



PACIFIC ISLANDS COUNCIL QLD INC

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Submission by the Pacific Islands Council of Qld to the inquiry on Migration Amendment (Australia's Engagement in the Pacific and Other Measures) Bill 2023, and the Migration (Visa Pre-application Process) Charge Bill 2023

Pacific Islands Council of Qld (PICQ) accepts the invitation to make a submission to the inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Australia's Engagement in the Pacific and Other Measures) Bill 2023 and Migration (Visa Pre-Application Process) Charge Bill 2023. This submission is made on behalf of the Queensland Pacific Diaspora particularly those who have supported Pacific Islands peoples living, working, and studying in Queensland.

The Pacific Islands Council of Qld represents the voice and views of Queensland based Pacific Island Nations' organisations and communities. For over a century, Pacific Islanders have been actively contributing to the Australian way of life. The desire to increase this involvement as well as improve the conditions of life for all Pacific communities living in Queensland, and more broadly, Australia, continues to grow.

Pacific Islands Council of Qld supports the Bills and agrees with the primary purpose of the Bills for the creation of a new visa class, Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV). The Bills will provide Permanent Residency opportunities for Pacific Islands people who have contributed to the Australian workforce and those from nations that are not eligible for the New Zealand Pacific Access Category program.

The Explanatory Memorandum outlines the Government's commitment to enable participation of relevant Pacific nations and Timor-Leste through an agreement. PICQ welcomes the move to identify relevant Pacific nations and Timor-Leste for PEV. It is important that the relevant Pacific nations be spelt out in the Bills to not create confusion.



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PICQ welcomes the amendment of the 1958 Migration Act to cater for the ballot process as outlined in the Explanatory Memorandum (page 2), *to allow the Minister to implement a visa pre-application process, involving random selection of eligible persons who will then be permitted to apply for a relevant visa*. The ballot (through an online system) also provides the unbiased granting of visas.

PICQ agrees to the pre process payment, as in page 11 Explanatory Memorandum Point 37: *A small charge for participation in a ballot is likely to be necessary in most ballots to ensure that those who register are genuine and have given serious consideration to their capacity to take up a relevant visa should they be successful in being selected in the ballot*. It is also crucial that a pre-process payment is included. We agree with the suggested amount mentioned in the Bill and the explanations given for payment.

Pacific Islands Council of Qld agrees that the Pacific Engagement Visa will allow for the main applicant (including immediate family) to apply for Permanent Residency. It is important that the term *immediate family* be clearly defined as mentioned in page 15 Explanatory Memorandum. What would *immediate family* consist of if the successful applicant is single? It is suggested that immediate family would constitute single applicants' parents and siblings.

In supporting the Migration Amendment (Australia's Engagement in the Pacific and Other Measures) Bill 2023 and Migration (Visa Pre-Application Process) Charge Bill 2023, the Pacific Islands Council of Qld commends the Australian Government and Parliament for enabling the Pacific Engagement Visa for Pacific peoples of relevant Pacific nations and Timor-Leste who have made significant contributions through PALM to the Australian economy. It is our hope that the PALM workforce (past and current) be given first choice. The Bills are a welcome reward and incentive for the Pacific and Timor-Leste PALM workforce.

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