

Senate Standing Committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 [Provisions]

I am writing to place on record the support of William Buck Gold Coast for the *Gold Coast Regional Classification Business Case* (August 2019) prepared by Study Gold Coast.

The essence of the Study Gold Coast business case relates to international education and changes proposed relating to the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485), designed to attract students to regional areas post-study or for study. The Gold Coast is not a capital city and lacks the inherent attributes and advantages enjoyed by capital cities in attracting and retaining international students to study and work.

The appropriate reclassification of the Gold Coast as a regional centre for the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485) would be beneficial to the national interest by drawing graduates away from capital cities such as Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and in doing so contribute to the Gold Coast's development as a knowledge economy. The reclassification would assist the efforts of Griffith University, as one of the city's anchor institutions, in developing a more diverse and vibrant economy for the Gold Coast.

The most recent economic contribution and impact analysis of Griffith University's Gold Coast campus established a direct annual contribution of \$544 million while creating an estimated 4,908 jobs in the city. Since that analysis was undertaken, the University has worked with government and private partners to strengthen the potential for the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct to become a major economic accelerator for the City.

Accordingly, it is recommended in the Study Gold Coast Business Case, with good cause, that for the purposes of the international student visa system that a concession be provided to the Gold Coast over three years to be reviewed annually.

Griffith University also provides tremendous opportunity for domestic students to work in regions through its Rural Health Stream and GP placements in areas including the Darling Downs, South Burnett and Sunshine Coast. This has extended in 2019 with the opening of the Sunshine Coast Medical School which is strongly connected to the Gold Coast base. The rural emphasis continues through a priority access scheme for students studying medicine, dentistry and other healthcare professions.

Therefore, a strong case exists for Griffith Gold Coast access to the Government's Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships, which has the potential to contribute to both the Gold Coast's development as a strong regional city and that of more rural and remote parts of Queensland. The Department of Employment projects strong industry growth in the Gold

Coast of another 36,100 new jobs through to 2023 suggesting that it would be sound public policy to direct students to an area that can absorb the additional human capital.

We therefore commend both the Study Gold Coast business case for an international student visa concession be provided for at least three years and propose that equal consideration be given to the provision of access by the Gold Coast to the Government's Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships.

Regards

Janelle

Janelle Manders
Director

