

Media Release

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NCOSS URGES THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE BOOSTED JOBSSEEKER PAYMENT BEYOND CHRISTMAS

The Australian Government's decision to cut the JobSeeker payment and not guarantee its long-term future will hurt those struggling to find work and the broader economy, according to the NSW Council of Social Service.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said the JobSeeker payment should not be cut by \$300 a fortnight at a time when the economic impact of the pandemic will be affecting more people than ever.

"The cut to the JobSeeker rate will act as a handbrake on the economy and mean those struggling to find work across NSW will have less in their pocket to make ends meet," Ms Quilty said.

"As we face a recession and a public health crisis, the reality is that more people than ever before will struggle to find paid work.

"There is currently only one job vacancy available for every 13 people on JobSeeker or Youth Allowance. We must be providing more support to these people not less.

"We also know for many people in our community on low incomes, cost of living pressures in NSW have forced them to make extremely difficult decisions.

Ms Quilty said it was also extremely concerning that the rate could again be cut by the end of the year, raising the spectre of returning to the old Newstart rate.

"The full JobSeeker supplement should be maintained until it is replaced by a permanent, adequate payment," Ms Quilty said.

"With so much uncertainty, we need to give people and businesses confidence for the long haul, not further temporary measures.

"Even before the most recent shock people have been resorting to desperate measures like not heating their homes, pawning possessions and going without food to make ends meet.

"The new payments have meant those looking for work can better support themselves and pay for essentials. It has also meant more money going into local economies, helping to keep businesses afloat. Reducing payments now and not providing certainty going forward seems short-sighted.

"If we really are all in this together - as we rebuild, we cannot turn our back on those who are at risk of being left behind.

"We need to raise the rate for good so that everyone has enough to cover the basics of life, like a roof over one's head and food on the table," Ms Quilty said.

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