

16 July 2021

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
Federal Treasurer
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer

COVID Disaster Payments

I write to request urgent action to review the COVID Disaster Payments to ensure that all affected people are eligible for support. I welcome the announcement of disaster payments in NSW and Victorian hotspots. However, it has come to my attention that the currently eligibility requirements for the most recent disaster payments leave hundreds of thousands of people on low incomes with totally inadequate levels of financial support.

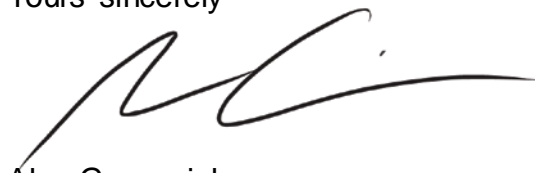
I am aware that around 375,000 people across greater Sydney cannot access disaster payments because they receive income support such as Youth Allowance and Austudy. This bar to eligibility affects the most vulnerable members of our community like students, single mothers, parents, older women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability and migrants.

People who receive these payments rely on income support to supplement their part-time or casual work. That work has disappeared overnight in many cases. Currently, JobSeeker is just \$315pw, while Youth Allowance is only \$256pw. In many areas of greater Sydney, this amount may not even cover rent and utilities.

We are hearing from people who have lost paid work in the lock down and now can't make ends meet because they are ineligible for the Disaster payment. I call on the Federal Government and National Cabinet to review the guidelines to ensure that these low income earners are eligible for the same level of disaster relief as other citizens.

Could you please inform me what action you will take to ensure that the hundreds of thousands of Australians who are experiencing lockdown and receive income support payments are not excluded from adequate disaster relief payments?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney

