

# MEDIA RELEASE

21 July 2020

## **Permanent Increase to JobSeeker a Missed Opportunity**

Community Industry Group, the peak body for community service organisations in south east NSW, commented on today's announcement by Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Treasurer Josh Frydenburg on the JobKeeper and JobSeeker payment.

CEO Nicky Sloan expressed concern that the 1.6 million people currently depending on the JobSeeker payment will experience a \$150 per week cut to the Coronavirus Supplement from September, with a further announcement about the future of the supplement by the end of the year.

"While we are pleased that the Coronavirus Supplement will continue for another three months, we are disappointed that the amount of the supplement has been reduced," Ms Sloan said. "But of even more concern is the lack of security about what people living on JobSeeker will receive from December."

"This is a missed opportunity to announce a permanent, adequate increase to a rate of income support which is widely condemned as insufficient to maintain a decent, fair lifestyle. We encourage the Government to stop dithering about with supplements and lock in a rate of JobSeeker which enables people to live with dignity and respect," she added.

A permanent increase to the safety net would also make a significant impact on the struggling retail and hospitality sector. As the stories on the [550 Reasons to Smile](#) show, people on the unemployment benefit are spending their extra money on things like food, appliances, and clothing. This will stimulate the local economy and in turn, keep businesses afloat.

While the return of mutual obligation means a demoralising return to searching for jobs which currently don't exist, Community Industry Group does welcome the increase to the income free threshold which will enable people to earn an additional \$300 per fortnight. "Jobs are scarce across the region" Ms Sloan said "but if people are lucky enough to find a little casual or part time work, they will be able to replace what they have lost from the reduction to the Supplement."

Community Industry Group also welcomed the extension of the JobKeeper scheme. "Many not for profits and charities have experienced cuts to their incomes, and are relying on JobKeeper to keep staff employed and to keep providing services and supports to people who are doing it tough," Ms Sloan concluded.

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### **About the Community Industry Group**

Community Industry (formerly known as Illawarra Forum) is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the South East of NSW. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice.

Community Industry Group represents the non-government community services industry in the South East of NSW, and works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region.