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Migrant workers are expected to simply 'return home' as the federal government offers no support to temporary visa holders and international students

The Federal Government has failed to provide critically needed support to help 1.1 million migrant workers get through COVID-19.

National Co-Director, Neha Madhok says, "The Morrison Government does not address the very real public health crisis that millions of workers are facing. Asking them to 'go home' or raid their meagre retirement savings to survive COVID-19 is not only short-sighted, it's racist.

"The Government must extend income support to all workers. Not doing so risks the entire community's health and shirks Australia's moral responsibility to look after the wellbeing of all who are here during an unprecedented pandemic.

"Simply 'going home' is not an option for many. With borders closed these workers have nowhere else to go. The Morrison Government has left them stranded with no support whatsoever.

"Many essential services employ people on temporary visas and international students. They deliver our food, pick our fruit and vegetables and work in our supermarkets. They wait in restaurants and work in our hospitals.

"The lack of support for this group of people shows that the Government treats migrants and international students as cash cows. They hire them for cheap labour and ask them to pay huge education fees, but when things get difficult, they wash their hands clean of any responsibility.

"This pandemic does not discriminate based on visa status, and neither should we. Everyone deserves to be safe.

"Access to wage subsidies is a public health issue and a human rights issue," said Ms Madhok.

Democracy in Colour is calling on the Government to consider the livelihoods and wellbeing of migrant workers by providing a wage subsidy for them in the coronavirus related financial support.

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