

Thursday, 12 March 2020

## **Morrison abandons Casual and Contract workers**

Casual workers and those in insecure jobs have been left cruelly exposed by Scott Morrison's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite the undeniable financial crisis many Australian workers are confronting, Scott Morrison has ruled out providing two weeks of paid special leave for those working without sick leave provisions.

Suggesting that casual and contract workers can be simply moved onto Newstart, already a below poverty payment, and expected to survive an extended period when many are already struggling is an absurd idea.

This is not only a policy laced with cruel indifference to struggling Australian workers, it is also a reckless public health strategy.

3.3 million Australian workers in jobs that offer no access to paid are facing the prospect of having to decide whether to try surviving without enough income to make ends meet if they should have to self-isolate or place themselves at others at risk by going to work even if they have symptoms.

In the event of their workplace shutting down during the pandemic or an economy-wide lockdown, these workers will be left in poverty.

With its stimulus measures, the Morrison government has once again told Australia's casual and insecure workers to fend for themselves.

### **Quotes attributable to Sally McManus**

"In order for our country to slow down the spread of the virus and to stop infecting at risk people, workers will need to make decisions to self-isolate. We must remove the financial penalty for people to make this decision. Newstart payments are far less than what nearly all casual workers are currently paid, so the financial penalty remains. This announcement by the Prime Minister falls far short of what is required. Public health concerns must be put first, this response fails to do so."

We have seen some of Australia's most trusted brand names offer support to their entire workforce, including casuals, yet the Morrison government is refusing to properly support the 3.3 million Australian workers with no guaranteed access to paid leave."

"We've seen the Morrison government go from ignoring casual and contract workers to suggesting they should have been putting aside money just in case there was a pandemic to now putting them on poverty level welfare payments. It is not good enough and we will keep fighting to get paid special leave for as many "

**ENDS**

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