

FECCA expresses concerns about proposal to grant broad, discretionary powers on immigration

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) opposes any proposal to allow for broad, discretionary ministerial powers to review, restrict or cancel visas for people based on membership of a particular community.

Chairperson of FECCA, Joe Caputo said: 'The expansion of ministerial discretion to allow a visa to be refused or revoked on the basis of nationality or residency threatens the integrity of our immigration system.'

FECCA is concerned about the powers to be granted to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection in proposed amendments to the Migration Act that allow the minister to "identify any group of people based on a shared common characteristic or circumstance," and review their visa status.

Mr Caputo said: 'We must protect the foundations of Australia's immigration system, a system based on transparency and impartiality.'

'An equitable and open immigration system in Australia has contributed to Australia's harmonious and successful multicultural society. The integrity of our immigration system is internationally recognised and respected.'

Mr Caputo continued: 'Decisions that restrict travel to Australia on the broad basis of nationality, residence or membership of a particular community must be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and not be at the behest of ministerial discretion.'

'These discretionary powers could allow for the targeting of communities on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion,' he said.

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.

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