

Friday 27 May 2021

Victoria faces first lockdown without JobKeeper

The Victorian lockdown will be the first to extend beyond a weekend since the Morrison Government prematurely ended the JobKeeper wage subsidy at the end of March, despite an uneven recovery and a failing vaccine rollout which meant that additional lockdowns were likely.

A lockdown with no support for jobs, especially those in sectors like hospitality, retail and aviation which are still struggling to recover from the pandemic, means many workers face an uncertain future with no guaranteed connection to work.

The Morrison Government bears clear responsibility both for this lockdown, caused by a combination of its lack of action on national quarantine standards and inability to efficiently distribute the vaccine, and for any job losses resulting from its short-sighted decision to end JobKeeper for all.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“This lockdown is the direct result of policy failures from the Morrison Government. A vaccine rollout which is months behind the rest of the developed world and a refusal to provide central coordination on quarantine.

“It will be made worse by the decision to pull support out from under workers in the middle of the recovery. People will lose work during this lockdown thanks to the Federal Government’s decision to completely end JobKeeper early.

“The Morrison Government defined the narrowest possible field of responsibility for itself in response to this pandemic – refusing outright to take responsibility for anything apart from the vaccine rollout and providing central coordination on quarantine. These are the areas which are holding this country back.

“The Morrison Government must re-instate JobKeeper where it is still needed. While the vaccine rollout continues to flounder there will be thousands of businesses and millions of workers who continue to need support.

“The Morrison Government’s failure on the vaccine rollout is one of the most consequential policy failures in recent history. It is putting the health and job security of millions of Australians at risk and is an immense brake on our economic recovery.”

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200