

Covid-19 ASU member update

Increased support for workers who lose their jobs or are stood down, on low incomes, or in casual and contract employment.

On the 22 March the Federal Government announced that there will be additional income support available for workers who lose their job, are stood down, on low incomes or are in casual and contract employment and meet the income test as a result of the economic downturn due to the Coronavirus.

What does this mean?

This means workers who meet the criteria will be able to access the Job Seeker payment immediately (\$550 per fortnight) as well as the phased in Coronavirus Supplement (\$550 per fortnight) from April 27 2020.

What is the 'Coronavirus Supplement'?

The Government is temporarily expanding eligibility to income support payments and establishing a new, time-limited 'Coronavirus Supplement' to be paid on top of the existing job seeker payment.

The Coronavirus Supplement will apply from the 27 April 2020 for at least six months.

How much will I get?

The changes mean if you are eligible for the Job Seeker Payment (depending on your family circumstances) with the Coronavirus Supplement you will receive at least \$1100 a fortnight. This is approximately 75% of the minimum wage.

Who can access the Job Seeker Payment?

The Jobseeker Payment criteria have been expanded and will provide payment access for people who meet the income test and are:

- Permanent employees who are stood down or lose their employment;
- Casual workers;
- Contract workers;
- Sole traders; or
- Self-employed.

This could also include a person required to care for someone who is affected by the Coronavirus.

The Coronavirus Supplement will also be paid to all existing and new recipients of the Youth Allowance jobseeker, Parenting Payment, Farm Household Allowance and Special Benefit.

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How will it all work?

If you apply for the Job Seeker payment between today and 13 April

- People who are unemployed, have been stood down or have seen their income drop below the threshold of \$1086.50 a fortnight can access the normal JobSeeker payment of \$565.70 a fortnight (dependent on income and family circumstances) without the usual waiting period of one week.
- In addition to the job seeker payment you will receive a lump sum stimulus payment of \$750 which will be delivered from 31 March (through to the 13 April as people sign on)
- To access the Job Seeker payment at this stage, you will need to provide proof you have been let go from your job an Employment Separation Certificate (if applicable)
- At this stage the Liquid Assets Waiting Period will still apply. This means if you have significant savings from \$5,999 to \$11,500 or more then you will have to wait from 1 week (\$5,999) up to 13 weeks for (\$11,500)
- All other asset tests still apply.
- You will have a revised mutual obligation, which means you will have to apply for 4 jobs per month to remain eligible.

If you apply for the Job Seeker payment between April 14 and April 27

- • All the above applies but you will not receive the first \$750 payment.

After April 27

- In addition to the Job Seeker payment all eligible workers will receive the Coronavirus Supplement - an additional \$550 per fortnight for 6 months
- All asset tests, liquid asset waiting periods, and proof of dismissal are all waived for 6 months
- If you were currently serving one of those waiting periods it will be waived and you will gain access to the payments
- You will have a revised mutual obligation, which means you will have to apply for 4 jobs per month to remain eligible
- Special eligibility for sole traders and the self-employed, which allow them to satisfy mutual obligation through the continuation of their business, begin for 6 months.
- Please be advised: The government announced a second stimulus payment of \$750 to be paid in June. This will only apply to people who receive government benefits excluding the Coronavirus supplement.

What we don't know and are trying to find out:

Right now we don't know the impact accumulated annual or long service leave will have on eligibility for the payment.

The questions is whether members must access all annual and long service leave entitlements before being eligible for the payment or whether accumulated leave entitlements have no impact on workers eligibility.

* we are aware that some members are being stood down and are not being given access to their accrued entitlements whereas others are, and we are trying to get answers for all scenarios.

We expect an answer to this question to be included in the federal government regulations which we hope will be released shortly.

As soon as we know the answer we will advise members immediately.

How do I apply for the JobSeeker Payment and Coronavirus supplement?

You can apply for these payments either online (via myGov), over the phone or in person through Services Australia (Centrelink). For more information go to: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/affected-coronavirus-covid-19>

Need more information?

For more information contact your local organisers:

Branch	Contact	Mobile
NSW US	Thomas Russell	0419 761 320
NSW/ACT Services	Linda Spiteri	0417 663 108
VIC/TAS A&S	Aaron De La Torre	0427 813 821
VIC PS	Victor Jose	0425 753 756
VIC PS	Imogen Sturni	0433 339 656
QLD SNA	Glenn Desmond	0427 975 806
QLD Together	Billy Colless	0419 736 886
SA/NT	Lesley Till	0497 555 875
WA	Yvonne Klaa	0417 969 767

Disclaimer This is general guidance only and was correct at the time of writing 11:00 24/03/2020. Check [government sources](#) for more details.