

Young guns shoot for easy work visas

Start-ups

Joanna Mather

Young entrepreneurs want the G20 countries to adopt a "start-up" visa regime to smooth the flow of talent around the world.

Canada introduced the world's first start-up visa last April. Would-be immigrants need to have the backing of a government-approved venture capital fund or angel investor group.

Sydney-based entrepreneur Jeremy Liddle, who started his first business, a juice bar, when he was 19, reckons the visas should be adopted across the G20.

"The barriers to trade for an entrepreneur are travel, getting onto work visas easily and hiring skilled labour," he says. "So relaxed visas on both of those fronts would be a big win for the start-up community."

Mr Liddle is the president of the G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance, which is meeting in Sydney this weekend. About 400 alliance members are in

Key points

Entrepreneur visas would smooth the flow of global talent around the world.

Professional alliance is working on ways to reduce youth unemployment.

town to work on a strategy to reduce global youth unemployment below 10 per cent by 2030.

Getting the conditions right for entrepreneurs to flourish will be at the heart of the strategy, which the alliance will take to the G20 leaders' meeting in Brisbane in November.

But can entrepreneurship really alleviate joblessness?

Matt Barrie, the founder of Freelancer.com, certainly thinks so. "Entrepreneurship is the solution for young people in Australia, and globally, who are struggling to find work," he said.



Sebastien Eckersley-Maslin, founder and CEO of BlueChilli; Jeremy Liddle, entrepreneur and president, G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance; Holly Ransom, 2014 Summit host, co-chair Y20; Aaron McNeilly, Sherpa G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance; and Matt Barrie, founder and CEO of Freelancer.com.

PHOTO: LOUISE KENNERLEY



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"Start-ups and SMEs account for well over half of all job opportunities in most G20 economies, including Australia, and deliver double the employment growth rate of large enterprises."

Freelancer.com is a job-outsourcing website where freelancers are able to bid for projects such as graphic design and programming.

Freelancer.com has enjoyed run-

away success and propelled Mr Barrie to number 192 on the BRW Rich List this year, with a fortune of \$255 million.

Aaron McNeilly is the sherpa for the G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance. He is encouraging the Australian government to push ahead with changes to employee share scheme laws.

Changes by the previous Labor government are a barrier to start-ups because employees get taxed on share options immediately, rather than when they are vested.

Mr McNeilly said it was crucial to foster a culture of innovation and

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experimentation. "I get frustrated that young people go to work and are annoyed and don't enjoy their jobs, when entrepreneurship provides you the opportunity to get up every morning and do what you love," he said.

"It's not just restricted to people starting their own businesses. It's the entrepreneurs in larger corporations that say, 'Hey, I've got the initiative; let me try an idea and I can help grow your bottom line as well.'"

International media reports that Canada has within the last few days accepted its first two applicants under the start-up visa program. Stanislav Korsei and Oleksandr Zadorozhnyi, formerly of Ukraine, are developing an application that allows companies to monitor social media for customer concerns. Once identified, complainants are given a direct phone number to call.

Mr Liddle said there was no reason why the start-up visa couldn't work at the multilateral level across the G20. For Australia, it would help stem the outflow of start-ups and encourage talent to move here.

"Restrictions within the 457 visa have made the life of tech start-ups difficult, particularly because Australia lacks the engineering talent, the coding talent," he said. "Being able to hire that talent in would allow the tech start-up world to grow faster."