



MEDIA RELEASE

24 March, 2020

COVID-19 CRISIS RESPONSE – CALL FOR UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME IMMEDIATELY

The Australian Progressives today have called for a temporary unconditional cash transfer to every Australian citizen for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. The measures announced by the Morrison Government are insufficient to assist every Australian under every circumstance. A traditional system of means testing and lengthy application processes are unnecessary, and we must ensure everybody receives immediate assistance.

“The Australian workforce does not always fall into tidy categories such as casual workers, small businesses and existing welfare recipients. Putting anyone through a difficult application process with the threat of debt reclamation is often cruel and unjustified. Many Australians are already under financial stress and this will worsen matters,” said spokesperson, Douglas MacLaine Cross.

Targeting individuals once they are struggling results in further poverty as individuals are forced to draw on their savings. Allowing people to draw down on their superannuation after a lifetime of responsible saving makes this issue worse, as people are forced to bear the brunt from any current savings, while eroding already fragile retirement plans.

Unconditional assistance is the best way of ensuring every Australian can survive this unprecedented situation. The bushfire crisis closely followed by the COVID-19 crisis is nobody’s fault but everyone has suffered. Every Australian deserves assistance.

Struggling individuals, businesses and communities do not deserve the judgement and headache associated with a means test based assistance program when they are already in desperate need to survive. Having to wait will cause additional expenses, with many Australians already living paycheck to paycheck.

Douglas MacLaine Cross added “The Australian Progressives call on a minimum unconditional cash transfer of at least \$100 per week per citizen and permanent residents every week for the duration of the crisis. This can be achieved very quickly using data from the ATO for bank accounts and number of children.” He continued, “If families are to survive, then we must act today.”

ENDS



About Australian Progressives:

We believe in the advancement of an empathetic society - one in which all citizens of Australia can reach their full potential and find fulfilment in their lives within a thriving democracy. We will be a government with the guts to advance society through laws, services and infrastructure, for the benefit of all people. We believe government and communities should work together to develop creative and passionate individuals who can improve the world around them, embracing education, technology, science, culture and global leadership.

Australian Progressives Spokesperson Douglas MacLaine Cross is available for comment.

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