

Market Wrap

Further stimulus and support measures explained

On 30 March, the Federal Government announced a \$130 billion support package for individuals whose employment is impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Here, we look at those new measures and what they could mean for you.

Newly announced measures

JobKeeper Payment

The Government will provide \$1,500 per fortnight (before tax) per employee for up to 6 months, with the first payments to be rolled out in the first week of May. This represents approximately 70% of the national median wage. It's also about \$400 more than the previously announced 'JobSeeker' welfare payment for those who have lost their job. If an employee ordinarily receives less than \$1,500 per fortnight, they are still eligible to receive the full \$1,500.

The JobKeeper Payment is designed to help businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19 have access to a subsidy from the Government to continue paying their employees. This assistance aims to help businesses keep people in their jobs for the duration of the current crisis. For employees, this means they can keep their job and earn an income – even if their hours have been reduced. The JobKeeper Payment is also available to the self-employed i.e. sole traders.

This payment is eligible for Australian citizens, holders of a permanent visa, or those in various special category visas, depending on the eligibility of their employer. It's important to note that people cannot be in receipt of JobKeeper payments from two or more employers if they have multiple part time or casual jobs.

[> Find out more](#)

Eligibility for JobSeeker payments

If you have lost your job, eligibility for JobSeeker payments has been expanded. Previously, people who were out of work were not eligible for this payment if their partner earned \$48,000 or more, but this threshold has been raised to \$79,762 and above.

These changes are subject to legislation being passed which is expected to occur in the coming days.

Previously announced measures

Income support for individuals

Over the next six months, the government is temporarily extending eligibility to income support payments and establishing a new, time-limited coronavirus supplement of \$550 per fortnight. This will be paid to existing and new recipients of JobSeeker (formerly known as Newstart), Youth allowance jobseeker, Parenting Payment, Farm Household and Special Benefit payments.

[> Find out more](#)

Payments to support households

The government is providing two separate \$750 payments to social security, veteran and other income support recipients and eligible concession card holders who aren't in receipt of the \$550 supplement. The first payment will be made from 31 March 2020 and the second payment will be made from 13 July 2020. Around half of those that benefit are pensioners.

[> Find out more](#)

Temporary early release of superannuation

The government is allowing individuals affected by the coronavirus to access up to \$10,000 of their super this financial year and a further 10,000 in 2020-21 (i.e. before and after 1 July 2020). The amounts released won't be taxed and won't affect Centrelink or Veterans Affairs payments. To apply for the early release you will need to satisfy a number of requirements.

[> Find out more](#)

Temporarily reducing superannuation minimum drawdown rates and changes to deeming rates

The government is temporarily reducing superannuation drawdown requirements for account-based pensions and similar products by 50% for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Upper and lower social security deeming rates are also being reduced by a further 0.25 percentage points in addition to the 0.5 percentage point reduction to both rates announced on 12 March 2020. As of 1 May 2020, the upper deeming rate will be 2.25 per cent and the lower deeming rate will be 0.25 per cent.

[> Find out more](#)

Support for coronavirus-affected regions and communities

\$1 billion is being set aside to support regions most significantly affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. These funds will be available to assist during the outbreak and the recovery.

[> Find out more](#)

Boosting cash flow for employers

The government is enhancing the Boosting Cash Flow for Employers measure it announced on 12 March 2020 by providing up to \$100,000 to eligible small and medium-sized businesses, and not for-profits (NFPs) that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000. These payments will help businesses and NFPs with their cash flow so they can keep operating, pay their rent, electricity and other bills and retain staff.

Under the enhanced scheme, employers will receive a tax-free payment equal to 100 per cent of their salary and wages withheld (up from 50 per cent), with the maximum payment being increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000. In addition, the minimum payment is being increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Payments will be made automatically through the ATO from 28 April, and 28 July for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years respectively.

[> Find out more](#)

Supporting you

There's no doubt that the current coronavirus situation is causing concern for what it means for you, your lifestyle and your financial position, but it's important to remember that your financial plan has been tailored to your circumstances and objectives. If you have any questions about these announcements and how they affect you, please feel free to contact me.

Speak to us for more information

If you have any questions, please speak to your financial adviser.

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