



Papua New Guinea Federation Queensland
PO Box 5019 DAISY HILL QLD 4127

ABN: 64 998 658 752
Incorporation Number: IA 40711

Migration Amendment (Australia's Engagement in the Pacific and Other Measures) Bill 2023, and the Migration (Visa Pre-application Process) Charge Bill 2023 Senate committee submission

About our community

The Papua New Guinea Federation of Queensland (PNGFQI) is the body that represents the interests of the Papua New Guinean diaspora residing in Queensland. We represent the interests of Queensland based PNG sporting organisations, provincial groups based in Queensland and other cultural and art groups from our community who help to preserve our language, food and culture whilst also showing off our talent.

The Federation empowers all of these organisations to do the most that they can deliver to help our community become productive members of the Queensland community. We also advocate for our community and PNG nationals in Queensland, including workers under the PALM scheme and our International Students.

Papua New Guinea citizens living in Queensland are spread out throughout the State and now number several thousand who have joined with people from their own communities back home forming small local community groups in Queensland. The main PNG population centres are Brisbane, Logan, Gold Coast, and Cairns with a presence in most other regions. There is a reason Cairns is often referred to as "Little Moresby". Most do not understand that it is quicker to fly from Port Moresby to Cairns than it is to fly from Brisbane to Cairns. Our community is as far north as Cairns and the Tablelands and as far west as Toowoomba.

There are also many former expatriates who grew up in PNG who have a strong affinity with their former homeland and many more who spent the best years of their working lives in the country who have fond memories of their time there.

Our position

PNGFQI opposes the introduction of a charge for a visa whereby the applicant has no guarantee or ability to influence the successful outcome of that visa being processed. In the case of every other visa that our people apply for to come to Australia, there is a fee that they pay, however they are in control of their capacity to meet the criteria of the visa.

The lottery concept attacks the basis of that fundamental dynamic in a way that we have never seen before.

PNGFQI supports increasing net migration from PNG into Australia and supports any move from the Australian Government to make that easier. However, this is not a fair way, nor will it make it easier for migration to occur.

Currently, our community faces huge problems in gaining visas to enter Australia. PNG nationals face excessive waiting times for their visas to be processed as it currently stands, since the Australian presence in Papua New Guinea cannot process visas. When the Australian Prime Minister came to PNG and called it the closest relationship in the Pacific, we would like to see this backed up with concrete actions regarding migration access from PNG.

When PNG nationals can't get visas to enter Australia, miss business opportunities, family moments, medical appointments etc, it makes the rhetoric sound like it has nothing behind it. When our people apply to come to Australia, it should require the Australian High Commission in PNG, Port Moresby to process the applications and not be sent to Fiji for the visa applications to be processed.

This is why we find ourselves in the position of supporting the principle of the visa but opposing the lottery mechanism as proposed inside this visa.

If the Australian Government wishes to meet the aim of the Pacific Engagement Visa, which is to increase net migration from the laid out Pacific nations that will be included in the scheme, the government should set a criteria.

The Australian Government should note that PNG despite being the largest Pacific Island Nation with a bigger population than the other Pacific Island Nations, the number of participants in the PALM Scheme is the lowest. Some consideration should be taken into account to ensure that PNG is not disadvantaged due to their low number of participants in the scheme.

We are also concerned that our brothers and sisters from some of the smaller nations included in the scheme will not have an equal opportunity to gain access to the new migration pathway because of the lottery scheme. Because of population disparity between PNG and the other nations, PNG will have the overwhelming number of applicants in a lottery scheme. Therefore, we anticipate issues with people from the smaller nations being successful in a lottery through the sheer weight of numbers.

Position:

1. PNGFQI opposes the lottery charge proposed in the bill.
2. PNGFQI opposes the lottery proposal in the Pacific Engagement Visa.
3. PNGFQI believes that the Pacific Engagement Visa needs a criteria that people can meet which creates fairness for people to apply for.
4. PNGFQI believes that there should be some protection to ensure applicants from smaller Pacific countries are also successful in coming to Australia.

5. PNGFQI believes that the visa should bring more than 3000 people per year to Australia.

Lynette Wessel

President PNGFQI



"UNITED AS ONE