

Unions Tasmania boosts support for migrant workers with the launch of its new project ahead of International Migrants Day

On International Migrants Day, Thursday the 18th of December, Unions Tasmania is putting a spotlight on the vital contribution migrant workers make to the state and the barriers they face when trying to raise concerns about unsafe or exploitative work.

To strengthen support for migrant workers, Unions Tasmania has launched a new initiative, the Migrant Work Rights Hub. The Hub, which has been operational for a few weeks, provides free, confidential information and support to migrant workers on temporary visas and their employers. Unions Tasmania is asking migrant workers, members of the community and organisations to connect with the Hub to ensure that no workers are left navigating complex workplace issues alone.

Unions Tasmania Secretary Jessica Munday said migrant workers are essential to Tasmania's workforce, yet remain disproportionately affected by exploitation, safety risks and wage theft. Many are placed in vulnerable situations where speaking up feels impossible.

"Migrant workers are essential to Tasmania's economy and communities, but the truth is they face additional and often severe barriers to reporting unsafe or unfair work."

"Fear of visa consequences, pressure from employers, language challenges, and being far away from family or community support all combine to keep workers silent. That is exactly why the Migrant Work Rights Hub exists. It gives workers a safe space to get that information and support without fear," said Ms Munday.

Since July 2024, national protections introduced under the *Migration Amendment (Strengthening Employer Compliance) Act* have strengthened reporting protections, created the Workplace Justice Visa, and expanded flexibility for employer-sponsored workers, but awareness of these reforms remains low.

"These protections only work if workers know about them and feel safe using them. The Hub helps bridge that gap by making sure migrant workers understand their rights and can come forward safely," she said.

Multicultural advocate, Aimen Jafri, welcomed the focus on migrant workers this week.

"Migrant workers demonstrate remarkable bravery and resilience when they leave their lives packed into a suitcase, stepping into the unknown to build a future for themselves. Their courage to leave behind home, family and familiarity is profound," said Ms Jarfi.

"Their hard work, entrepreneurial spirit and determination not only strengthen our economy but also enrich our multicultural identity. We must honour the sacrifices migrant workers make and ensure they are supported with dignity and fairness.

The Migrant Work Rights Hub is a vital initiative that empowers workers with the information and confidence workers need to speak up when something is wrong.”

Industrial Organiser at the Health and Community Services Union, Komal Gera, said migrant workers need clear and accessible information they can trust.

“As a migrant, I know how hard it can be to find clear, reliable information about rights and responsibilities in a new country. Migrant workers need a single, accessible point of information that reflects their diverse needs – and the Migrant Work Rights Hub helps fill that gap across industries.”

“In my work as an industrial organiser, I’ve seen workers who didn’t know about their leave or wage entitlements and ended up working unpaid for hours. When they finally discover the truth, some recover stolen wages with union support, but many stay silent out of fear of losing their visa. That’s why visa protections and initiatives like the Hub are so important – they give workers the confidence and tools to assert their rights safely.”

To mark International Migrants Day, the Tasman Bridge and Wrest Point Casino will be illuminated in orange in recognition of the courage, resilience and contribution of migrant communities across the state. The illumination also highlights the work of the new Migrant Work Rights Hub.

The Migrant Work Rights Hub is also hosting an information stall at Elizabeth Street Mall, Hobart from 1pm to 3pm, where workers and members of the community are encouraged to drop by and talk to staff.

“Unions Tasmania will always stand with workers who are vulnerable to exploitation.”

“Every worker, regardless of their visa, deserves safe and fair work and support they can trust,” said Ms Munday.

Jessica Munday, Aimen Jafri, Komal Gera, and representatives from the Migrant Work Rights Hub will be available for comment tomorrow:

When: Thursday, 18 December 2025
Where: Regatta Grounds near the Bridge of Remembrance
Time: 9:30 am

For media enquiries: Nick Upadhyay – 0416 277 677
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