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Federal Government refuses to acknowledge migrant workers' humanity in sobering new report

A new report by the [Migrant Worker Justice Initiative](#) confirms the **dehumanising effects of expecting migrant workers to support up our economy while offering nothing in return.**

Democracy in Colour urges the Federal Government to consider the livelihoods and wellbeing of migrant workers by guaranteeing a wage subsidy for every person affected by COVID-19 - no matter if they are a citizen, permanent resident or temporary visa holder.

National Co-Director, Neha Madhok says "For years, the temporary visa system has been a way for large companies to get away with underpaying and mistreating migrant workers.

'Many politicians are happy to allow migrant workers and international students to be used as cash cows. People who pay money to work here, who have no access to a social safety net and who do back-breaking work. And in this crisis, Scott Morrison has chosen to leave them out in the cold with no work, no support, and no way home.

"Scott Morrison is on the wrong side of history. It's unconscionable that we expect temporary visa holders to prop up Australia's economy and refuse them any support during a pandemic.

"With restricted travel both domestically and internationally, over 1.1 million temporary visa holders are left in limbo. More than a quarter of migrant workers cannot afford the exorbitant costs of flights home and now are stranded here in an impossible situation.

"More than half our migrant workforce predict that they will have no income and no savings by the end of the year. This means that there are thousands of marginalised migrant workers with no means to make a living for themselves during an unprecedented health and economic crisis.

"The best way to build back after this pandemic is through our permanent migration program, not the flimsy and exploitative temporary visa system that allows companies to exploit migrant workers and turn them into second class citizens.

This report further highlights the grave situation for migrant workers in this country. No matter where we come from, we all work hard for our families.

"Migrant workers and temporary visa holders want the same things that we all work hard for - a safe place to call home, food on the table and a healthy family. Instead, Scott Morrison chooses to throw them under the bus and deny their humanity when they most need support.

"Building back from COVID is an opportunity to make sure everyone gets a fair go. Jobs that temporary visa holders are pushed into, like fruit picking, are essential and provide us with the produce we enjoy. This work should be respected, the pay should be decent and the conditions fair.

"Australia's long term plan to build back from COVID must be one that leaves no one behind" said Ms Madhok.

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



Democracy in Colour is a national racial and economic justice organisation led by people of colour. It runs campaigns that tackle structural racism and build the power of people of colour to shape the critical issues that affect our lives.