

FECCA calls for balanced debate on temporary migrant workers

18 November 2016

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) today called for a balanced debate on 457 visa-holders and other temporary migrant workers in Australia.

The peak body representing ethnic communities said that the value of migrants to the country and the importance of safeguarding the welfare of migrant workers had to be recognised.

FECCA Chairperson Joe Caputo said, "These temporary visa holders are already some of the most vulnerable workers in Australia. Governments and communities should do all that they can to reduce the appalling rate of workplace exploitation against these people".

"The decision to reduce the period that 457 visa-holders can remain in Australia after ceasing to work for their sponsors—from 90 days to 60 days—increases the vulnerability of these workers, and discourages them from leaving workplaces where they experience exploitation and mistreatment."

The reliance of 457 visa holders on their employers for the continuance of their visas is a significant vulnerability and means that employers continue to have significant control over an employee's presence in Australia.

Migrant workers bring skills, knowledge and experience to Australia. Additionally, by contributing to the diversity of our communities they help to build a productive and culturally rich Australian society.

However, a lack of knowledge about the Australian workplace relations scheme, including their workplace rights and entitlements, lack of support networks, social isolation and language barriers all contributed to their heightened vulnerability.

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.

For more information see www.fecca.org.au.

Media Comments: FECCA Office – (02) 6282 5755 or media@fecca.org.au.