



20 September 2019

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Senate Standing Committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: *New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019*

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's Inquiry which will review the *New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019*.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the national voice of local government in Australia, representing 537 councils across the country. In structure, ALGA is a federation of State and Territory Local Government Associations. This submission should be read in conjunction with any separate submissions received from State and Territory Associations as well as individual councils.

75% of Australia's local governments are in rural, remote or regional areas of Australia. Depending on local circumstances, many regional and rural local governments are actively working to attract and retain workers and residents in their communities.

The provisional skilled regional visas require regional migrants to live and work in a regional area for three years before being eligible for permanent residence. Our understanding of this Bill is that the Federal Government will provide access to welfare payments or government services to holders of provisional skilled regional visas.

ALGA supports this Bill on the basis that the amendments will ensure adequate support to visa holders and thus take potential pressure off councils which often have to fill service gaps when these services are not otherwise available to members of their community. This is particularly the case in thin markets or with vulnerable members of the community). Further supports the Bill on the basis that it will encourage visa holders to move to and remain in regional Australia, which will enhance the social and economic fabric of these communities.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Beresford-Wylie
Chief Executive
