

New report shows that migrants are disproportionately affected by wage theft and exploitation

Racial and economic justice advocacy organisation Democracy in Colour is calling for a wage subsidy for all after the release of the appalling figures in the report released by the [Migrant Worker Justice Initiative](#). The report proves wage theft amongst migrant workers and international students is still endemic in Australia.

National Co-Director Tim Lo Surdo says, "Over three quarters of those on temporary visas were paid below the minimum hourly rate. The vast majority of international students and those on temporary visas are having their wages stolen.

"Not only are people on temporary and student visas being subjected to industrial scale wage theft, they've also been cruelly excluded from coronavirus income support by the Federal Government during a global pandemic.

"Migrant workers are the lifeblood of our economy. During the pandemic they have been crucial essential workers, delivering food, picking fresh produce, and working as carers to those who have had to stay inside and isolate. The Federal Government's refusal to provide them with any income security during these precarious times is morally bankrupt and racist.

"What is even more distressing is how wage theft and exploitation disproportionately affects people of colour. Almost forty per cent of those on temporary visas from non-English speaking backgrounds earned less than \$12 an hour, double the amount those from English speaking backgrounds.

"We're seeing that this vulnerable group in Australia have been left in the cold without any income support during the pandemic and forced to continue to work just to be able to pay for essentials like rent, food and medicine. Is this what we call a 'fair go' for all?

"Democracy in Colour is calling on the Federal Government to extend income support payments to migrants and those on temporary visas so that they can continue to be a part of our society in a way that is humane and fair as the economy starts to reopen. The Government also needs to take urgent action to address the wage theft epidemic targeting people of colour.

"The Federal Government must step up and provide life-saving wage subsidies to the people who need it most by extending the Federal JobSeeker and JobKeeper Payment Schemes to include those on temporary visas," says Mr Lo Surdo.

CONTACT PERSON: ALIYA AHMAD 0428684307 OR aliya@democracyincolour.org

