



20 September 2019

Sophie Dunstone  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [legcon.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:legcon.sen@aph.gov.au)

**Ref: Inquiry into the New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 [Provisions]**

Dear Ms Dunstone,

We write with respect to the Inquiry into the New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 [Provisions].

Migration Alliance is the Peak Professional Association for Australian Registered Migration Agents with over five-thousand member agents. Our association represents the majority of the profession, and is a trusted stakeholder.

Migration Alliance supports the introduction of two new skilled regional (provisional) visas (subclass 491 and subclass 494). We believe this will be a great incentive for the regional and rural communities across Australia, especially in times of drought, where locals are finding it hard to find work, and are moving to urban areas to seek work, just to survive.

As per the recent annual report from Home Affairs, 95% of all migrants move to either Sydney or Melbourne. This leaves very little room for regional and rural growth and development. By introducing these visas, along with these amendments, it is our view that this will help with consistent intake of highly skilled persons into these much needed areas.

The Hon David Coleman MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migration Services and Multicultural Affairs has moved this bill for a second time.

**Migration Alliance supports the following bill:**

*Mr COLEMAN (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs) (09:47):*

*The New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 makes consequential amendments to legislation administered by the Department of Social*



*Services, the Department of Education and the Attorney-General's Department. Specifically, the bill amends:*

*A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*

*Disability Services Act 1986*

*Fair Entitlements Guarantee Act 2012*

*Higher Education Support Act 2003*

*National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*

*Paid Parental Leave Act 2010*

*Social Security Act 1991*

*The bill will give effect to government policy that holders of new provisional skilled regional visas, which come into effect on 16 November 2019, will have access to government services consistent with skilled permanent visa holders.*

#### **Migration Alliance agrees**

*The new provisional skilled regional visas are set out in the Migration Amendment (New Skilled Regional Visas) Regulations 2019.*

*They are:*

*Subclass 491 (Skilled Work Regional (Provisional)) visa for skilled people who are nominated by a state or territory government or sponsored by an eligible family member to live and work in regional Australia; and*

*Subclass 494 (Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional)) visa, enabling an Australian business to sponsor skilled workers to work in their business in regional Australia.*

*These new visas are part of the Australian government's plan for Australia's future population to ease the pressure on the big capitals while supporting the growth of those smaller cities and regions that want more people. The plan includes reducing the annual migration ceiling from 190,000 to 160,000 places and, in addition, setting aside 23,000 of those places for these new regional visas.*

#### **Migration Alliance agrees**

*The visas, introduced by regulations tabled in parliament on 2 July 2019, support regional economies to get the skills they need.*

**Migration Alliance**



*A key feature of the new visas is a requirement for regional migrants to live and work in a regional area for three years before being eligible for permanent residence.*

*This will encourage visa holders to remain in regional Australia, which in turn will support the local communities and enhance the economies of regional parts of the nation.*

*The amendments in this bill will ensure that holders of the new visas have access to government services in line with the current arrangements applicable to permanent residence visas.*

*These changes will have a low financial impact while ensuring that provisional skilled regional visa holders are not disadvantaged compared to holders of permanent skilled visas available for people to work in metropolitan areas.*

*Changes to legislation, service delivery and ICT systems—administered by the Department of Social Services, Services Australia, the Department of Education and the Attorney-General's Department—are required in order to give effect to the government's policy regarding holders of these new visas.*

*This would be subject to meeting the same eligibility requirements for the payments and services and serving the same applicable waiting periods that exist for permanent skilled visa holders.*

*These visa holders will be supporting local economies and contributing to rural and regional communities throughout Australia. I commend this bill to the House.*

### **Migration Alliance agrees**

Migration Alliance welcomes the introduction of this bill, and looks forward to supporting the government with any future initiatives associated with these new regional provisional visas.

Yours sincerely

Liana Allan and Ross Ahmadzai

Migration Alliance Inc