



# New laws to safeguard migrant workers and help employers

New laws that protect migrant workers from exploitation and help to create a level playing field for businesses that do the right thing come into effect on 1 July 2024.

The laws will make it an offence to use a person's migration status to exploit them in the workplace. It will be harder for dishonest employers to underpay and take advantage of temporary visa holders.

Migrant workers are encouraged to report exploitation to [Border Watch](#) or the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#).

Immigration Compliance Operations Assistant Commissioner Sandra Jeffery said Australian businesses and the broader community benefit enormously from migrants' skills and experience.

"We cannot allow people to misuse the migration system to exploit temporary migrants," she said.

The new laws will cover a range of situations where exploitation can happen, such as when a worker is deliberately underpaid, or pressured by their employer to surrender their passport, accept inadequate housing, perform sexual favours or breach their work related visa conditions.

New compliance tools will also come into effect to enable enforcement officers to respond proportionately to issues of non-compliance.

Assistant Commissioner Jeffery said a key focus is educating employers, labour hire businesses and others in the employment chain so they can comply with their obligations.

"We take a proportionate approach to issues of non-compliance. Our initial focus is always on education but these new laws also enable the government to deal with the most serious and deliberate breaches appropriately," she said.

Employers, labour hire businesses or others in the employment chain can also be prohibited from hiring additional temporary visa holders for a period of time. This measure, called a prohibition declaration, aims to protect temporary visa holders from those who have previously exploited migrant workers.

Prohibition declarations will apply to serious, deliberate or repeated exploitative behaviour in the workplace.

Home Affairs supports the integrity of Australia's visa programs through field compliance activities and ensuring employers follow their sponsorship obligations.

Read about migrant worker exploitation laws at ([Information for employers and labour hire intermediaries \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](#)).