



Com.It.Es.
Comitato degli Italiani all'Estero
South Australia

13 May 2020

The Hon Steven Marshall MP
Premier of South Australia
State Administration Centre
200 Victoria Square, Adelaide SA 5000
Email: premier@sa.gov.au

CC: The Hon Jing-Lee MLC – Assistant Minister to the Premier
Mr Norman Schueler OAM – Chair SAMEAC

RE: Availability of Assistance to Temporary Visa Holders

Dear Premier, *Steven*

As the representative body of the Italian community in South Australia, we are writing to express our community's deep and widespread concerns about the livelihood of Italian and all temporary visa holders whose employment has been interrupted or terminated because of the coronavirus emergency. Such visa holders, irrespective of citizenship, do not qualify for the financial assistance approved by the Federal Parliament on 23 March 2020 and in additional subsequent measures.

Italian community social and welfare organisations throughout Australia have been flooded by thousands of enquiries requests for support by temporary visa holders who have lost their jobs because of recent business closures. Most of the enquiries are individuals who have lost their jobs because of recent closures of restaurants, cafes, tourism and hospitality establishments and now have no alternative means of support. While most of them are single individuals, a significant proportion also have a family to support.

The South Australian government has allocated a \$13.8 million support for international students and we commend you and your government for doing this. However, there are many other temporary visa holders who again have missed out from any form of support. These individuals not on student visas are typically older and in fact may have families. As we have seen from the Victorian, ACT, Tasmanian and Queensland government's is that they have provided support to all visa holders providing approximately a \$250 one-off payment to individuals in financial hardship as a result from COVID19, with families being provided up to a maximum of \$1,000.

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These one-off payments, can really assist the wider temporary visa holders to survive these difficult times as they are unable to receive any other government assistance, and ultimately it will allow them to remain here for when the economy re-opens again in South Australia so they can return to their workplace and assist in rebooting the local economy. When many local businesses re-open again they require their experienced staff to return in order to ramp-up services, however if many of these visa holders were forced to return overseas then these local businesses would be placed in a predicament where they would no longer have their experienced employees to allow them to return to their pre-COVID output, and therefore they would be further impacted which would ultimately further hinder the local economy and workforce. It really would be a detriment to the South Australian economy if we were to lose some of these visa holders who have and continue to contribute positively to our economy and to the local community.

These visa holders are a critical component of the workforce, particularly in activities such as seasonal agricultural harvests, restaurants, cafes and catering services, and tourist services. For many years, their employment has been making a substantial and growing contribution to the economy and to the wellbeing of all Australians and will continue to do so in years to come. Quite apart from compassionate and other deserving grounds, it is vital that these workers be assisted to endure the hardship of the current crisis and be available to contribute fully to the post-hibernation economic recovery.

Dear Premier, we thank you for your consideration, and hope you will be able to act urgently to provide some appropriate relief to ease the plight of workers with temporary visas who have been caught up in unfortunate circumstances not of their making.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Christian Verdicchio
President of Com.It.Es South Australia