



Programme Update From OMEGA CEO Justin Treagus

October 2010

Skilled immigrants have and always will be part of Auckland and New Zealand's landscape. It is our collective responsibility to find ways to productively integrate the creativity, skills, abilities and numerous other qualities that they offer our country.

OMEGA continues to focus its interventions on assisting skilled immigrants to find appropriate work, as this is probably the most essential building block for immigrants and their families as they establish their new lives. Without an income, it is impossible to settle and carve out a new identity in a new land.

Recently the focus at OMEGA has been to fully **establish the programmes and validate the model**; and in the main this has happened. Progress within the programmes has been underpinned by growth in three organisational areas: The governance of OMEGA moving from an initiative of The Committee for Auckland to an independent not-for-profit with its own Board of Governance; several new funding partners supporting the work; and new staff joining the team. Up front it needs to be said that the enthusiasm, involvement and financial support of OMEGA's **funding partners** has made the work possible. Partners include: ANZ, Auckland City Council, BNZ, Genesis Energy, Gen-i, New Zealand Post Group, State and Vodafone, and we extend a huge vote of thanks for the willingness of these organisations to 'walk the talk'.

OMEGA's flagship **Mentoring Programme** has gone from strength to strength and the results have been telling. Essentially OMEGA plays the role of 'match-maker'; facilitating a connection between a skilled immigrant and a business professional with a similar working history, qualifications or skills. Consequently, the primary programme measurement here is the number of mentoring matches between skilled immigrants and business professionals. Most mentoring relationships continue until either the mentee finds appropriate work, or until the sixteen week mentoring programme is completed.

Both mentees and mentors continue to report a high level of satisfaction with their participation in the mentoring relationship, and we are really encouraged by how the mentors are becoming 'skilled immigrant

change agents' as a result of their participation in the programme. The secondary measurement for success is how many mentees who have been mentored on the programme go on to find relevant work or direction that will enable this.

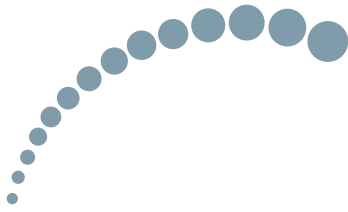


Our results to date from the Mentoring Programme are as follows:

- Since the start of OMEGA, **388 mentoring pairs** have been matched in a job specific Mentoring Programme.
- Approximately 80% of mentees who completed the programme have found appropriate work, whilst many others have achieved successful outcomes through the programme such as studying to attain the necessary qualifications.
- Mentees have procured jobs in an **array of industries and levels of seniority** including: project manager, IT manager, HR manager, lecturer, engineer, key account manager, environmental health specialist, associate director of operations, business analyst, programme manager, health and safety officer, social worker, product manager, consultant, director strategy and planning, sales and marketing manager, trainer, accountant and key account manager.
- The benefit to job successful mentees is estimated at a **combined accumulated annual salary of over \$9m**.
- Skilled immigrant applicants to the Mentoring Programme come from **57 countries** (30% of all the countries in the world), representing a huge diversity benefit for New Zealand's future workforce.



Opportunities for Migrant Employment
in Greater Auckland



- There have been over **306 volunteer mentors** since the start of the programme, of which 62 are currently mentoring, 211 have mentored via the programme at least once, and 66 have mentored more than one mentee.
- Of the mentors, **41.6% occupy a senior role** within their organisation.
- More than **80% of mentors** report that they are very satisfied overall with the Mentoring Programme, and that they are now more aware of the issues faced by skilled immigrants.
- More than 70% report that their involvement with the programme satisfied their learning needs as a mentor.
- Over **6000 mentoring hours** have been volunteered by business professionals representing an estimated contribution of \$600,000 from Auckland's business community.
- Over **108 Auckland organisations** are represented by these volunteer mentors on the Mentoring Programme.

Of the many barriers that skilled immigrants face when trying to enter the New Zealand labour market, perhaps the most obstructive and often cited is the need for kiwi experience. In other countries, organisations working with skilled immigrants have responded to this need for local experience by putting internships to use with good results. The combination of internships not being typical in our labour market, and the economic recession has necessitated a cautious approach with this strategy.

In response to this, the originally titled Internship Programme was repackaged towards the end of 2009 to become the **Talent Access Programme for Industry (Tap-In)**, and we remain confident that this intervention will pick up as the economic climate improves. Already this small change has yielded an increasing interest in the idea of employing a volunteer or intern for a short period of time. Tap-In provides workplace experience for skilled immigrants in their field of expertise, through three to six month paid internships, or volunteer terms of several weeks, and thereby also offers Auckland organisations a cost effective way of quickly accessing a pool of mature, experienced talent, without having to commit to employing staff over the longer term. There are examples of this working extremely well, and we're particularly pleased when our programmes complement each other: The case of a mentor setting up his mentee to provide fixed term work cover while he goes on

annual leave demonstrates that we're getting a number of things right, as does the number of mentors who have organised temporary work for their mentees within their own office.

We continue to work with The Maytree Foundation as the New Zealand partner to **Cities of Migration**. Cities of Migration is a compilation of good ideas that work in integrating skilled immigrants. OMEGA connects local practitioners working with immigrants, and then captures and disseminates their practical good ideas across the globe via the Cities of Migration networks. Our work will see us present at the first Cities of Migration Conference in the Hague as well as the Metropolis conference that same week later this year.

Our **Best Practice Forum** connects practitioners, and we are encouraged by their enthusiasm to contribute towards this collaborative effort. Building capacity for business to leverage the benefits of diversity across New Zealand will become an increasingly bigger component of our work, and I look forward to discussing this with you further.

We're also seeing some exciting results as we continue to develop our **public communications and brand awareness**. Skilled immigrants are proudly displaying their participation in OMEGA's programmes on their CVs, and even more encouraging is that employers are taking note when they see this. Highlights have been substantial media articles, including in the New Zealand Herald and New Zealand Management, and the overhaul of the website. Numbers of visitors to the site have gone from 200 in May 2008 to 1800 in March 2010. Another growing area is the OMEGA database of stakeholders which has over 950 members who receive regular updates on the work of the organisation and news pertaining to the issue of skilled immigrants in New Zealand.

Our work with government has resulted in OMEGA being appointed to the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy Leadership group, and we are looking forward to seeing tangible outcomes emerge as the Super City takes shape in November.

None of this would be possible without your support. In many ways OMEGA is facilitating the enthusiastic support and commitment of forward thinking leaders and individuals, we are most appreciative and for this we offer our most sincere thanks.