can get us to finalise as many applications as possible, however I am not sure how substantiated this is.*

Because it is far quicker and easier for staff to approve an application than it is to decline it, applicants from various high risk countries or dishonest applicants with high risk backgrounds are having their false jobs, false qualifications, false marriages all glossed over by immigration staff and getting their temporary permits *all approved*. It sounds crazy I know but I can assure you that it is true. The managers pressure the staff and say "risk manage it" just give all applicants a temporary 6 to 12 month permit. Because it is only a temporary permit it doesn't really matter. This is what is called "risk managed". Bearing in mind that there are numerous applicants who have presented blatantly false information or applicants from high risk countries who have all been issued with permits. These are people who should have been investigated, declined and removed from New Zealand.

We are approving the wrong type of people into New Zealand because the managers are more concerned about the *quantity* of work the staff produce than the quality. There is an endemic culture within this Immigration office where staff just approve virtually all temporary work permits with little thought or concern of checking the authenticity of documents, job offers, viability of businesses or relationships. Sure there is some discretion allowed within our work but the discretion that is bestowed on staff is used far too casually. The whole work culture and work processes are not only slack and casual but is *highly flawed*. These work practises are endorsed by all tiers of our branch management. I hope you agree that this is not how we should be issuing permits.

Staff from all levels within our office from managers to staff on the floor commonly refer to immigration applicants as "widgeits". These are potential immigrants to this country who are people with a face and families but are referred to as a derogatory "widgeit". This is the type of culture that exists in this office.

In my opinion there are managers from all tiers of the Immigration Service from all branches who should be questioned and disciplined for allowing and condoning these work practices and the work culture as a whole.

I recommend that any investigation should involve interviews with staff from all levels and not just "the management" so that your average member of staff like my self can also provide some realistic perspective into a review.

There are numerous scam applications and "set up" applications where dishonest applicants with false jobs and false relationships are all approved either temporary or residence permits because the immigration staff do not have the support from managers and are not given the time and resources to investigate because the culture and motivation is to approve, approve, approve applications rather than to investigate, decline, prosecute and deport. Currently due to high work loads in our Branch we are approving all temporary work permits. Never mind that the applicant has presented dodgy information, just approve them all in the interests of timeliness and good customer service.

Sure it is fine to approve legitimate applicants but it is morally wrong to approve all temporary work permits. Immigration officers dealing with residence permit applications are also under huge pressure from management that it is easier for them to approve than to investigate.

Staff are fearful of their managers knowing that if they do not meet their work targets they will be disciplined and eventually be dismissed for poor performance. Never mind if a staff member conducts a time consuming thorough investigation, quantity is viewed as better performance over a thorough quality investigation. I am sure you will agree with me that this is definitely not the way New Zealand's Immigration Department should be run. The need to investigate an application should be just as important if not more important than the number of approvals a staff member can complete.

I urge you to ask the Immigration management to re address their target driven mentality, take the pressure off the staff and focus on quality decisions and protect New Zealand's borders and approve the good and legitimate immigrants. © PLY

I apologise that I feel a need to remain anonymous and unable to identify the Branch where I work but I urge you to interview the managers and staff of as many Immigration New Zealand Branches as possible to find out for your self how New Zealand's immigration policies are just being flouted to the detriment of the integrity, security and fabric of New Zealand.

I have felt a need to speak out as these practises have been going on unchecked for far too long.

Yours sincerely

A concerned New Zealander and Immigration Officer.