



Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur

# MEDIA RELEASE

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(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

## **Australia steps up efforts to prevent exploitation of foreign workers**

The Australian Government is again reminding Malaysians planning to work in Australia to be alert to visa scams and to carefully check their visa conditions.

The Government is concerned that some Malaysians are being tricked into scams in which agents offer travel to and work in Australia with an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA). People who are scammed often find themselves underpaid and living in sub-standard conditions.

Malaysians were amongst a group of more than 225 illegal workers located during a recent Australia-wide operation by the Australian Border Force targeting visa fraud and the exploitation of foreign workers. The illegal workers had overstayed their visas or were working in breach of their visa conditions, including their ETA. They were located working in industries ranging from agriculture to retail and hospitality.

Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Rod Smith, said these scams were deliberately misleading people into breaking Australian law. “We don’t want to see Malaysians exploited by unscrupulous agents,” he said. “The Australian Government is urging all travellers to ensure they understand what their visa or ETA allows them to do while in Australia.”

Most Malaysians are able to travel to Australia on an ETA. However, an ETA does not carry any right to work in Australia. It is the responsibility of individual travellers to ensure they have the correct visa to visit, study or work in Australia. Visa Finder helps travellers search for the right visa: [www.border.gov.au/trav/visa-1](http://www.border.gov.au/trav/visa-1).

People involved in the organisation of visa fraud or illegal work can face penalties of up to 10 years’ imprisonment, or fines up to AUD\$210,000. Individuals caught working illegally in Australia are detained and removed to their home country. They may also face a ban on future travel to Australia and incur the costs of their removal.

Representatives of the Malaysian and Australian Governments recently met in Canberra and agreed to work together to address this issue.

## Contact

If you are aware of, or suspect a scam in relation to Australian visas, you should inform the Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur by sending an email to [visakl@dfat.gov.au](mailto:visakl@dfat.gov.au) or report it to the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection using the Immigration and Citizenship Online Report: [www.border.gov.au/about/contact/immigration-and-citizenship-online-report](http://www.border.gov.au/about/contact/immigration-and-citizenship-online-report).

More information on proper processes and reputable channels to apply for Australian visas in Malaysia are set out at:

- The website of our service delivery partner, VFS Global, that operates the Australian Visa Application Centre in Kuala Lumpur:  
[www.vfsglobal.com/australia/malaysia/index.html](http://www.vfsglobal.com/australia/malaysia/index.html).
- The Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection's website:  
[www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au).