

## Unions welcome additional protections for migrant workers

The ACTU welcomes the passage of the Migration Amendment (Strengthening Employer Compliance) Bill 2023 today.

This legislation implements key recommendations of the Migrant Workers' Taskforce after years of inaction by the Coalition Government.

Australia's migration system has been used by unscrupulous employers who have created a business model of exploiting migrant workers. This new bill will make it a criminal offence for employers to coerce or unduly influence migrant workers to work in breach of their visa conditions or use a worker's migration status to exploit them - shifting the focus onto employers who are using the power they have over vulnerable workers to maximise their profits.

The Bill also gives the Minister powers to ban exploitative employers from hiring workers on temporary visas for at least 5 years. This should be seen as a serious deterrent to employers thinking of taking advantage of vulnerable workers.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"The exploitation of migrant workers is completely unacceptable— we welcome the Albanese Government taking action to protect migrant workers from exploitation and to implement key recommendations of the Migrant Worker Taskforce.

"The exploitation of workers in Australia on temporary visas hurts all workers. It exposes the impact of a migration system that had shifted away from permanent migration towards a guest worker approach where employers control workers' passports and paycheques. These changes are important as we cannot have a country where workers fear reporting workplace exploitation because they fear losing their ability to stay in the country. This new law, and the actions outlined in the Government's Migration Strategy released at the end of last year, are critical to ensuring all workers in Australia are treated fairly.

"For too many employers, exploiting temporary migrant workers is a business model. We commend the Albanese government for taking action to protect migrant workers and increase the penalties for employers who see temporary migrant workers as an easy target for exploitation."

**ENDS**

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