



Treasurer
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Minister for Sport

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Mr Paul Lindwall
Presiding Commissioner
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
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Dear Mr Lindwall *Paul*

Migrant Intake into Australia

I refer to the Productivity Commission's (PC) Inquiry into "The use of charges to determine the intake of migrants" and the recently released Draft Report, *Migrant Intake into Australia*.

In my capacity as the Queensland Treasurer and given my portfolio responsibility for skilled and business migration, I have given consideration to the findings and recommendations outlined in the Draft Report on behalf of the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Government is committed to building business confidence, creating jobs and growing the economy. Migration and international business investment is an important part of achieving these objectives and we recognise the vital contribution migrants make to our State's economic growth and prosperity.

In this light, the Queensland Government acknowledges the substantial work undertaken by the inquiry and supports the PC finding that Australia's existing merit-based immigration system works well and is not suited to a price-based approach. Moreover, the Queensland Government supports efforts to improve the effectiveness of the existing immigration system, including greater transparency of immigration data and investing in data collection, integration and dissemination to enhance evidence based policies.

Regarding the PC's draft recommendations for the humanitarian migration program, the Queensland Government supports a review to assess the mix and extent of settlement services for immigrants. As part of this review, consideration should be given to the findings of the recently released 'Evaluation of the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support programmes' as prepared for the Department of Social Services by Ernst and Young. The Evaluation identified improvements to existing humanitarian migrant programs to support settlement pathways, service delivery, collaboration and reduce regulatory burden.

The Queensland Government supports the draft recommendation that policy decisions related to migration be cognisant of, and consider the impacts on, both permanent and temporary immigrants. Moreover, the Queensland Government further considers that genuine pathways to permanent resettlement should be afforded to all refugees who have been assessed as engaging Australia's protection obligations and who have fulfilled health, character, security and identity checks.

Recognising the issues faced by New Zealand Special Category Visa holders living long term in Australia, the Queensland Government notes the benefits to migrants from having access to certain supports and the development of a pathway to permanent residency. However, given the uncertainty potential visa changes may have on both state and Commonwealth funded services, we welcome greater consultation with the Australian Government on this issue.

The Queensland Government supports the draft recommendation that the Australian Government should seek opportunities to improve the recognition of overseas qualifications to enable migrants and refugees to utilise their skills and contribute to the Australian economy. The Queensland Government, through the Department of Education and Training, currently provides a free service to assess overseas qualifications against the Australian Qualifications Framework, working within Australian International Education guidelines. This service includes additional support to migrants and refugees, such as referrals to employment-related information, including details of available training programs, industry associations and occupational regulatory authorities.

Further, the Queensland Government supports the draft recommendation to review the Business Innovation and Investment Program (BIIP) which we utilise to attract those migrants who will contribute and provide value to the Queensland economy. Queensland uses these visas to target and incentivise regional growth and almost 50 per cent of our visa nominations are for Queensland's regional areas, aligning with the Federal objectives outlined in the White Paper for Developing Northern Australia.

However, the Queensland Government considers given the recent changes to the Significant Investor visa and introduction of the Premium Investor visa, that the recommendation to abolish these streams may be premature. Consideration of these visas and their performance may be best determined as part of the broader 2017 BIIP review.

Finally, regarding the information request on whether current investments to support multiculturalism and address racial discrimination are effective and efficient, the Queensland Government can advise that it supports community groups and invests in community organisations and local councils. Through a range of competitive grants and funding agreements, Queensland's multicultural identity is celebrated, community cohesion is fostered and equitable access to opportunities for people from diverse cultural backgrounds is supported.

The Queensland Government welcomes any further consultation on the findings and recommendations as the Inquiry progresses.

Yours sincerely

HON. CURTIS PITT

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