

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

Union campaign delivers continued income support

The ACTU has welcomed the continuation of JobKeeper and JobSeeker but has concerns about the changes to the program design.

The extension of JobKeeper is essential to supporting working people during this crisis, however there is still a need to close gaps which exist in the program so every worker and employer effected by the pandemic are covered.

The ACTU has questioned the justification for cutting payments to all workers receiving JobKeeper and especially those working fewer than 20 hours, who are often low paid and by the Government's own admission have often lost 2nd and 3rd jobs. They have suggested the approach is misguided and will cause financial hardship to huge numbers of working people.

The cuts to JobSeeker and the reintroduction of mutual obligations may signal a return to the failed punitive approach to welfare which Australians hoped had been left behind.

Asserting that unemployed workers should be trying harder to find a job while there are 13 people for every available job is not based in reality.

The ACTU has reiterated that while these supports are an important foundation it will be a jobs-led reconstruction plan that allows Australia to complete the economic recovery.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“The union movement has been campaigning for continuing the JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs, the gaps also need to be closed so everyone who has been badly effected by the pandemic is supported.

“This announcement has delayed the economic catastrophe that would have resulted from pushing these programs off the cliff during the pandemic, but we need far-reaching government investment to create a path out of recession and to create the jobs we will need to rebuild the economy.

“The increase of the income free threshold to \$300 for jobseeker is welcome but the reintroduction of mutual obligations is a worrying return to the punitive approach to welfare payments which we hoped the Morrison Government had left behind.”

ENDS

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