



PRESS RELEASE
Friday 14th August 2020
Hannah Tamaki

Vision NZ's Leader - Hannah Tamaki is calling the Government to grant an immediate Amnesty for Pacific overstayers living in New Zealand. This call for action follows the latest community outbreak of Covid-19 in Auckland this week where it was announced four members of a Pacific family living in South Auckland tested positive for Covid-19.

A recent report released by Te Punaha Matatini - a University of Auckland research unit found Maori and Pacific communities in areas such as South Auckland would be at greater risk from a second wave of Covid-19. This is largely due to the incidence of overcrowded living in NZ, is highest for the Pacific population - twice as high as Maori and eight times more likely than for Europeans.

"These poor living conditions would make it harder for them to self-isolate if they contract the virus. They also are more likely to be employed in low paying jobs and environments which put them at greater risk of infection." said Tamaki.

The most vulnerable and susceptible to a higher risk of undetected outbreaks are the almost 5000 Pacific overstayers who move around from house to house to avoid being detected and would be the least likely to present themselves for testing for fear of being sent back to the islands. "We are talking about a group of people who are hardworking, they raise their children here, contribute to our economy, they are not foreigners, they are whanaunga, family and we cannot keep them trapped and helpless in this risky and dangerous situation" said Tamaki.

In June in Manurewa at the launch of their local candidate, Tamaki announced the Amnesty as one of their Pacific Peoples' policies. Tamaki said "It was right to acknowledge the unique and ongoing history and contribution of our Pacific cousins to the building of our nation - however it is even more critical now - given these extreme circumstances the government must grant this immediately to reassure them to come forward and to save lives"

Tamaki acknowledged the work of the Pacific Leaders Forum in supporting Pacific families in need and presenting a recent petition to Parliament to provide pathways for overstayers under compassionate grounds to gain permanent residency in New Zealand. "My concern is that we cannot wait for the lengthy process of considering this petition, Government must act now, respect the cry of our Pacific leaders and grant Amnesty or we are sitting on a ticking time bomb."