

Thursday 17 March 2016

ACTU backs Senate report calling for end to abuse of temporary work visas

The ACTU welcomes the findings of the Senate report into temporary working visas released today, which suggests tightening up the scheme.

Unions are especially supportive of measures that prevent local workers being replaced by 457 workers, and require employers taking on 457 visa workers, to also take on a local apprentices or graduates.

Other measures – such as the licensing of labour hire operators and stronger rights for migrants under labour and migration law - would start to address their exploitation.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver:

“For too long, 457 visas have been a tool for unscrupulous employers to exclude local workers and drive down wages and conditions through the exploitation of overseas workers who are often treated as second class citizens.”

“This inquiry has shone a light on exactly how this takes place, and come up with some sensible recommendations to help ensure local workers aren’t undercut or pushed out of a job.”

“Requirements for employers using temporary overseas workers to also take on local graduates or trainees are an especially welcome move towards giving young people a decent start to their working life.”

“These requirements will also make sure employers don’t take the lazy option of simply importing temporary workers which has contributed to a skills shortage.”

“Disappointingly, Government Senators chose to put their free trade ideology before the needs of Australian workers by failing to support a key recommendation to improve labour market testing because it ‘would be incompatible with Australia’s obligation under... free trade agreements.’”

ENDS

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