

# OPINION

murrayvalleystandard.com.au/opinion

## EDITORIAL

# No-one wins when racism overtakes reason



**T**HEY took our jobs! In four words, repeatedly yelled out by an angry crowd, the TV show South Park summed up the number-one reason people worry about immigrant workers.

The same sentiment is present in the Murraylands, judging by the comments that appear on our Facebook feed every time we publish a story about the issue.

That's why a pretty dry story about a change in government policy makes it onto page three of today's edition.

Today is too soon to praise PM Turnbull for the changes he says he will make, and too soon to damn him.

Politically speaking, yes, it's a smart move: the federal government gets to capitalise on anti-immigrant sentiments without necessarily reducing the number of foreign

workers in Australia. The numbers 457 have come to be hated in every town where there aren't enough jobs to go around, which seems to be everywhere these days.

But a temporary work visa by any other name will smell pretty similar.

What will be really interesting is the "labour market testing" that will be needed to prove there are not enough suitably skilled locals to fill the available jobs.

Of the 1000-plus people without a job in the Murraylands, how many would be completely unsuited to pick produce or process meat after a bit of training?

Anyway, now that the announcement has been made, the government needs to follow up with details so employers and workers can plan their futures with certainty. And unlike in previous cases such as 18C,

it needs to walk the walk by showing it can get the changes through parliament.

While we wait for that, here's something to bear in mind: the workers now in Australia on 457 visas, and other foreign workers, are not the real problem.

They are too often exploited by labour hire companies who underpay them and cram them into share houses.

I can understand the frustration, anger and disappointment of being turned down at interview after interview - I've been there.

But punch up: blame the HR agencies which manipulate the 457 system, the companies which use them and the successive governments which have allowed them to flourish.

Racism is too simple an answer to a complex problem.

**Peri Strathearn**

## FACEBOOK COMMENTS

### POOR JUDGEMENT

I guess you don't need to be intelligent to be a judge these days, another breach will mean harsher penalty but it might only take one more breach for someone to get seriously hurt or worse ("Eight charges heard in court", April 13).

**Natalie Gill**

### LIVES WASTED

Good on the courts... really! How many times do they get off... how many lives are wasted because the courts let them off... too many people have to suffer for the limp wisted systems... ("Eight charges heard in court", April 13).

**Bronwyn Oliver**

### PRISONS OVERFLOWING

I believe they are under instruction because our prisons are so full to capacity ("Eight charges heard in court", April 13).

**Yvonne Vonnie Thomas**

### HOME DETENTION

Then at the very least they could put them on home detention... that way they can be tracked and police would know when their partner/ ex is at risk and, or they are breaking their conditions of parole (again!) ("Eight charges heard in court", April 13).

**Carina Lawless**

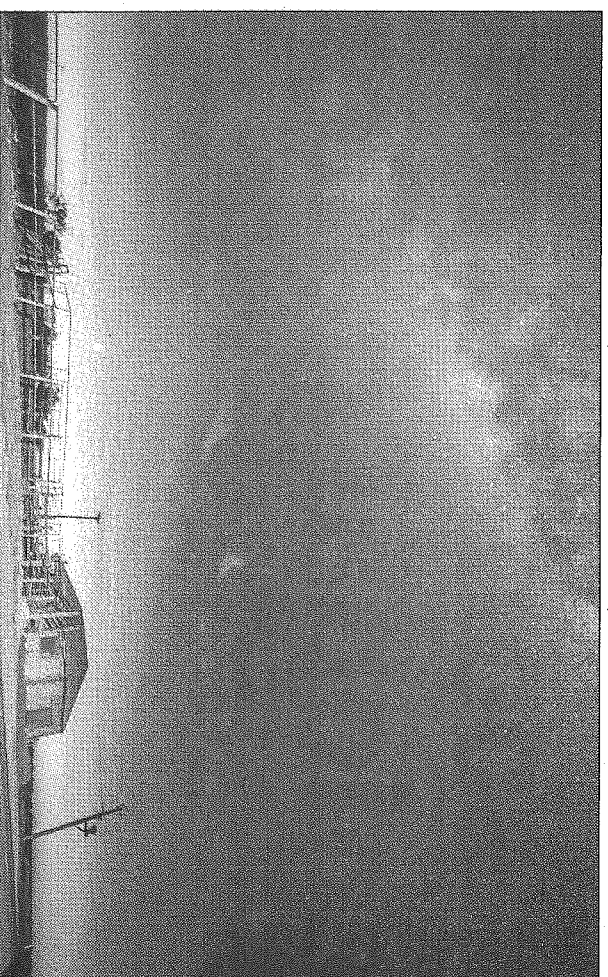
### POINTLESS ORDER

This happens way too often. Why bother having an intervention order? Not very encouraging for people to get one if they're not taken seriously ("Eight charges heard in court", April 13).

**Cher Gordon**

### RELIANT ON 457'S

Business reliant on 457 because they have become accustomed to paying cheap wages to expand profit margins, again at the expense of the country and it's people ("Government will abolish 457 visas", April 18). But given the opportunity to do so by government.



**PHOTO WORTH 1000 WORDS:** Graham and Karen from Aussie Rambling captured this shot of the night sky over Murray Bridge last month.

Who's to blame?

**Clinton Allen**

### DISTRACTION TACTIC

I'm sorry but this is quite a standard thing that governments do to divert attention ("Government will abolish 457 visas", April 18). It's quite simple they will still occur but just under another name. And once we all cotton on to that they will change it again.

**Andrew Iyerman**

### FITNESS INSPIRATION

Awesome write-up guys ("Scott Liebelt vows he will never give up", April 18). Congratulations on your new business venture. I wish you all the best x

**Lisa Hopgood**

### CASEY WILL BE MISSED

Lovely young lady ("Farewell from journalist Casey Gregory", April 17). She will be missed, but good luck with the new direction.

**Gail Robertson**

### TOUGH COMPETITION

I want to give everyone else a chance, thought it wouldn't be fair ("Pumpkin size matters", April 19).

**Ian Pithers**

### NEW LIFE AT MONARTO

Beautiful sight to see ("Myeshia the giraffe gives birth", April 19). Congratulations to Monarto Zoo and to happen during the school holidays is excellent.

**David Finnie**

### WHOLE NEW WORLD

So gorgeous ("Myeshia the giraffe gives birth", April 19). So nice to see her out in the open not penned up in a small cage.

**Lana Stewart**

### APRIL THE GIRAFFE

Thank goodness it wasn't as over-hyped as April the giraffe ("Myeshia the giraffe gives birth", April 19).

**Keren Strathearn**

## LETTER

### BIG BUSINESSES NEED SMALLER POWER BILLS

I welcome the draft determination of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) regarding the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy's joint electricity purchasing group, which included major industry stakeholders in the Hammond electorate.

I submitted a letter to the ACCC in support of SACOME's joint electricity purchasing group, as I can see the benefits it will provide the involved businesses.

On a number of occasions it has been brought to my attention the prospects local businesses face as a result of excessive power prices in South Australia and the forward planning involved to factor in these increases.

Investment within our state needs to be encouraged and with South Australia having the most expensive and unreliable power in the nation, it does the exact opposite.

South Australian businesses are having to forecast major increases to their operating costs, whilst trying to remain competitive with interstate counterparts and markets which have the luxury of lower input costs.

I do not want to see South Australia not considered for current or future investment as a result of its unreliability and feasibility to operate, which is why I strongly support the draft determination of the ACCC.

The joint electricity venture has the potential to encourage new generation or underutilised generation to enter the market, which in turn will create business sustainability and future investment.

I know the establishment of a joint buying group will benefit major businesses within Hammond and the state Liberals will continue to support other South Australian companies who wish to participate in a scheme similar to SACOME's, in an attempt to lower their electricity costs.

**Adrian Pederick, Member for Hammond**

### PHOTO WORTH 1000 WORDS

Have you taken a colourful, unusual or perfectly-timed photo that deserves a wider audience?

Email it to [peri.strathearn@fairfax-media.com.au](mailto:peri.strathearn@fairfax-media.com.au) or tag @MV\_Standard on Instagram.

Photos may be printed on *The Standard's* opinion page or shared on social media.

## CONNECT WITH US

### EMAIL

Send letters to:  
[dylan.hogarth@fairfaxmedia.com.au](mailto:dylan.hogarth@fairfaxmedia.com.au)

### PHONE

Call us:  
(08) 9532 8000

### SOCIAL

[facebook.com/murrayvalleystandard](https://www.facebook.com/murrayvalleystandard)  
[twitter.com/mv\\_standard](https://twitter.com/mv_standard)

### POST

PO Box 244  
Murray Bridge,  
SA, 5253

All letters must include name and address for publication. A telephone number must be included for verification and preference will be given to letters no more than 250 words. The editor reserves the right to edit letters where necessary.