

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FNQ DAMA Assisting Regional Businesses to Address Skilled Labour Shortages

Businesses in many sectors are struggling due to extreme skilled labour shortages that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since enhancements to the Far North Queensland Designated Area Migration Agreement (FNQ DAMA) in June 2021, there has been a significant increase in businesses accessing the FNQ DAMA to source the employees they need from the overseas workforce, both those overseas and already in Australia.

“Filling jobs with Australians is and always has been our first priority, however the FNQ DAMA plays an integral role in addressing the regional skill gaps,” said Cairns Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer Patricia O’Neill.

“Used wisely and in the way it was intended, the FNQ DAMA can help businesses prepare in advance for skill shortages, becoming pre-approved for occupations and positions they cannot fill locally. This can make them an employer of choice for overseas workers,” added Cairns Chamber of Commerce Migration Manager Geoff Heath.

Accessing concessions built into the FNQ DAMA, such as experience concessions and age concessions, combined with clear permanent visa pathways, can broaden the pool of potential overseas workers for a business.

“There is a common misconception that to access the FNQ DAMA and have a 5-year Labour Agreement put in place, that the business needs to have identified the prospective workers in advance – this is not the case,” stated Mr Heath.

“While some employers do have potential candidates in mind, there is no need to have done so to seek a FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement.”

As border restrictions continue to ease, businesses that have skill shortages already covered by a FNQ DAMA Labour Agreement will be on the front foot and be able to take advantage of nominations being given more priority than most standard programs.

For more information on how the FNQ DAMA operates and can assist our regional businesses to fill skills gaps, click [here](#) or contact the Cairns Chamber of Commerce at dama@cairnschamber.com.au.

The Cairns Chamber of Commerce will be conducting further information sessions for businesses, agents and international recruiters in early February 2022 – for email updates, subscribe [here](#).

