

FECCA responds to proposed changes to Australian citizenship laws

In response to today's announcement on proposed changes to Australian Citizenship laws FECCA calls on all political leaders to exercise caution and ensure that any changes to the citizenship process are based on robust empirical evidence and not political considerations.

Mr Joe Caputo, Chair of FECCA said: "Australia is a country of immigration. Migration is central to Australia's continuing economic, intellectual and social growth and achievement."

"Migration brings new skills, knowledge and experience to Australia and by contributing to the diversity of our communities migrants help to build a productive and culturally rich Australian society," he said.

FECCA recognises the importance of citizenship policy to achieving and maintaining social cohesion in the Australian community.

"For migrants to Australia, the granting of Australian citizenship is symbolic of acceptance into the Australian community. It is cherished by all in Australia's migrant communities," said Mr Caputo.

Mr Caputo reiterated FECCA's position on citizenship. "FECCA has always advocated for a pathway to citizenship that emphasises civics and citizenship education."

"The journey to Australian citizenship should be positive, welcoming and encouraging. This will ensure that migrants are empowered to make the most of the opportunities presented by becoming an Australian citizen and to maximise their social and economic contribution," he said.

Mr Caputo emphasised: "Australia's values, both civic and cultural values, are built on the shared understandings of generations of migrants. The migration experience forms the bedrock of this nation's thriving and productive multicultural society."

"FECCA also acknowledges the centrality of Australia's First Peoples in defining Australian culture and values," he said.

FECCA is concerned about any changes to the citizenship process that might unfairly target some of Australia's most vulnerable arrivals, such as refugees, through punitive tests rather than education and support.

FECCA also opposes the extension of the time period required between the granting of permanent residency and the opportunity to apply for citizenship.

"This threatens social cohesion, placing additional pressures on migrants and delaying their access to the tools and resources that will foster their full participation in the Australian community," said Mr Caputo.

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.

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