

Monday 15 February 2021

## **JobKeeper must be extended as industries struggle to recover and areas deal with lockdowns**

The hard-earned JobKeeper wage subsidy which has kept millions of Australians employed throughout the pandemic is still essential and must be extended as there are sectors and regions which are still deep in crisis and areas which are experiencing snap lockdowns.

Instead, the Morrison Government is proposing that the subsidy will end prematurely in 6 weeks, with lockdowns still being imposed in various states and international borders still closed.

The end of the scheme will be devastating for sectors like tourism and hospitality, particularly in regions of the country such as Far North Queensland where the local economy relies heavily on international tourism. Higher education and parts of the manufacturing sector are also still dealing with the flow on effect of the crisis. The premature end of the scheme will hurt workers and small businesses.

We need ongoing support for businesses that meet the serious drop in turnover tests which need time to recover and also have JobKeeper extended to cover snap lockdowns which we know are necessary to keep the community safe from further outbreaks.

1.5 million people are reliant on JobKeeper and it is clear that many jobs and hours of work will be lost as a result of the ending of the JobKeeper scheme. We know this will take money from the hands of working people and hurt small business as spending drops.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:**

"Industries like tourism, hospitality and retail continue to rely on JobKeeper and face an uncertain future without the payment at the end of March.

"1.5 million workers were still on JobKeeper at the end of 2020 and whilst the Government teases potential support for some sectors, these people continue to live with uncertainty. The Government must commit to ongoing support to businesses that are continuing to suffer a proven serious drop in turnover and extend JobKeeper to cover those affected by snap lockdowns.

"This recovery will be driven by working people spending in local businesses. Cutting supports and driving those workers into unemployment will prolong the recovery, hurt small business and weaken the economy.

"We are living in a crucial recovery period that requires people to spend and to do that people need the certainty that these supports create – to not extend JobKeeper is not only cruel, its bad economics."

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