



The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

ALGA MAIL
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Dr Felicity-ann Lewis
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Australian Local Government Association
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DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Dr Lewis

20th National General Assembly of Local Government motions

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2014 concerning matters arising from the 20th National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA). I appreciate the time you have taken to bring these matters to my attention.

Several of the motions you have provided to me fall within my portfolio responsibilities, however as one matter relates to the Department of Social Services I will forward your correspondence to the Minister for Social Services, the Honourable Kevin Andrews MP, for consideration and response.

Motion 57

Although there is no direct funding provided to local governments for costs associated with citizenship, the Australian Government (through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development) will provide \$2.3 billion in FY 2014-15 in untied funding to local governments under the Financial Assistance Grant programme.

The Financial Assistance Grant programme consists of two components:

- a general purpose component which is distributed between the states and territories according to population (i.e. on a per capita basis), and
- an identified local road component which is distributed between the states and territories according to fixed historical shares.

Both components of the grant are untied in the hands of local government, allowing councils to spend the grant according to local priorities.

While citizenship legislation specifies certain mandatory requirements for the conduct of citizenship ceremonies, they are minimal in nature. The provision of gifts and social elements such as music and refreshments are at the discretion of each council.

Motion 58

Departmental officers have met with representatives from Wyndham City Council. The council has advised the department that the Australian Electoral Commission has made a commitment to continue their representation at citizenship ceremonies.

Motion 71

This motion has been referred to the Minister for Social Services.

Strategic Motion 72

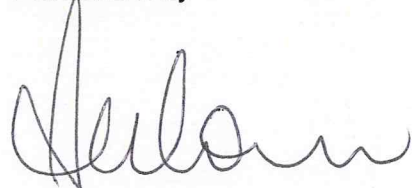
The Australian Government has determined that places in the Humanitarian Programme will be reserved for those who engage Australia's protection obligations through the appropriate processing channels and those who come illegally (by boat or air) to Australia will not be rewarded with permanent residency. Under Operation Sovereign Borders, all illegal maritime arrivals (IMAs) entering Australian waters by boat without a visa will be liable for offshore processing and resettlement in Nauru or Papua New Guinea. This is one of the government's suite of measures intended to deter people smugglers by denying them a product to sell to often vulnerable people.

Asylum seekers are being advised that it will assist the processing of their application if they have taken steps to prepare for that process by ensuring, if possible, that they have as much documentary evidence as possible, in support of their claim for protection. As each case is determined on its merits, there will be different reasons for the length of their processing time for each individual, depending on their circumstances.

In my speech of 10 September 2014, *Restoring integrity and public confidence in Immigration and Border Protection*, I said that the reintroduction of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) will enable the government to introduce new arrangements for processing the asylum seekers who had already arrived under the previous government. Combined with other measures, TPVs will also give the government an alternative option for those who arrived after 19 July 2013. It will continue to be government policy that anyone who now arrives illegally by boat will be transferred to offshore processing centres. The speech is available at: <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/sm/2014/sm217736.htm>.

Thank you for bringing the Australian Local Government Association's concerns to my attention. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Scott Morrison MP

Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

27/11/2014