



JENNY LEONG MP

MEMBER FOR NEWTOWN



**THE
GREENS**

18 May 2020

Mary Waterford AM

Chair Sydney Alliance

David Barrow

Lead Organiser Sydney Alliance

Dear Mary and David,

Re: Financial support for those people in NSW not able to access JobKeeper or JobSeeker

Thank you for your letter calling for NSW government support for those facing severe hardship who have not been given access to *JobKeeper* or *JobSeeker* payments during the Covid-19 emergency, and for sharing the individual stories which show just how dire this situation is for so many people.

I am replying as the Greens Multiculturalism and Housing spokesperson on behalf of all of my Greens colleagues in the NSW Parliament.

The Greens fully support the calls by Sydney Alliance for urgent action on this issue. In NSW and nationally, we have been advocating for support for this cohort of residents - temporary visa holders, international students, people seeking asylum and those without a visa status (undocumented workers) – since it became apparent that the federal government had shamefully neglected to provide any safety net for them.

In March, as the NSW Greens spokesperson for Housing, I [called on the Premier](#) and shared many hundreds of signatures, supporting all those in insecure employment regardless of visa status to be supported by the government so that no one would be evicted into homelessness.

In the two special sittings of the NSW Parliament during the pandemic, we have focused our advocacy and representation on ensuring protection for renters, the measures that have been secured will provide improved protections for all people who rent in NSW, regardless of their citizenship status. It is our strong position that no one should be evicted into homelessness during this crisis, no matter what their status and level of income loss. The Greens are committed to continuing to work to ensure those who are most at risk are supported and protected during this time.

As the NSW Greens spokesperson on Multiculturalism, I wrote to the Premier and released a [media statement](#) in March calling on the NSW government to take urgent action to support all those who were facing immediate and severe hardship as a result of losing their incomes due to the pandemic.



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Our call made the following requests that all people in NSW regardless of their visa status, be provided with the following:

- Access to all NSW Government services and supports
- Clear messaging be sent to those who may not normally be able to access services such as Medicare, so they are able to get the care they need without risk of repercussions or based on their ability to pay.
- Increased communication and warnings of the latest restrictions and police powers shared with those who speak languages, and access news in languages other than English.

Additionally we called on the Premier as a member of the National Cabinet, to raise as a priority the importance of care and support for non-citizens who were not covered by *JobSeeker* or *JobKeeper*.

We also supported the call for the removal of refugees and asylum seekers from detention centres such as Villawood which are crowded and susceptible to increased risk of COVID-19 infection.

My recent [Op Ed](#) in the Sydney Morning Herald, called on the government to support migrant workers and international students. I made the point that while the virus does not discriminate, the measures and protections that are available and the support given by the government, is absolutely (and disgracefully) determined by the colour of an individual's passport or the status of their visa.

At federal level our Greens colleagues and NSW Senator Mehreen Faruqi has also been ensuring that the plight of those who are most vulnerable and have been left out of the current measures are not forgotten.

We thank you and all the Alliance members who signed the letter, for your work advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community and can assure you that this issue is a priority for me personally and for the Greens in all levels of government.

Please do let us know if you would like more information about any areas of our work or how we can do more to support your efforts.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Leong MP

**Member for Newtown
NSW Greens Multiculturalism and Housing Spokesperson**

