

# *Media Advisory*

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## **457 scam busted – Government must act**

Federal Police, DIAC and the Workplace Ombudsman have raided a South Australian painting contractor, following a tip-off from the CFMEU. The raids have uncovered nine Filipino workers sponsored into Australia under the 457 Visa scheme and being shockingly exploited for up to 18 months.

CFMEU National Secretary John Sutton said that the discovery constituted the worst 457 abuse yet uncovered in South Australia and called on the Federal Government and regulatory authorities to 'throw the book' at the sponsoring employer.

"This disgraceful situation is a real test of the Rudd Governments new legislation designed to end exploitation of foreign nationals under the 457 scheme."

"These nine Filipinos were working seven days a week, being badly underpaid, getting no overtime and having compulsory deductions taken from their pay of up to \$600 per week."

"One of the workers was being charged rent despite not living in the allocated accommodation."

Mr. Sutton said that the contractor, Martina Corporation Pty Ltd was working on a number of sites including the Baulderstone Morphet Street Project. He said underpayments to the workers appear to be in excess of \$100,000.

"Authorities used federal warrants to seize documents and records that detail massive exploitation and a history of fraudulent paperwork."

Mr. Sutton said that there was evidence Martina had had other 457 visa workers and that he understood federal authorities were considering people traffic charges, particularly given one worker was paying \$200 a week to his sponsoring employer to keep his job and visa to remain in Australia.

"It appears the company has had a number of warnings from authorities about their treatment of 457 workers. In the context of what has been uncovered in South Australia with these raids, there are serious questions to be asked about how Government processes can allow a situation like this to go on for so long."

**For media comment please call John Sutton on 0419 254 180**