

Friday 29 October 2021

Up to 700,000 workers to have disaster payments cut today

Up to 700,000 workers will have their disaster payments cut by the Morrison Government today as Victoria reaches 80 per cent full vaccination, despite reopening being incomplete and worker capacity remaining staggered.

The Morrison Government is cutting critical support payments as Victoria records more than 1000 cases a day and retail, hospitality, accommodation, and events are only open at limited capacity with limited workers.

168,000 people or 4.6 per cent are currently formally unemployed in Victoria, and when those who've left labour force or working zero hours are included this increases to 558,400 people (16 per cent of the labour force) out of work.

5.4 per cent of women compared to 4.2 per cent of men are currently unemployed in Victoria and cutting disaster payments will predominately affect women who are over-represented in insecure work.

Victoria has been the hardest hit state by the pandemic, and it is imperative that workers have the money and financial security in these early reopening stages to help rebuild the economy.

From today the Covid-19 Disaster Payment will drop from \$750 to \$450 this week for those who have lost more than 20 hours of work, dropping to \$320 the week after that before ceasing altogether.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"The national roadmap anticipates further restriction being necessary if cases climb. The decision to axe disaster payments in these conditions is reckless and will continue to condemn workers into poverty right as the economy needs them with money in their pockets to fuel the recovery. It also deliberately forces State Governments to make an awful choice between public health and the livelihoods of workers.

"The Morrison Government is repeating its mistakes of 2020 by cutting support payments before jobs and the economy have recovered and condemning thousands of workers to poverty.

"700,000 workers receiving disaster payments will receive a very sudden pay cut today by the Morrison Government, even though reopening is staggered and many businesses won't be able to offer them their old jobs or hours back.

"Victoria has been the hardest hit state by the pandemic and it's crucial that workers have money and financial security in these early reopening stages to rebuild the economy."

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