

Media Release

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CFMEU calls for pay rise for 457 visa workers

CFMEU National Secretary John Sutton today called on the Rudd Government to immediately raise the remuneration of temporary migrant workers in Australia under the 457 Visa scheme, saying that they had not had a pay rise for nearly two years.

“457 worker minimum pay has not been increased since May 2006. The Immigration Minister admitted as much in evidence to the Senate Estimates on 19 February this year,” Mr. Sutton said.

“That means 457 visas can lawfully be approved today - even in April 2008 – at May 2006 rates of \$41,850 in most categories and \$57,300 in I.T. occupations, and 10% less in regional Australia.”

“If Australians are to have any confidence in the 457 program the Government must move quickly to implement a policy of market rates for these overseas workers.”

Mr. Sutton said that if 457 salaries were simply increased by average wages growth of around 4% pa, it would mean an increase in the standard minimum salary to \$45,265, or an increase of \$3,415 or approximately 8.2%. The I.T. minimum salary increase would be more.

“If these workers are expected to perform the same work as Australian workers, which they are, it is incumbent on the Government to ensure they get the same pay,” he said.

“Anything less is by definition exploitative and a gratuitous free kick for businesses using 457 workers, at the expense of businesses who invest in training and employing Australian workers.”

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