



Thursday 16 May

## **ECCV says political parties need to promote a 'fairer' migration program**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria has called on Australia's political parties to commit to a fair and equitable migration program that ensures sufficient support is provided to all people choosing to make Australia their home, and that timely decisions are made at all stages of the migration process.

ECCV Chairperson, Cr Kris Pavlidis, said it is a matter of concern to her organisation that the number of temporary migrants in the country was increasing at the same time that the Government had announced a reduction in the cap on permanent visa grants from 190,000 to 160,000 per year.

"Many temporary migrants who wish to settle in Australia can therefore only hope to acquire subsequent temporary visas, and current trends risked creating a class of 'permanently temporary' migrants who might experience years of uncertainty before being granted the chance to become permanent residents," Cr Pavlidis said.

"Reductions in the number of permanent visa grants and increased waiting times for citizenship applications to be assessed are causing delays throughout the system and creating unreasonable anxiety amongst those wishing to make Australia their home. Migrants on temporary visas are not protected by Australia's health and welfare systems and are often victims of exploitative work practices.

"The Government's plans to settle more migrants in regional areas must be supplemented by adequate investment in settlement services, infrastructure such as fast rail transport, and housing and employment opportunities.

"Migrants can make a tremendous contribution to regional Australia and fill skills shortages, but there should be investment to encourage them to settle there, rather than making it a visa condition."

Cr Pavlidis said ECCV was disappointed the Coalition had announced a cap on Australia's humanitarian intake at 18,750 for the next three years.

"ECCV fully supports the ALP's plans to increase the humanitarian intake and abolish Temporary Protection and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas and provide permanent protection to those found to meet Australia's protection obligations. We call upon both parties to return to community-based processing of asylum seekers and restore the right to family reunion for refugee and humanitarian visa holders."

"All parties should recognise the enormous contributions that migrants and refugees make to our country and ensure that Australia continues to be a welcoming and supportive place for people to make their home."

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