

MEDIA RELEASE

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Council supports call to review the North Australian Zone Allowance.

A call has gone out to the Australian Government to deliver improved and overdue tax breaks for workers in regional and remote areas of Northern Australia. The existing Northern Australia Zone Allowance is in urgent need of review. The Zone Allowance provides a personal tax offset of around 1- 4%, depending on location and dependents, for workers in regional and remote areas of northern Australia. This has been largely unchanged since the 1950's.

The Zone Allowance is designed to encourage workers to locate in regions of Australia that have difficulties attracting skilled staff and to offset the increased costs associated with living in regional and remote locations.

A petition is being promoted by the Mt Isa Council and amongst others has received support from the Roper Gulf Regional Council. This petition is timed to coincide with the development of a Federal Government white paper on the development of northern Australia as promised by the new Government.

Roper Gulf Regional Council Mayor Tony Jack encouraged northern Australian workers and employers to support the petition.

Mayor Jack said in support of the petition,
"As beautiful a place it is to live in it cost us so much more here than it costs to live in the South. Transport, food and housing cost substantially more here. We need to be able to encourage workers to relocate here and to stay. A realistic amount of tax offset is an important part of this. The north of Australia is an important generator in the Australian economy and this proposal is an important part of equalising costs of living and developing the north. This in turn will open opportunities for locals."

Copies of the petition can be downloaded from the Mt Isa Council website <http://www.mountisa.qld.gov.au/zoneallowancereform>.

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