

Tuesday, 14 July 2020

Return to \$40 a day JobSeeker would crush recovery

It is essential that JobSeeker never returns to the poverty levels of the old NewStart allowance, for the health and safety of the existing unemployed, the hundreds of thousands of workers who have lost work during this pandemic, and also for the long-term strength of our economy.

The ACTU today joins the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) in a day of action in support of permanently raising the rate of the JobSeeker payment. Australian unions support JobSeeker remaining at the current rate inclusive of the coronavirus supplement which allows unemployed workers to be financially secure while they look for work.

It would be a catastrophic mistake for the Morrison Government to cut the rate while we have 13 workers unemployed for every available job, and record levels of youth unemployment and underutilisation.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“JobSeeker isn't just important during the pandemic – it is essential that people looking for work have time and security to find a job. The \$40 a day rate of NewStart was a poverty trap so low that it stopped people having the resources they needed to survive while looking for work.

“We need to understand the impact of this virus and part of that is ensuring that no one falls into poverty when they lose their job. Any move to cut the rate will be opposed. With 13 workers looking for work for every single available job what's needed is support and a jobs plan.

“A cut to the rate during the recovery would be a disaster for working people, devastating for those already out of work and would be a crushing blow to the economy.

“The Morrison Government could give security to hundreds of thousands of workers by guaranteeing they will not cut JobSeeker.”

ENDS

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