



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Inquiry into the regulation of Australian migration agents

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Preventing exploitation in Australia's immigration system

A parliamentary inquiry has found evidence of loopholes in migration law which enable Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) (subclass 601) visa holders to exploit Australia's immigration system and unscrupulous individuals providing unregistered immigration advice, unlawful registered migration agents and education agents are exploiting visa applicants.

Mr Wood said the committee has heard that a percentage of Malaysian nationals are using travel visas as a gateway to circumvent Australia's immigration system and enter and stay in Australia and obtain work by applying for a protection visa.

'This represents an orchestrated scam that provides protection visa applicants the right to work in Australia until their claims are finalised,' Mr Wood said.

'This process has taken up to eight years in some cases and has cost the Australian taxpayer over \$46 million in the last three years.'

The report recommends fast-tracking the process for Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) (subclass 601) visa holders who have lodged a protection visa application.

Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Jason Wood MP, stated that evidence from the inquiry also found that some individuals have been left substantially out of pocket after being exploited by either unregistered or registered migration agents or education agents.

'While the majority of registered migration agents and education agents are diligent, knowledgeable, hardworking and competent and provide outstanding service, there are individuals in these industries that take advantage of vulnerable consumers,' Mr Wood said.

'Victims of unscrupulous and unlawful migration or education agents are left with very few options for taking action and are unable to seek recompense. The relevant authorities face multiple challenges in detecting, deterring, disrupting, investigating and prosecuting cases.'

The final report of the inquiry into the regulation of migration agents, tabled in the House of Representatives today recommends establishing an Immigration Assistance Complaints Commissioner with broad regulatory powers over the migration and education agent industry.

The full report can be found on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/mig



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