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1.1 million people in Australia are still left out as JobSeeker payments start trickling in

The Federal Government's JobSeeker payments have begun to trickle in for people who have lost employment or income during the pandemic. But there are still 1.1 million migrants in Australia who have been left out of any support

National Co-Director of Democracy in Colour, Neha Madhok says, "The Federal Government has refused to address the health and safety of a large part of our community who are left with no income and no safety net.

"Chief Ministers and State Premiers have begun to offer wage subsidies of their own to people vulnerable during this time. This is a great step forward but ultimately wage subsidies are a federal issue. We need a federal response to ensure regular payment to keep people afloat and consistency in payments across the country.

"Some state governments have announced this week that they will provide some relief to international students which is overdue and very welcome but this requires a coordinated national response. We are calling on the State Premiers and Chief Ministers and publicly demanding the Government provide a federal wage subsidy by expanding JobKeeper and JobSeeker to all.

"This is a public health issue, we've seen stories of migrants who have been left without any income. Internationally, there have been countries, like Singapore, where there has been a spike in cases again because migrant workers were left out of any support.

"Without any income safety net, migrants have to keep working in unsafe conditions and can't socially isolate properly. This drives home the fact that if we honestly want to 'flatten the curve' the whole community must be involved and supported. We don't want to see another rise in cases here, especially when we know it can easily be prevented.

"Democracy in Colour is calling for universal basic income for everyone who has been out of work or forced into isolation during the COVID-19 crisis, regardless of visa status. The virus doesn't discriminate based on visa status, so it's on the Federal Government to protect everyone during these turbulent times.

"The Federal Government has purposefully chosen to leave out migrants, international students, undocumented workers and people seeking asylum in their support packages. This deliberate exclusion has left over a million people without money for essentials like food and rent. We need universal basic income for all," says Ms Madhok.

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