

Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Temporary Migration - Temporary Visa Holders

Question reference number: IQ21-000051

Senator: Raff Ciccone

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:**

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 09 July 2021

Question:

What support services does the Department of Social Services provide, or fund, for temporary visa holders? Provide a breakdown of the services provided or funded by year and temporary visa category over the previous five years.

Answer:

The Department of Social Services (the department) provide a range of supports that temporary visa holders are able to access.

This includes the Emergency Relief (ER) program which can provide immediate food, material assistance, and financial support through paying a bill for a client. ER services are delivered by community organisations. Access to ER is free and there are no citizenship or residency requirements to access ER.

Under the \$200 million Community Support Package, \$150 million has been allocated to more than 300 providers, combined across all Financial Wellbeing programs that can be accessed by Temporary Visa Holders. Furthermore, of the \$150 million, \$18.5 million has been provided to the Australian Red Cross to deliver ER and counselling support exclusively to temporary visa holders. This comprises of \$3 million in 2019-20 and \$15.5 million in 2020-21.

The department also funds the *Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot (the Pilot)*. This pilot commenced in April 2021 and is specifically to support women on temporary visas, affected by domestic and family violence, to access social services, legal assistance and migration support.

As part of this pilot, the Australian Red Cross collects data on the category of visa held by temporary visa holders accessing this service. Data is not currently available, as the pilot has only been operating since April 2021.

The \$10 million package includes:

- \$6.5 million in 2020-21 for the Australian Red Cross to deliver targeted support to women on temporary visas experiencing violence who may be unable to access social services and welfare payments due to their visa status; and
- \$3.5 million in 2020-21 for nine Community and Women's Legal Centres to help women access legal assistance and migration support.

In the 2021-22 Federal Budget, the Australian Government announced an extension to the pilot, with a further \$10.3 million to be provided to 30 June 2023.

Some temporary visa holders may also be able to access Special Benefit if they find themselves in hardship. This includes temporary partner visa holders (subclasses 309 and 820) and holders of temporary humanitarian-type visas (subclasses 060, 070, 449, 785, 786 and 790).