



Our Ref: #6184791

16 September 2019

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Via: online portal.

Dear Sir/Madam

Senate Committee Inquiry – New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 [Provisions]

The Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) was established in the 1980's and represents 13 member councils from Hinchinbrook, north to Cook and west to Carpentaria in far north Queensland. The FNQROC region is the largest and fastest growing region in Northern Australia. It extends over 320,000 square kilometres with a population of approximately 276,000 and a gross regional product (GRP) of \$15.15 billion. Further details can be found on our website at www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments into the inquiry on the New Skilled Regional Visa's (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 [Provisions].

As an organisation we have had little to do within the visa space. In undertaking a review of this regulation and the proposal to give access to government services as if they were a permanent visa holder educated us on the changes recently put in place.

We welcome the growth in eligible skill sets and increased time (from two years to three years) in the regions. We also welcome any initiatives that support these visa holders to live and reside in lower and declining populated areas.

We support these visa holders having access to these government services, perhaps this could be an entitlement given only to those that choose a regional area with a low or declining population base as an enticement.

Yours sincerely

Cr Tom Gilmore
Chair