

MEDIA RELEASE

Support Asylum Seekers and Refugees in face of COVID-19

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St Vincent de Paul Society National Council President Claire Victory has called on the Federal Government to extend available payments and support to people seeking asylum, especially now in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking in the lead up to Palm Sunday, Ms Victory said that while the usual Palm Sunday rallies will not go ahead this year, Australia must not forget some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

'Welcome, significant support for many has been announced by the Federal Government in response to the universal impact of COVID-19, but thousands of people on Bridging Visas have no access to any form of financial support, even when they have no other income,' Ms Victory said.

'The Society supports the Refugee Council of Australia's call to the Australian Government to extend COVID-19 supplementary payments and Medicare to those seeking asylum.

'Further, changes to accessing financial assistance under the Status Resolution Support Services mean that thousands of people are now seeking assistance from depleted charities, as Bridging Visa holders are left destitute and at severe risk of homelessness.

'Despite the challenges facing this country, we are big enough to show compassion and provide meaningful support to this particularly vulnerable group of people in our community,' Ms Victory said.

The [Refugee Council of Australia's website](#) has a resource page that contains information on where to go to get help

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 conferences located in individual parishes across the country.

Media contact: Judith Tokley 0408 824 306 / media@svdp.org.au