

Media Release

Construction Forestry Mining & Energy Union
National Office
Level 12, 276 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000
P (02) 8524 5850 F (02) 8524 5851

For immediate release 14/04/08

CFMEU concern over 457 abuses vindicated by Federal review

The CFMEU today congratulated the Federal Immigration Minister on the announcement of a wide-ranging review into the 457 Visa program.

CFMEU National Secretary John Sutton said the union had campaigned for years to highlight shocking exploitation of overseas guest workers under the program.

“This review is a vindication of trade union concern over many years about 457 abuses. We have consistently called for an open inquiry into various malpractices and abuses.”

“It is tremendous that this Minister has listened and we are confident that we can demonstrate fundamental flaws in the current 457 model.”

Mr. Sutton said the CFMEU would be suggesting to the inquiry a raft of changes that could be made to restore integrity to Australia’s guest worker system.

The issue of migrant labour will be the subject of much discussion at the 6th annual Asia Pacific Building Workers conference, taking place in Christchurch New Zealand today and tomorrow.

Mr. Sutton is chairing the meeting.

“New Zealand is a focal point for this issue at the moment as there are a number of developments here that have implications for the region,” Mr. Sutton said.

“For example, New Zealand is currently trialing a Pacific Islander work program, whereby temporary unskilled labour is sourced from South Pacific nations.

“New Zealand has also just wrapped up a free trade agreement with China which has a labour component to it, allowing Chinese nationals to work in New Zealand. Some in our country would like to see a similar arrangement in a future free trade agreement between China and Australia,” Mr. Sutton said.

“In addition New Zealand has protocols facilitating consultation with unions, whenever employers seek to bring in temporary labour from overseas. This is something I would like to see considered in Australia.”

For Further information please call John Sutton 0419 254 180

For further comment phone:

John Sutton (m) 0419254180 (p) 02 85245850

Media Queries:

Phil Davey (m) 0414 867 188