

Dear Committee Secretary,

I have just become aware that the Senate Legal and Constitutional committee is examining the legislation titled, *New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 [Provisions]*. I also understand that submissions closed yesterday, but you are prepared to take late submissions until the end of this week. I thank you for that indulgence & wish to take advantage of the indulgence. My submission follows.

I am a Gold Resident & businessman & have been so for the past 29 years. In both roles, I have had the privilege of witnessing Griffith University grow & mature into the leading research based university it is today. In doing so, it has always worked closely with the Gold Coast's local government, community groups & the business community to everyone's mutual benefit. To my mind, this is best manifested by the Gold Coast City Council, many years ago, gazetting a significant portion of land surrounding the Gold Coast campus as the Health & Knowledge Precinct which essentially required any development proposal within the precinct to have a health or knowledge focus.

Griffith University has more than played its part in this precinct by investing heavily not only in terms of capital spend but also academic resources in research sciences embracing health, advanced engineering, biotechnology, an intellectual property incubator to assist in the commercialisation process, environmental & coastal issues, drug discovery – the list is quite extensive & impressive.

You can perhaps therefore understand my passion & support for Griffith University & the Gold Coast at large & why I am making this submission.

I have read the *Gold Coast Regional Classification Business Case (August 2019)* prepared by Study Gold Coast. I understand that this has been brought to your attention by Ms Karen Andrews, the Federal Member for McPherson. I am sure the other Gold Coast Federal members have also brought this Report to your & the Committee's attention.

I unreservedly endorse this Report & ask the Committee to also embrace its findings.

In summary, I note:

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Finally, I 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.

I am happy to add further comment or input if the Committee requires such.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff McDermid FAICD FCA