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MEDIA RELEASE

**ABBOTT GOVERNMENT MUST IMMEDIATELY INVESTIGATE CLAIMS OF
WORKER EXPLOITATION**

Labor has called on the Abbott Government to immediately investigate allegations aired on the ABC Four Corners program last night about exploitation within the 417 Holiday Visa program.

The revelations that overseas workers employed on the 417 Holiday Visa are being exploited through mistreatment and underpayment are shocking and demand urgent investigation and swift action by the Abbott Government.

The former Labor Government amended the Migration Act to put in place an enforcement strategy that could be used to deter illegal work hire practices and sanction employers and labour suppliers who persist in non-compliant behaviour such as we saw on Four Corners last night. The Abbott Government therefore has the powers it needs to act in this matter and it must do so as a matter of urgency.

Australia's temporary work visa program must operate with an assurance to the community that robust safeguards are in place to protect all workers. The 417 Working Holiday Visa is for young people who want to holiday and work in Australia for up to a year. It must not be used as a back door avenue to source cheap labour on conditions the community would find appalling.

Labor's concerns for Australia's temporary work visa programs are precisely why, in March, we called for a Senate Inquiry into the impact of the temporary visa classes, including the 417 Working Holiday visa, the 416 Special Program visa and the 462 Work and Holiday visa on the labour market.

Labor recognises the need for temporary visa work programs in meeting skills shortages to support Australia's economic growth, however there can be no place in our workforce for the exploitation of workers and the cutting of wages and conditions to a specific group.

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