

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Get Cracking! Do something about JobSeeker**

Community Industry Group, the peak body for community service organisations in southern NSW, is frustrated at the absence of commitment and action from the Government to provide security for the region's unemployed.

CEO Nicky Sloan expressed concern that invisible Australians will remain unseen and unheard. "The turmoil of 2020 has highlighted the impacts of social isolation during COVID-19 but for many people with insecure work, or people living on income support payments like JobSeeker, this is the reality of everyday life, pandemic or no pandemic," Ms Sloan said. "Social participation is impossible when you're battling with financial insecurity. Clothing, food and having friends over for dinner can be outside of the budget, making it difficult to escape poverty-induced isolation."

The most glaring gap in the 2020/21 Budget has been the failure to deliver a permanent adequate rate for the JobSeeker payment. "The economy in recession and there is a limited number of job opportunities in the region. We were disappointed that there was no announcement of a permanent increase to the JobSeeker payment," said Ms Sloan. "We cannot go back to a payment of \$40 per day. While the coronavirus supplement has been invaluable, supplements can be reduced or removed at any time. We urgently need a permanent increase to the base JobSeeker payment."

Community Industry Group is urging the community to get cracking and have their voice heard by participating in an anonymous survey on how social isolation affects them. Ms Sloan said, "We have a responsibility to the community to make sure they get a fair go in having a say. We need as many people as possible to let us know how social isolation affects them and what can be done to fix it."

The *Social Isolation Survey* takes approximately 5 minutes and can be accessed here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CIGSIS2020>.

## **About the Community Industry Group**

Community Industry (formerly known as Illawarra Forum) is the peak body working for community services and organisations in Southern NSW. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice. Community Industry Group is an independent organisation governed by a committee of management elected annually by the membership.

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Community Industry Group represents the non-government community services industry in the South East of NSW, which consists of approximately 300 organisations, and works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region.

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