



7 April 2020

MEDIA RELEASE: 100 ORGANISATIONS URGE MORRISON GOVERNMENT TO EXPAND *JOBKEEPER* PAYMENT TO ALL WORKERS

Over 120 civil society, faith, business, union and migrant organisations across Australia have united to call on the Morrison Government to urgently expand its wage subsidy *JobKeeper* scheme to include all working people in Australia regardless of their visa status or how long they've been working in their current job.

Without a safety net, many migrants who contribute to our society will be trapped in Australia and living in poverty. The Morrison Government has called on these workers to return home when many of them do not have enough savings to pay for an airfare home and many do not have superannuation to draw from to survive.

The signatories to this statement (attached) know it is wrong that 1.1 million temporary visa holders are being locked out of the financial assistance that was announced for other working people and are calling on the Morrison Government and National Cabinet to show leadership and include all working people as part of the *JobKeeper* scheme.

The Morrison Government say they are proud of our cultural diversity, but these words are empty if they are leaving people behind during a time of crisis.

Australia cannot afford to leave migrant workers on temporary visas behind as we face COVID-19. Everyone in our community should be able to access real support during a public health emergency.

Quotes attributable to Director of Migrant Workers Centre Matt Kunkel

“We cannot afford to leave anyone behind. Excluding 1.1 million temporary visa holders from any income support will push them onto the streets at a time when food and housing security is essential for fighting this pandemic.

“There are more than 100 organisations on this list from right across civil society, calling for the government to extend income support to all. The government must listen and act. It has a duty of care to support those who need it most, the health and wellbeing of our communities depends on it.

“If we don't expand the wage subsidy to include temporary migrant workers they will be forced on to the streets at the height of a pandemic – we can't allow this to happen and this is why over 100 organisations have come together to call for a wage subsidy that covers all workers.”

MIGRANT WORKERS CENTRE

Empowering migrant workers in Victoria to understand their rights, enforce them in their workplaces, and connect with other migrant workers.



“The government’s move to leave out temporary visa holders ignores the fact that the vast majority of people on temporary visas either can’t get home because of closed borders or they do not have enough savings to pay for an airfare home.”

Quotes attributable CEO Migration Council of Australia CEO Carla Wilshire

“Australia has a duty of care to all that remain within our borders to ensure they do not face undue hardship. This is a time for coming together and looking after those who are vulnerable.

“There are pressing public health and safety considerations, it is critical to stopping the spread of the virus that everyone has access to a basic level of support if they need it. This is a pragmatic health policy that is in the interests of us all.”

Quotes attributable CEO National Retail Association Dominique Lamb

“Retail is an incredibly diverse industry. Our employees come from all walks of life, and our employers are keen to see all of them taken care of in this difficult time.

Quotes attributable Fr Peter Smith on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

“It’s our belief that the government has a duty of care to all people living here at this time. We need to respect the most vulnerable in our communities and some of our migrant workers who don’t have permanent citizenship are among the most vulnerable. We call on the Government to include these people in all compensation packages.”

Quotes attributable Committee for Adelaide Chief Executive Officer Jodie van Deventer

“There are so many people from overseas living in Australia who contribute to our economy and like many, have lost their jobs. Without support, they have no way of feeding their families or paying rent.”

Quotes attributable to Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Moderator Rev David Baker

“As a nation we are finding our life together in new ways. It’s important that no one gets left behind.”

Quotes attributable Queensland Community Alliance Lead Organiser Devett Kennedy

“We represent over 1.7 million Queenslanders who believe it is time to include every employee and business. If you’re in Australia, you are our responsibility to look after. Your visa status or length of employment shouldn’t matter.”



Quotes attributable Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey

“Migrant workers prepare our meals, clean our schools and care for our sick and elderly.

“They have established lives in our communities and pay taxes to our state and federal governments. They deserve equal access to financial support.”

Quotes attributable Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary Luke Hilakari

“Migrant workers are part of our communities - on the one hand the Morrison Government is praising these workers while on the other they’re demanding they go home. This isn’t good enough.

“We call on the Morrison Government to leave no worker behind – casual or migrant worker – and expand the JobKeeper scheme to include them immediately.”

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