

Family migration vital for successful settlement

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) welcomes the Productivity Commission's report from its inquiry into Australia's Migrant Intake. The report is an important contribution to our understanding of the impact of Australia's migration programmes.

FECCA is strongly opposed to the Commission's recommendations with respect to parent visas, which appears skewed toward fiscal impacts. The social and cultural contribution of family stream migration should not be under-estimated.

The Productivity Commission's report recommends that the Australian Government amend arrangements for permanent parent visa applicants. In the short term, the Commission says the Government should:

- increase substantially the charge for contributory parent visas;
- narrow eligibility to non-contributory parent visas to cases where there are strong compassionate grounds to do so, accompanied by clear published criteria to limit applications for such visas;
- consider lowering the caps for contributory parent visas; and
- introduce a more flexible temporary parent visa that would provide longer rights of residence, but with requirements, as for other temporary visas, that the parents or sponsoring child would meet the costs of any income or health supports during the period of residence.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection advises there is approximately a 30 year wait before visa grant consideration for parent (non-contributory) visa applications. There is a delay of up to 50 years for people applying for remaining relative and aged dependent relative visa applications. The associated costs for contributory parent visas are also significantly higher than those for non-contributory visas.

FECCA Chairperson Joe Caputo said, "The availability of family reunion is essential for successful settlement, allowing migrants to maintain family ties and connections. Family reunion is also related to core human rights principles around the rights of Australians to live with their family members."

"FECCA is fundamentally opposed to the imposition of a fee for immigration to Australia. Australia's migration intake should be balanced and merit-based, not based on the financial means of a potential migrant. A holistic approach should be adopted, looking at the skills and other contributions of migrants", said Mr Caputo.

FECCA believes the Migration Programme must achieve a balance between skilled and family migration. We are concerned that the report's recommendations do not adequately recognise the importance of family migration. Overlooking the benefits of Family migration may lead to the system being heavily skewed toward skilled migration.

[Read FECCA's full response to the Productivity Commission's report on Australia's Migrant Intake here.](#)

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