

Waiting period measure to hit vulnerable migrants

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) says that Federal Government plans to extend the waiting time for new migrants to access welfare payments will hit the most vulnerable of new arrivals.

The Chairperson of FECCA, Ms Mary Patetsos said today that the move would impose considerable hardship.

"We are disappointed by this decision to extend the waiting period for benefits to three years from its current two years," Ms Patetsos said.

"FECCA believes that this move will create an underclass of migrants—new arrivals who find themselves at even more risk financially as they try to settle into Australia.

"These measures will negatively impact the Australian born children of migrants and disproportionately affect women.

"They will also disadvantage migrant families by restricting access to paid parenting leave.

"The reality is that migrants who come here have always needed time to establish themselves in housing and employment.

"These changes make it harder for migrants to settle in this country—for the sake of what is a relatively modest Government budget saving.

"We appeal to the Government to rethink this measure," Ms Patetsos said.

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

Contact: Jim Maher 0403 044 216