

Monday, 3 August 2020

Pandemic relief payment doesn't go far enough

The "Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment" is a step forward but will not fix the hole in our COVID-19 defences.

The \$1500 a fortnight is the minimum wage when the average wage is double this amount. This means that nearly every fulltime worker will still suffer a financial penalty for isolating. Only full wage replacement, like sick leave, can fix this.

Leaving workers to call 1800 numbers and navigate another system also puts unnecessary barriers in the way.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus

"Any money for workers who are saving lives and saving jobs by staying home and doing the right thing is welcome, but this payment does not address the full scale of the problems which fully funded Paid Pandemic Leave would address.

"We need a new, temporary paid leave entitlement so that working people will not lose wages or risk their job to isolate or get tested when they need to.

"This payment will mean that nearly all fulltime workers who are forced to rely on it will take a pay cut while they isolate. This will mean that a financial penalty still remains, this just weakens our COVID-19 defences.

"The system of calling 1800 numbers, instead of being paid as normal is yet another barrier.

"We need to do better. We need to do everything we reasonably can. The Morrison Government cannot stop at this half-measure. We need federally funded Paid Pandemic Leave for all workers who need to get tested and isolate. That's how we ensure that this pandemic ends as quickly as possible with as few people infected as possible."

ENDS

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