



Australian Temporary Residents COVID -19 Relief Appeal Launched

“More than two million temporary visa holders living and working in Australia have been left in limbo and risk breaking migration laws as the coronavirus pandemic brings global travel to a near standstill.”

“The Migration Council of Australia says it has particular concerns for two groups of visa holders – those on multiple entry tourist visas who can’t meet visa conditions, and those on temporary work visas who would be vulnerable in the event of a downturn. Some visa holders are also at risk of breaching visa rules if their work conditions change.”

“A significant proportion of the aforementioned visa holders are of Indian origin. The Indian Society of WA (ISWA) is exploring many ways to address the adverse impact that COVID-19, has already had on them”, said ISWA President Surya Ambati. “One such initiative is the Appeal that has been established in partnership with the Multicultural Services Centre of WA (MSC) for Australia’s temporary Residents impacted by COVID -19. We urge members and the wider community to contribute to it and be involved in many other ways”, he added

“Concerns are growing for multiple entry tourist visa holders who can’t meet visa conditions, and those on student/ temporary work visas whose work opportunities are fast disappearing. MSC has the licence to collect money and goods, under the Charitable Collections Act 1946 for such purposes. One of MSC’s objects is to undertake initiatives to respond to natural and other disasters and humanitarian causes and so we are very pleased to offer our services”, said MSC’s Chairman Dr. Prabha Karan Krishnan. The government should urgently consider issuing provisional registrations for overseas trained doctors who can work under the supervision of APHRA registered doctors to ensure we have an adequate number of medical practitioners to deal with the worsening COVID-19 situation,” he added.

“The impact of the pandemic on temporary residents is yet to be reflected in the Australian governments’ COVID-19 initiatives to date. A large portion of temporary residents are already in limbo not being able to leave Australia due to international flight cancellations, ineligibility for financial support from governments federal and state, not having access to timely and affordable medical treatment including access to mental health, should they contract COVID-19/or have to self-isolate etc.”, said Ramdas Sankaran, MSC’s CEO.

“Every cent donated will be used to alleviate the financial hardships of of Australian temporary residents affected by COVID-19.” Just as we did in the case of the Kerala Flood Relief Appeal, **All** costs relating to administration, accounting, audit etc. will be borne by MSC. We partnered with ISWA in raising funds for flood relief work in Kerala and I am confident that this initiative will be just as successful,” he added.

“For electronic banking purposes those transferring money can do so using the following details. Account Name: **Multicultural Services Centre of WA - Natural Disasters**, BSB: **633000**; Account Number: **1606 45594** and Reference: **COVID-19**. Donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible and receipts will be issued” said Dr. Krishnan. Alternately, online donations can be made through the link below. <https://indiancommunityperth.com.au/coronavirus-fundraiser/> A Facebook Fundraiser has also been started by Surya Ambati and all funds collected will be deposited by Facebook directly into MSC’s bank account.

Ethnic Communities Council of WA President, Mr. Suresh Rajan commended ISWA and MSC who are members of the Council for leading the way in supporting non-permanent residents, especially overseas students, whose contribution to our economy is worth more than 15 billion dollars annually. “I call upon the Prime Minister to urgently intervene to ensure steps are taken to obviate the need for temporary migration stream residents to apply individually to have their visa status changed so that they can remain lawfully in Australia, for at least the next six months. Otherwise, given the massive number of people in this situation, the system will be clogged and they will find their residency situation unlawful for no fault of theirs,” said Mr. Rajan.

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