

FECCA expresses concern over punitive measures in the Government's proposed Omnibus Bill

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) has expressed its concern over the proposed Social Services Legislation Amendment (Omnibus Savings and Child Care Reform) Bill 2017 or 'Omnibus Bill' through a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Omnibus Savings and Child Care Reform) Bill 2017*.

Chairperson of FECCA, Joe Caputo said: 'FECCA opposes proposals in this Bill to change the portability of the Age Pension and other payments including the Disability Support Pension'.

If this legislation is passed, pension recipients who have lived in Australia for less than 35 years will have their pension benefits reduced if they travel overseas for more than 6 weeks.

Mr Caputo said: 'Nearly 40 per cent of people receiving the Age Pension were not born in Australia. These provisions will disadvantage a significant section of the Australian population who were born overseas and who wish to maintain ties with their place of birth.'

'Migration has made Australia great, and migrant Australians should not be punished in their older age because they wish to make an extended visit to their country of origin,' said Mr Caputo.

The Australian Government already imposes waiting periods of ten years for people born overseas before they can access pensions.

Mr Caputo said: 'These additional changes will further disadvantage culturally and linguistically diverse Australians leaving them with fewer rights. This is inequitable and does not contribute to social cohesion within Australian society.'

Mr Caputo also expressed concern about other elements of the Bill that will impact some of the most vulnerable members of our community including extended waiting periods for unemployment payments, further cuts to family payments, and the abolition of the energy supplement.

The submission is available [here](#).

FECCA is the national peak 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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