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Morrison cuts worker support payments early, again

The Morrison Government's decision to suddenly cut disaster payments when states reach 80 per cent double dose vaccination will mean workers face a slow recovery and future lockdowns - which modelling shows will be needed for the foreseeable future - with no safety net.

Support payments should be kept in place for those who need them until all workers are back to pre-covid normal at work and lockdowns and restrictions are no longer required.

Cutting disaster payments of \$750 per week means workers will be forced to live on nothing and wait for weeks to receive unemployment payments from Centrelink, which are set at poverty levels of \$350 a week.

The Morrison Government is repeating premature, punitive and damaging decisions of last year by cutting off support payments before the job is done, condemning workers to poverty and undermining workers' financial security that is needed for the economy to recover.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"While businesses remain at reduced capacity and workers are still not back at work there should be support payments; cutting off payments while lockdowns and restrictions are still expected is dangerous and short sighted.

"The Morrison Government is repeating the punitive decisions of 2020 by cutting off disaster payments before the job is done and condemning workers to uncertainty and insecurity in future lockdowns.

"At 80 per cent double doses every state has restrictions still in place and economies will not be back to normal - to recover we need workers with money in their pockets and the security to spend.

"Our hospitals and healthcare workers are already under immense pressure, forcing States to completely and permanently reopen once 80 per cent full vaccination is reached is reckless and will result in more harm, less safe workplaces and worsening pressure on our hospitals.

"Sectors including hospitality, retail, tourism, higher education and the arts are continuing to suffer with workers stood down and on reduced hours. This is the Federal Government using the overall vaccination rate of a state as a weapon to punish workers when a lockdown is required to protect public safety.

"The dramatic tapering and cut-off of payments will leave workers with two weeks to find a job."

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