

# cohealth speaks out in support of the people of Afghanistan

cohealth, along with the world, has looked on with increasing horror at the events unfolding in Afghanistan. As the Taliban advances across the country cohealth is deeply concerned for the welfare of the Afghan people and our thoughts are with them and their communities throughout the world.

The events in Afghanistan are devastating to the Afghan clients and community cohealth works with. They are telling us of their great fear for the safety of family in Afghanistan, deep sadness about the future of their country and a profound sense of hopelessness. The hopelessness of witnessing these events unfold, and of not knowing what to do or how to provide support from afar. They are holding on to hope that Australia may take people in for safety, while also feeling despair that our country may not step up to provide protection.

This fear and uncertainty is having a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of both the community and our staff who work with them. This is a community who already face significant disadvantage and uncertainty as many are seeking asylum and on temporary visas, and within this system they may only have limited rights to work, education, income support and healthcare. cohealth calls on the wide community to extend their support, understanding and assistance to the Afghan community.

cohealth has joined [over 300 organisations, businesses, and community groups calling on all Parliamentarians to respond to the crisis in Afghanistan.](#)

We welcome the Government's announcement confirming the extension of temporary visas for people from Afghanistan in Australia but there is a lot more that needs to be done for people at grave risk. Members of the Afghan diaspora in Australia are desperately worried about their family, colleagues, and friends who remain in Afghanistan. Many of the people here in Australia also need certainty and safety, and the Australian Government has the power to offer protection and additional support in many ways, including:

- Immediately offer additional refugee resettlement places for Afghan refugees, particularly those most at risk
- Ensure that people whose asylum claims have been previously rejected be supported to submit new claims in the light of the changed circumstances in Afghanistan
- Grant permanent protection to Afghans already in our community on temporary protection visas
- Assist Afghan Australians, including people with temporary and permanent protection visas, with urgent family reunion applications for relatives who are at particular risk

Afghan community members in the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne who need support with their health needs at this difficult time can access cohealth services. Contact can also be made with the cohealth Refugee & Asylum Seeker Health Team on 94485502 regardless of their visa status.