

FECCA says social services changes unfair on migrants

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) said today that proposed changes to support for new migrants would unfairly impact them as they settle in Australia.

Plans to extend waiting periods from the current two years to three years for various social security payments and to introduce a three-year wait for support including carer allowances, family tax benefit and widow allowances are contained in the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Encouraging Self-sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018*.

FECCA says that the changes would impact the most vulnerable new migrants, including:

- Single parents and children;
- Women at risk of family violence;
- Children whose parent unexpectedly loses their job; and
- Young migrants and newly-graduated students.

“The changes in this Bill will impose considerable hardship on migrants at the very time they need a little help to settle into their new home,” the Chairperson of FECCA, Ms Mary Patetsos said today.

“Permanent migrants and their children should enjoy the same benefits as all other Australian residents.”

Ms Patetsos said the great ongoing story of multicultural Australia was the economic benefit brought by migration.

“Migrants are the most education-oriented, driven and entrepreneurial members of our society,” she said.

“It’s estimated that by 2050, migrants will be contributing \$1.6 trillion dollars to Australia’s GDP.

“However, in the early days of their migration journey, as new migrants look for housing and jobs and settle their children into life in Australia, it is crucial—and fair—that they receive the support which other Australian residents receive,” Ms Patetsos said.

FECCA’s has lodged a [submission](#) opposing the Bill to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs.

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Our role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government, business and the broader community.

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