

# Proposed changes to Australian citizenship are unfair and discriminatory

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) urges all sides of politics and the community to take a strong stance against any proposed changes to the citizenship process that are unfair and discriminatory.

Mr Joe Caputo, Chair of FECCA said: "We are deeply concerned about proposed changes which appear to be based on political considerations rather than any empirical evidence."

"The extended waiting time offers no benefit to Australia other than to delay the application for citizenship of hard-working, dedicated Australian residents who want to be able to fully participate in the community," he continued.

Under the proposal, Australian permanent residents will have to wait four years before qualifying for citizenship despite, in many cases, years of contribution to the Australian community.

The new citizenship rules will also require a much higher level of English from prospective citizens.

Mr Caputo said: "While it is important to support migrants in learning English, those who struggle with the language nevertheless continue to make a valuable contribution."

"My mother raised a proud Australian family using her native Italian language, as she worked at improving her English," said Mr Caputo. "This is the story of many migrant families in Australia."

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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