



Monday, 13 April 2020

ECCV urges the Australian Government to support temporary migrants during the COVID-19 crisis

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) urges the Commonwealth Government to reconsider its coronavirus response for temporary migrants to avoid a humanitarian and economic disaster in Australia.

The \$320b COVID-19 stimulus package fails to provide a safety net to approximately 1.1 million people in Australia who are on temporary work or study visas. This exclusion puts a significant percentage of our population at risk of destitution, while also risking major Australian industries in the future such as education, agriculture and hospitality.

ECCV Chairperson, Eddie Micallef, believes the humanitarian and economic costs associated with excluding people on temporary visas in Australia can no longer be ignored.

"The threat to people who are now out of work and can no longer support themselves without any safety net is immediate. ECCV has received reports that migrant communities on temporary visas are in crisis, with the sad recent case of one international student taking their own life as a result of their circumstances," said Mr Micallef.

Australia's reputation as a preferred destination for people from around the world for work and study is being jeopardised, with the long-term cost to the \$37b international education industry directly at risk, including the 250,000 Australians currently employed by this sector.

"Australia has done well to position itself as a world class destination for international students over the last two decades. This reputation can be undone very quickly if our political leaders promote an isolationist view that if temporary visa holders cannot support themselves during a crisis like this they should just go home," Mr Micallef said.

"This position is not good enough, when the borders of so many countries are currently closed, even to their own citizens."

"The Australian Government urgently needs to step up and include temporary visa holders in the interim JobKeeper scheme and establish a dedicated hardship fund for international students to avoid creating a local underclass with no access to income or welfare."

For interview opportunities, please contact Chris Christoforou – ECCV Executive Officer – on cchristoforou@eccv.org.au or call 0428 844 711.



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Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) is the peak advocacy body for culturally diverse communities in Victoria, since 1974. As the voice for multicultural Victoria, ECCV is the conduit with government and other stakeholders. We are a member driven organisation representing over 220 organizations on behalf of 70,000 members across Victoria.

www.eccv.org.au