

MEDIA RELEASE



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People dependent on the Carer Payment also need the Coronavirus Supplement

Carers Australia has been receiving many representations from carers on the Carer Payment who are concerned and upset that their needs have not been sufficiently considered in income support measures which have been introduced to compensate for the impact of the coronavirus.

The fortnightly Coronavirus Supplement of \$550 available to people on a range of social security payments has not been extended to carers receiving the Carer Payment or to recipients of Disability Support Pension and Age Pension.

The Government does not seem to have considered that many carers on the Carer Payment who have been able to access up to 25 hours employment per week have also lost their jobs, or have had to give up their jobs because the people they care for are in the category of those with particular vulnerability to the worst impacts of the virus.

Moreover, all carers on the Carer Payment who are now unable to go out to shop and undertake other essential activities can face extra costs of delivery and/or sourcing more expensive products. Further, the costs of essential items, particularly fresh food, transport and medical supplies, has increased significantly due to higher demand. Those who rely on public transport, which poses significant transmission risks, will be faced with the additional costs of taxis and ubers.

We are particularly concerned that many people on the Carer Payment may apply to switch to another Centrelink payment for which they would be eligible in order to attract the Coronavirus supplement. It was for this reason that the Government extended the supplement to students on ABSTUDY and Austudy so as to discourage students from applying for the jobseeker payments at the risk of compromising their education. There are also longer term risks of carers switching payments once the supplement, currently guaranteed for six months, comes to an end.

Very importantly, there is the additional pressure placed on Centrelink to manage payment switching at a time when it is deluged with new applications for income support.

Carers Australia strongly encourages the Government to extend the Coronavirus Supplement to those on the Carer Payment. Our Position Paper, which explores the issue in more depth, can be found [here](#).

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