

FECCA calls on the Government to ensure vulnerable workers are protected under new visa scheme

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) calls on the Government to ensure that migrant workers coming to Australia under the new temporary visa scheme will be protected from exploitation and abuse.

FECCA Chairperson, Mr Joe Caputo said: "Workers from overseas fill key positions in rural and regional areas as well as in Australia's major centres where local employees cannot be recruited."

"They are critical to Australia's economy and society: caring for our elderly and disabled, supporting our nation's agricultural sector and growing Australia's IT and high-tech companies," he said.

Mr Caputo continued: "Temporary visa holders are some of the most vulnerable workers in Australia and are too often victims of workplace abuse. The Government must ensure that the new categories of temporary work visas provide proper protections to migrant workers."

The peak body representing ethnic communities said key to safeguarding the welfare of migrants is encouraging the broader community to recognise the contribution of migrant workers to Australia's economy and society.

Mr Caputo said: "While public discussion on immigration is important, debate must take place within the bounds of respectful discourse. Language implying that foreign workers are taking "Australian" jobs is unhelpful. I caution against inflammatory statements that may divide Australia's multicultural community."

Mr Caputo added: "Australia has a proud history of temporary and permanent immigration. We must defend Australia's harmonious and vibrant multicultural society that has contributed to Australia's economic, intellectual and cultural success."

FECCA is the peak national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. FECCA's role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to government, business and the broader community.

Media contact: (0424) 910617 / emma@fecca.org.au