

Peak bodies urge increased oversight of migration services

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the Settlement Council of Australia (SCoA) have joined forces to call for increased Government funding for the oversight of migration services in Australia.

In a joint submission to the Australian Parliament's *Joint Standing Committee on Migration*, the two peak bodies acknowledge the critical role played by migration agents in often-complex applications for migration but stress the detrimental impact that unregistered migration agents have on vulnerable individuals applying to visas.

The Chairperson of FECCA, Mary Patetsos, said: "FECCA believes that registered migration agents are currently regulated and supported by a strong system and that the majority adhere to sector regulations and guidelines.

"However, the robust regulation of migrant agents, combined with a well-resourced effort to reduce the impact of unregistered practice, is in the best interests of CALD and migrant communities and those with family members keen to migrate."

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCoA) said that the role of migration agents should be acknowledged.

The Chairperson of SCoA, Dewani Bakkum, said: "Our members witness firsthand the true value of the contribution made to multicultural Australia by those it welcomes as migrants, as well as the challenges those people face when attempting to settle in their new communities."

"We believe that stringent regulation and accreditation of migration agents is crucial to ensure strong, safe and prosperous CALD and migrant communities. Confidence in the visa application process must be maintained."

FECCA and SCoA have recommended to the Committee that:

The current system of regulation of migration agents be maintained, including strong registration and stringent accreditation processes, as well as swiftly enforced penalties for exploitative and unethical migration agents;

- The allocation of resources to further investigate the volumes and patterns of unregistered migration agents and education agents providing unlawful immigration services in Australia;
- A comprehensive effort be made to inform clients of migration agents of their rights as consumers, and a streamlined process for migrants to raise concerns and have them arbitrated as efficiently as possible;
- Consideration be given to additional resourcing to the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA), including the maintenance of a compensation fund for individuals who are left out of pocket as a result of unethical behaviour.

The joint submission by FECCA and SCoA can be found [here](#).

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

SCoA is the national peak body for settlement. SCoA represents settlement agencies across Australia providing direct services to people of refugee and migrant background. SCoA's goal is to help ensure the best possible settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees settling in Australia.

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