



ABF CRACKS DOWN ON BUSINESSES EXPLOITING MIGRANT WORKERS

After a decade of inaction by the old Liberal Government, the Albanese Labour Government is delivering on its vow to protect vulnerable employees on temporary visas, releasing today the findings of a month-long blitz on firms exploiting migrant workers.

In July, Australian Border Force (ABF) personnel inspected around 300 enterprises across all states and territories.

This blitz comes on top of the 140 enterprises approved in the first year of the Albanese Labour Government. The ABF specifically targeted sponsoring businesses, awarding fines, bans, and other sanctions to those that failed to protect employment rights such as pay, working conditions, health and safety.

Under the former Minister, Peter Dutton, visa regulations were tightened to limit employees' rights, and compliance with immigration laws declined. The past Liberal Government sat on the Migrant Workers Taskforce report and never attempted to address widespread exploitation such as that found at 7 Eleven.

The Albanese Labour Government is looking ahead to further reform to improve migrant workers' rights, and has introduced the Migration Amendment (Strengthening Employer Compliance) Bill 2023, which includes providing the ABF with new compliance tools to deter exploitation and is set to be debated in the House of Representatives today.

VETASSESS - FREE EMPLOYABILITY ASSESSMENTS FOR MIGRANTS

VETASSESS is providing free employability assessments for additional occupations as part of an Australian Government programme to assist migrants living in Australia in obtaining employment at their skill level.

The employability evaluation will highlight deficiencies in abilities such as literacy, internet literacy, and communication. VETASSESS will send the applicant to a training agency that will assist them with these skills, with the Australian Government covering the majority of the costs.

Migrants who have achieved a successful VETASSESS skills assessment in any of 43 occupations can apply for this programme if their evaluation is dated after January 1, 2012 - a deadline that has now been extended back to 2019. The full list of roles assessed by VETASSESS, as well as the eligibility criteria, can be seen [here](#).

Applicants should be aware of the following:

- This programme does not fall under the purview of the VETASSESS skilled migration evaluation programme. It is open to applicants who are in Australia on a valid permanent visa.
- VETASSESS can only refer migrants to this programme if their skills evaluation was successful. Migrants who have been reviewed by other authorities should contact them to see if they are eligible.
- This is a Pilot 3 - Employability Assessments for Migrants Pilot, as well as a pilot of the Australian Government's Skills Assessment Programme. Visit the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' website [here](#) for more information about the pilots.

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ETS - TOEFL iBT TEST UPDATE

As of July 26, the TOEFL iBT test can be completed in less than two hours as a result of:

- test instructions and navigation have been simplified, and all unscored test problems have been removed.
- TOEFL iBT has a new, more modern writing task that replaces the solo writing task.
- There is one fewer reading (and accompanying questions) in the Reading portion.
- The 10-minute break has been removed.

The Australian Department of Home Affairs is actively reviewing the enhanced version of the TOEFL iBT® test as part of its standard process, and until this review is completed, only valid TOEFL iBT scores from tests taken prior to July 26, 2023, will be recognised for relevant visa subclasses to Australia.

PAY RISE FOR SETTLEMENT WORKERS

With a \$2.6 million funding boost to the settlement sector staff, the Albanese Labour Government is ensuring new arrivals to Australia receive the help they need to effectively settle.

The financing will bring significant job security to the sector, assisting new migrants in finding jobs, housing, and other support as they settle in Australia.

Women constitute a sizable share of the settlement sector employment, with many employees coming from culturally and linguistically varied backgrounds.

This policy, in keeping with the Albanese Government's gender equality agenda in jobs and pay, will help women in the business stay in this essential field.

According to a recent Settlement Council of Australia study, more than 85% of organisations had reduced staffing levels or would consider doing so if budget pressures were not resolved.

The Albanese Government is responding to these issues in a proactive manner, ensuring long-term funding for the settlement sector so that new arrivals can be successfully settled in Australia.

TEENS ASSAULTED, STRIP-SEARCHED IN DETENTION CENTRE, CLASS ACTION ALLEGES

Two teenagers inside a unit attached to a maximum security prison in Western Australia alleged they were discriminated against because of their disabilities and age, according to an affidavit from a solicitor hoping to add the proceeding to the WA youth detention class action.

Casuarina Prison, the main maximum-security prison for adult men in Western Australia, contains a juvenile detention centre known as Unit 18, where 10 current and former detainees alleged they were unlawfully discriminated against by the minister, chief executive, superintendent and officers.

Two boys, both under the age of 18, have alleged they were subjected to lengthy solitary confinement periods and were kept from education programs, social opportunities with other detainees, psychological assessments and, in the case of one boy, hygiene products.

In an affidavit filed with the Federal Court, Levitt Robinson Solicitors senior partner Stewart Alan Levitt said they have suffered "loss and damage, including physical injury, psychiatric injury, economic loss, deprivation of liberty, discomfort, fear and distress, and loss of dignity".

A complaint was lodged on behalf of both boys but then dismissed by the Australian Human Rights Commission in March 2023.

The applicants have claimed the state of Western Australia failed to ensure there were appropriate treatment, programs and services for group members with a disability. They alleged they were also restricted from education services and facilities within the adult detention centre.

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