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Local Councils stand up for the 2 million people abandoned by the Federal Government during the pandemic

Racial and economic justice organisation Democracy in Colour and Welcoming Australia are calling for local Councils across Australia to commit to supporting the 2 million migrant workers, refugees, people seeking asylum and international students during the pandemic.

In a joint letter, the two advocacy organisations have received commitments from 14 local Councils to sign a Mayoral Declaration that commits to **providing financial or in-kind support to workers who are currently left out of the Federal Government's income support schemes**. The participating Councils have also declared an intent to support all people in the community to ensure no one is left behind during the crisis.

Democracy in Colour National Co-Director, Neha Madhok says, "There is clearly an appetite from local Councils to support everyone in their communities. The 14 Councils that have signed this Mayoral Declaration are taking a stand with us and saying that it's time all workers, regardless of visa status, are protected and taken care of during this pandemic.

"The economic impacts of this pandemic have hit us all in ways that we might not have been prepared for, but we're seeing now that migrants, international students, people seeking asylum and refugees have been left out of any income support from the Federal Government.

"It's unconscionable that the Federal Government has willfully abandoned over 2 million people in this country during this global health and economic crisis.

"The more Councils that we have signed onto the pledge, the stronger our message to the Morrison Government is. We have the power to tell the Government that we are a country that should, and can, support everyone in the community during these trying times," said Neha Madhok.

Welcoming Australia CEO, Aleem Ali says, "People have been left without a safety net and are relying on the goodwill of Local Councils, State Governments, community organisations and generous individuals to continue to pay their rent and put food on their table.

"Many Local Councils are standing in the gap for recently arrived migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum because they value communities where people of all backgrounds can belong, contribute and thrive.

"I encourage more Councils to sign this pledge to demonstrate the groundswell of support for vulnerable people, and in recognition of the work that they are already doing," says Aleem Ali.

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Councils that have committed and signed the pledge are:

1. City of Hobart (TAS)
2. City of Sydney (NSW)
3. Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
4. City of Fremantle (WA)
5. City of Victoria Park (WA)
6. Hobsons Bay City Council (VIC)
7. Leeton Shire Council (NSW)
8. Randwick City Council (NSW)
9. Mornington Peninsula Shire (VIC)
10. City of Charles Sturt (SA)
11. Inner West Council (NSW)
12. Hume City Council (VIC)
13. City of Whittlesea (VIC)
14. City of Cockburn (WA)

Councils can sign onto the pledge here: <https://www.nobodyleftbehind.org.au/>