



ADAM BANDT MP

The Hon. Scott Morrison, MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra 2600

Via email: dlo@pm.gov.au

22 September 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Don't push us off the cliff

I am writing to you regarding your forthcoming plan to drastically slash the JobKeeper payment and the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement, as well as make it harder for newly unemployed Australians to access urgently-needed income support.

The combined effect of these cuts and eligibility changes will hurt millions of Australians, hit people on low incomes the hardest and push hundreds of thousands of people into poverty. Here in the state of Victoria, where more than 413,000 Victorians are receiving JobSeeker and it is expected there are around 1.5 million JobKeeper recipients, there is a very real fear that the impending cuts to JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments will plunge thousands of Victorian families into poverty.

Whilst Australia's official unemployment rate may have fallen slightly in the last month, those results have not been seen in Melbourne where people are still under lockdown, and those in regional Victoria under stage 3 restrictions are not necessarily finding it any easier to get a job or pay their bills.

My office has heard from constituents in my Federal electorate of Melbourne who are, at present, only just managing to cover their rent and expenses, and who are extremely worried about the prospect of losing their current housing or going further into debt once these devastating changes come into effect.

For example, my office was contacted by many young people who are currently employed, but who are expecting their employment to end in the next few weeks at the same time as your changes come into effect. What is next for these young people? After September 25, they may have to wait up to 13 weeks before they can receive income support.

In addition, my office has heard from a couple, both Jobseekers, who have had to spend their savings just to make ends meet during the pandemic, but who may be shortly be kicked off income support once the asset tests are re-introduced.

My office has also heard from low-income workers who are waiting in limbo to hear whether their JobKeeper payments will be slashed. These constituents are working more than 20 hours per week across two or more jobs but have no certainty from the government about how the upcoming changes will impact their payments.

ADAM BANDT MP Leader of the Australian Greens • Federal Member for Melbourne

📍 GF1 296 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065 📞 (03) 9417 0759 ✉ adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au

🐦 @AdamBandt 🌐 /Adam.Bandt.MP 📷 @AdamBandt [greens.org.au](https://www.greens.org.au)



ADAM BANDT MP

We know that these cuts and eligibility changes won't just hurt the people who need support most, it will also take billions of dollars out of our economy and in the long run, stands to deeply hurt us all. As you're aware, a Deloitte Economics report for the Australian Council of Social Services found that the planned cuts to the coronavirus supplement will result in a \$31 billion reduction in economic activity over the next two years, and a loss equivalent to 145,000 full-time jobs over the same period. Similarly, a McKell Institute report shows that cuts to the JobKeeper payment will take \$9.9 billion out of the economy by the end of the year.

The economic impacts of the coronavirus crisis are far from over. Slashing support for low-income workers and the newly unemployed, particularly while Melbournians remain under stage 4 lockdown, is cruel and unfair. I urge you not to cut the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement or the JobKeeper payment and instead retain them at their current rates.

Prime Minister, if we have learnt anything during this pandemic it is that you cannot leave anyone behind. With a tough economic future ahead of us, I urge you not to push us off a financial cliff.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Adam Bandt'.

Adam Bandt MP

Federal Member for Melbourne
Leader of the Australian Greens