

Skill shortages will increase demand for staff who hold working visas, CareerOne Editor **Cara Jenkin** reports.

# Foreign workers gain foothold on a career

**E**MPLOYERS increasingly are looking overseas to find workers to fill job vacancies as a tight labour market makes it difficult to attract and retain staff.

Many workers who hold working visas, however, say they are finding it difficult to get a job, as employers shy away from international staff.

A perception that workers on temporary visas will not commit to the company long-term and the extra effort required to sponsor workers to come to Australia is preventing many companies from looking to overseas-trained staff to fill vacancies.

Employees need to be prepared to fit in with workplace culture and work hard to overcome challenges to be more employable.

For employers, hiring an employee who has a working visa can be as easy as checking their visa status to ensure everyone complies with the employment terms.

But that can become more complicated if an employer is sponsoring a worker, either before or after they arrive in Australia.

Deadline HR manager Catherine Appleton says employing staff who hold working visas is no different to other workers.

"We seek to employ the absolute best person for the job vacancy in terms of skill set, experience and culture fit with our business," she says.

"We have found this fit with people who happen to be in Australia on working visas and so have employed them accordingly." Employers who accept the culture of visa holders and em-



Muhammad Ali, a web developer from Bangladesh in Adelaide on a working visa, at Deadline with human resources manager Cat Appleton.

Picture: Mark Brake

## HIRING SKILL

- **Employers can:**
  - Accommodate cultural differences
  - Provide professional development
- **Employees can:**
  - Show a commitment to the company
  - Work on cultural challenges

brace it by understanding and accommodating religious and cultural beliefs can be rewarded with the employee's loyalty.

Offering professional development to help workers fit in and

build their skill base also can retain employees on a working visa and encourage them to move to a permanent visa if they start on temporary conditions.

Employees who show commitment to a business, in particular to not just stay in Australia but South Australia, can increase their chances of being employed.

Ms Appleton says Deadline has a culture of tolerance and respect towards all its employees, which helps create a close working environment. "As information of different cultures is shared among the team, awareness and understanding and many shared interests develop," she says.

Temporary working visa

holder, web developer Muhammad Ali, is from Bangladesh, where he studied a Masters of Computer Application.

In his search for work, he found some organisations only wanted to employ a permanent residency visa holder but advises employers that workers who initially work on temporary visas can become permanent employees.

"I have been in Australia for the past five months and I plan to apply for residency after one and a half years," he says.

He says people wanting to work on a working visa need to be able to cope with difference accents, as he says the Australian accent can be difficult to understand.