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MEDIA RELEASE

JobSeeker cuts push thousands of Western Australians into poverty

The Federal Government has chosen to throw more than two million people across Australia including over 200,000 Western Australians into poverty, with the cuts to the Coronavirus Supplement (received by people on JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and parenting payments) coming into effect today.

Louise Giolitto, WACOSS Chief Executive Officer, said:

“The Coronavirus Supplement has been essential for people to be able to put three meals on the table each day, pay their rent and keep the lights on.

“Our economy is now facing what threatens to be the deepest and longest recession in our lifetimes, unemployment is predicted to keep rising significantly in the next six months, and many households now face severe financial hardship.

“Now is not the time to be cutting back support to those hit hardest by the crisis.

“The number of people out of work still drastically outstrips the number of jobs available. Making it harder for people to survive does not magically generate employment opportunities.

“In fact, the research out by Deloitte last week demonstrated that the Federal Government’s cuts to the Coronavirus Supplement will reduce the WA economy by nearly \$2 billion and will see a loss of over 15,000 jobs across the next two years.

“It is unacceptable that we have anyone in our society living in poverty, let alone that the Federal Government is actively and knowingly pushing people into it.

“The 100 Families WA project, which WACOSS is pleased to be a part of, found that the single most common impact of receiving the supplement was an improved quality of life, including less stress and being able to get rid of arrears on rent and bills.

“Cutting the supplement now, with unemployment still rising and many households threatening to default on their mortgages, is reckless and irresponsible.

“This is a dark day for people out of work and our whole society, with the Federal Government turning their back on them in the midst of a health and economic crisis,” Louise concluded.

Ends.

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