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Broken migration system harms migrants as agents exploit complex system

Flaws in Australia's broken migration system has enabled exploitative and harmful behaviour from migration agents taking advantage of international students and migrants.

Democracy in Colour National Director, Neha Madhok says:

“We continue to see international students and migrants being exploited at the hands of dodgy migration agents simply because Australia's migration system is broken.

“Our migration system is so complex to navigate that exploitation by immigration providers is rife — international students and temporary migrants are forced to rely on ‘loopholes’ created and endorsed by the government.

“We see many migrants who come to work and contribute to our economy having to resort to these particular pathways to avoid having their visa tied to employers that could abuse or exploit them.

“The contributions of migrant workers and international students is essential to our economy and we have a duty to ensure that while they are here, they are free from abuse. Every worker, regardless of their visa status, should be afforded the same workplace rights and access to support.

“Australia relies on the contributions of temporary visa holders to keep our economy afloat. We as a nation have a duty of care to ensure that while people are living and working in our country, that they can do so safely, with the same workplace protections as citizens and permanent residents. Every worker, regardless of their visa status, should be afforded the same workplace rights and access to support.

“Our migration system needs to provide robust protections for migrants to speak out against worker exploitation without the fear of visa cancellation.

“We see countless stories of international students who have come here to study, not being able to cope with the rising cost of living despite juggling both work and their education. They need to have access to the right support to avoid further exploitation at the hands of migration agents and potential employers.

“We have a duty to also ensure that migrants and international students who continue to do the right thing are safe and free from abuse. International students and migrants are treated as cash-cows and are simultaneously being blamed for the inadequacies of our broken migration system.”

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Democracy in Colour is a national racial and economic justice movement of over 16,000 members that advocates for people of colour and multicultural communities across the country. Read more at democracyincolour.org