




Speech By
Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

MOTION

Coronavirus, JobKeeper

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (4.22 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Treasurer. It is disappointing to hear the member for Chatsworth say that standing up for workers is a waste of this chamber's time. Six of the 10 areas with the most businesses signing up to JobKeeper are on the Gold Coast. According to analysis based on Treasury and ATO data, up to 2,420 businesses in the 4211 postcode in my community may be forced to close their doors, which could mean approximately 9,000 local workers may be forced into unemployment and over \$13 million could be ripped out of our local economy each and every fortnight if this JobKeeper payment is not extended. That is just in the 4211 area. I want to be clear that I support the move by the federal government to implement a wage subsidy. It is something many of us were advocating for and it has provided critical economic support for working people and businesses within the Gold Coast community. Our concern is that the 27 September deadline will leave families in the lurch if this is not extended.

Tourism is one of the Gold Coast's largest industries. We absolutely accept the rationale for keeping our borders shut, but there is no denying the huge economic impact this has on businesses and jobs. To put it into perspective, international visitation in the March quarter of this year was down 34.3 per cent compared with the previous year on the Gold Coast, and this was just a result of the initial effects of COVID-19. The flow-on effects for this industry are enormous.

Minister Fentiman and I recently visited a business in Coomera that had received a \$10,000 grant from our government and heavily relies on providing first-aid training to theme park employees. I recently phoned a constituent whose husband drives a truck for a business that provides linen to hotels and understandably is extremely worried about his job security after September.

Yesterday I received an email from Tracey, who lives in Mount Nathan and runs her own travel agency business, pleading for the JobKeeper payment to be continued. Since March she has lost money as a result of having to refund holidays to clients who are no longer able to travel internationally along with commission charged, leaving her with little to no income. This is not a multimillion dollar company; it is a small local operator that has existed for 14 years.

What is also concerning is the nearly 30,000 casuals on the Gold Coast who could have missed out on the JobKeeper payment because they were employed for less than 12 months by a single employer, some of whom also were not eligible for the JobSeeker payment. A lot of these workers were already on a minimum wage. We are seeing the result of this financial stress with the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre reporting that they have seen a doubling of the number of families needing to obtain low-cost and no-cost food boxes.

We know that economists like Reserve Bank Governor Dr Philip Lowe, have warned that it is incredibly important that we do not withdraw fiscal stimulus too early. We also know that the federal government has spent \$60 billion less on the JobKeeper payment than initially announced, so we are pleading with the federal government to use this to extend this important payment.

(Time expired)