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7 April 2020 (updated 16 April 2020)

**Government Stimulus Package – JobKeeper Support**

**Disclaimer**

The information provided here is based on current advice as at 16 April 2020. It is important to note that while this scheme is now legislation, there are a number of areas still be clarified, such as the mechanics of the income test and the effect of the payment on fringe benefit arrangements.

Congregations in the NSW/ACT District and in the Queensland District will need to contact their respective district offices for advice about how this package will apply in your circumstances before taking any of the steps outlined below.

Congregations in the other districts can contact their respective district administrators for further assistance and advice, or Chris Materne, Debbie Venz, Erika Mills and Kit Scott-Davies at the Churchwide Office.

**Summary**

Many congregations will be eligible for a payment of $1500 per fortnight for each eligible staff member (defined here as a pastor, lay worker or other employee) for up to six months. For this purpose, a staff member is someone currently called/employed by a congregation and being paid on 1 March 2020.

**Application process**

In order to start receiving payments employers need to go to the ATO website: <https://www.ato.gov.au/General/JobKeeper-Payment/Employers/> and follow the steps outlined on that page.

The ATO is now contacting people who have registered on behalf of the employers and inviting them to complete the application process.

Then you need to confirm the eligible employees you will claim JobKeeper Payment for (available from 4 May 2020) by following the instructions on the same page.

A top up payment to eligible staff will be required for the pay periods in April.

If you use LCA HRS for payroll purposes they will advise what specific steps you need to take to ensure these actions are all able to be processed via HRS and Single Touch Payroll (STP).

**Eligibility**

This support package is available to employers whose businesses (and this includes not-for-profits and charities registered with the ACNC) who have or will experience a decline in total income of more than 30% (registered charities have to satisfy a reduction of 15%).

The reduction in income test is met when income has reduced by more than 30% (15%) compared with the same period last year. The minimum period to be compared is at least one month.

The eligible income is the income returned in the GST return plus GST free income (congregational giving).

Eligible staff (pastors, lay workers and other employees) are people engaged as at 1 March 2020 on a full time or part time basis, or casuals who have been employed on a regular basis for at least 12 months as at 1 March 2020. This will therefore include any staff stood down since 1 March 2020. Please note that anyone who has not been a resident of Australia since 1 March 2010 will not be eligible. Employees can only receive the JobKeeper payment from one employer.

**Payments**

Eligible congregations will receive $1,500 per fortnight per eligible staff member. Payments will be made monthly in arrears by the ATO (commencing from 1 May, but calculated from 30 March).

Each staff member will receive, as a minimum, $1,500 per fortnight before tax. (If the person normally receives more than $1,500 per fortnight they will continue to receive their normal pay and the congregation will retain the JobKeeper Payment. If the person normally receives less than $1,500 per fortnight the employing body must pay them the full $1500 per fortnight, less tax regardless of normal pay or hours worked.)

Superannuation continues to be payable at the rate based on hours worked (not the JobKeeper rate)

**Business Activity Statements**

Congregations should note that the completion of the March Business Activity Statement (BAS), due on 21 April 2020, is particularly important. It is expected that congregations completing the form electronically will have a customised input form. If the form is normally completed by hardcopy, the statement a congregation has received may not have all the relevant information in it. Further information is being sought and will be made available when received.

Further information about the scheme is available in the following fact sheets:

For employers: <https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact_sheet_Info_for_Employers_1.pdf>

For employees: <https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact_sheet_Info_for_Employees_0.pdf>

**Peter Schirmer**Executive Officer of the Church