

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Vinnies welcomes JobSeeker extension

10 November 2020

St Vincent de Paul Society National President, Claire Victory today welcomed the Federal Government's decision to extend the JobSeeker coronavirus payment to March 2021 but said the Society is disappointed that the supplement will be reduced by a further \$100 from \$250 to \$150.

Speaking shortly after the decision was announced, Ms Victory said while it's encouraging to see the downturn in infection rates, the economy is a long way from being back on its feet. People who have lost jobs because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will need ongoing support for some time yet.

The latest [research by ANU](#) has found that, for those working through the pandemic period:

- there was an average loss of 67.4 working hours or 166.7 hours for those who were working in February, which represents a loss in production of \$47.0 billion
- males have lost more hours than females
- the 'middle-aged' have lost more than workers in younger and older age cohorts
- Australians who were born overseas in a non-English speaking country have lost more hours than those born in Australia

'We are concerned that since mutual obligation was reinstated, more than 234,000 jobseekers have had their payments suspended for breaching rules,' Ms Victory said.

'Punitive action is rarely effective, and right now in these difficult times, more support is essential to help people get back on track.

'The research also shows that anxiety and worry due to COVID-19 has continued to increase, with females and young Australians continuing to be more anxious and worried.

'And while people are less pessimistic about losing their jobs over the next 12 months, this particular measure is still much higher than recorded in other surveys prior to the pandemic.

'The Government and the Australian community must remain vigilant and committed to helping people in need.

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'The Society repeats the call for an independent, expert group to monitor and advise Government on income support payment levels that meet basic living needs and will keep people out of poverty,' Ms Victory said.

*The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.*

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