

30 July 2021



## **UnitingCare Australia welcomes much-needed boost to income support in lockdown areas**

---

The Morrison Government’s announcement of a \$200 per week payment for individuals on income support who have lost more than eight hours a week of work will provide welcome relief.

National Director of UnitingCare Australia, Ms Claerwen Little, said that while the COVID-19 Disaster Payment was welcome, it exposed a gap that people on JobSeeker who had lost income were facing further financial hardship.

“Last week I wrote to Minister Ruston requesting additional temporary and targeted support for people already on JobSeeker, Parenting Payments and related support, asking that they be given the option to apply for a top-up payment through Services Australia for the duration of the lockdowns.

“The new funding will help individuals and families make it through the current lockdown periods with dignity and ensure they didn’t have to make the difficult decision to pay this week’s rent or put food on the table.

Individuals who currently receive an income support payment and live in a lockdown area will now be eligible for a weekly top-up payment of \$200 in addition to their existing payment if they can demonstrate they have lost more than 8 hours of work and meet the other eligibility requirements for the COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

“As one of Australia’s largest networks of community service providers across the country, we have first-hand experience of the impact that the current lockdowns are having.

“We know from last year’s experience that providing the most vulnerable in our community with additional financial support during lockdowns made a significant difference and helped meet increased living expenses.

“But we aren’t through the woods yet. We know that the pandemic continues to adversely impact the most vulnerable in our community and whilst this payment goes a long way to help, there are still people at risk of falling through the cracks”.

The payment can be accessed through Services Australia and myGov and will be paid weekly for the duration of the lockdown and Commonwealth Hotspot remains in place.

More information can be found on the [Services Australia website](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au).

**Media Contact** M: 0437 276 834 E: [communications@nat.unitingcare.org.au](mailto:communications@nat.unitingcare.org.au)