



Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations
Minister for Racing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Your reference: Tabled petition 2702-17
Our reference: COM 01055-2017

17 MAR 2017

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 2702-17 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 15 February 2017, calling for Queensland to sign up to the Australian Government Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) arrangement and for the House to designate Brisbane and regional centres as SHEV zones.

I am pleased to advise that SHEV arrangements commenced in Queensland on 27 October 2016. As highlighted in the petition, the SHEV provides a new visa option and pathway for eligible asylum seekers in Queensland. SHEV holders who have worked and/or studied in a designated regional postcode for 42 out of 60 months and have met a number of other visa conditions, may be eligible to apply for other onshore permanent visas (excluding permanent protection visas).

The Australian Government has specified a regional definition which lists the postcodes considered part of regional Australia for the SHEV arrangement. In Queensland this currently includes all of Queensland except the Greater Brisbane area (including parts of Logan, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, Scenic Rim, Somerset and Redlands) and the Gold Coast. The listing of postcodes is available online at www.ima.border.gov.au/After-your-application-is-decided/Regional-Australia.

Since the SHEV arrangement is directly intended to encourage visa holders to take up study or work in regional Australia, it is not possible to have Brisbane included as a designated regional area. Nevertheless, while opting in to the SHEV arrangement, the Queensland Government asked the Australian Government to apply the broadest possible regional definition in Queensland, to maximise the opportunities for SHEV holders in Queensland to meet their visa conditions.

The current regional definition listed on the Australian Government website does not reflect Queensland's preferred regional definition. The Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts has asked the Australian Government to expand the postcode listing so that it includes all of Queensland except for Brisbane City and Gold Coast City postcodes. It is understood the Australian Government is making the necessary changes to the legislative instrument. Further advice will be provided via the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' website once the postcode listing is revised.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is continuing to work with the Australian Government to ensure the best possible outcomes for all migrants and refugees, and for Queensland as a whole. I am committed to ensuring Queensland communities are welcoming and inclusive, and that Queenslanders of all backgrounds have the opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, the economic, social and cultural fabric of our great state.

I would be pleased if you would arrange for the tabling of this letter in response to the petition in accordance with Standing Order 31 by 17 March 2017.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

HON. GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations
Minister for Racing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs