

22 April 2020

The Hon Dominic Perrottet MP
Treasurer
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Treasurer

Direct Assistance COVID-19 Temporary Visa Holders

I write to request urgent support and benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic to temporary visa holders who have lost work and income as a result of the COVID-19 emergency but are not eligible for other financial support.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing far reaching disruption across the community and economy. While I welcome the stimulus and support packages from all levels of government, I am concerned that some people are falling through the cracks and are at risk of hardship and homelessness.

Wage subsidies, income support and Centrelink welfare payments do not cover student and temporary visa holders outside of New Zealand. Overseas workers who have lost their jobs or income as a result of the health emergency may not be able to get back to their home countries due to border closures, flight cancellations or inadequate funds, leaving them vulnerable, with flow-on effects that will increase the spread and impact of COVID-19. I'm aware of others whose families are now unable to provide financial or practical support due to COVID-19 impacts in their home country.

Temporary visa holders are also less likely to be aware of local emergency aid services and agencies, and it is vital they can access up to date information through Service NSW.

Without any income, many affected overseas workers and students could end up homeless. A spike in homelessness rates at a time when we must urgently house existing homeless populations to reduce the spread of COVID-19 would be disastrous. Businesses and universities will be in a much stronger position when the pandemic is under control if they can rehire skilled and experienced staff, including overseas workers and students who are already in the country.

I understand that both governments in South Australia and Tasmania have both recognised this gap and taken the lead to prevent destitution and homelessness.

Could you please urgently extend financial support to overseas workers and students on temporary visas who have lost their job and income from COVID 19, ensure Service NSW can advise them about available help and inform me what action you will take?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney
CC: NSW Premier; Minister for Customer Service;
Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services

