

MEDIA RELEASE

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St Francis Social Services and the House of Welcome are committed to working with people who have been left behind as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our service to refugees and people seeking asylum has not waned, it continues with vigour and passion. However, there are extremely vulnerable people who have been overlooked in our government's relief payments and they are living precariously in our communities.

In response to this St Francis Social Services has joined over 180 organisations in asking our government to extend the COVID-19 relief package to include refugees and people seeking asylum. The signatories on the [letter addressed to our Prime Minister](#) have expressed their concerns for the one million temporary visa holders nationwide who have been placed in a dangerous situation as this pandemic continues to cripple nations across our globe. It is critical that support is provided because they do not have the opportunities or access to Job Keeper and Job Seeker schemes.

St Francis Social Services has also endorsed the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's Justice and Peace Office, to ask our government to consider providing some form of financial relief program, which asylum seekers and refugees in our community can count on for their survival. Our voice of concern and desire for action has been picked up in [The Guardian](#) and the [Catholic Weekly](#) press.

The fundamental rights of people seeking asylum and refugee status continues to be neglected and lives are being jeopardised. At the House of Welcome in Granville, our staff are being swamped with food and financial requests. Food is already in short supply and financial hardship is on the rise, and our ability to provide the basic necessities are being stretched along with other charitable organisations.

Our service is being challenged to meet the demands we are experiencing, and the stress and concerns of clients is contributing to a rise in mental health and other health related issues. As the CEO of St Francis Social Services, I call on our Prime Minister and Government to consider supporting our most vulnerable people in our communities. I also appeal to our supporters to continue to assist us with their generous donations to our [COVID-19 appeal](#).

“Give, and you will receive” Luke 6:38

Maurizio Vespa
CEO | St Francis Social Services & House of Welcome