



Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Government Policy on JobSeeker and JobKeeper Unhealthy and Economically Counterproductive

“The Federal Government’s plan to reduce JobSeeker and JobKeeper, its previous elimination of the temporary child care support measures, and its planned tax cuts will damage the lives of many and will have little if any, positive impact on the economy,” said Dr Tim Woodruff, Acting Chair of the Australian Health Care Reform Alliance.

Covid kills. It affects poor people much more than the wealthy. That’s what the figures show. Poverty kills. Even relative poverty leads to poorer people suffering and dying earlier than wealthier people, whether from Covid or any other cause. That’s what the figures show.

Newstart was 40% below the poverty line before Covid. As of September 24, 1.6 million JobSeeker Australians will have their income cut to 10% below the poverty line. Those people will suffer more and die younger than their wealthy fellow Australians. This is Federal Government policy.

It is immoral policy. It is unhealthy policy.

Every dollar these people on JobSeeker have will immediately be spent, thus regrowing the economy.

Contrast that with the contemplated Federal Government proposal to give tax cuts of \$2,000 to \$4,000 to wealthy Australians. They all have quite adequate disposable incomes. Those tax cuts will be spent increasing their wealth in savings such as superannuation, property investment and the like. Such spending will have little or no impact on the struggling economy. Indeed it may just maintain or even exacerbate the lack of affordability of housing for those on lower incomes.

Cutting taxes for the wealthy at this time is counterproductive economic policy
But it is ideologically consistent with a belief that if one is lucky enough to have had the opportunity to be wealthy, whether through having the right genes, family upbringing, and/or connections, then one deserves to continue to be comfortable, come what may, and damn the rest.

Questions remain. Why are mother and babies being left to go hungry in our cities and towns? Why is it being left to charities and volunteers to pick up the pieces? Does our Government have anything to say other than to call the poor a drain on society.

Does Australia really want public policy which is driven by ideology, despite it being unhealthy, immoral, and economically counterproductive? , asks Dr Woodruff. "Are we really all in this together?"

Dr Tim Woodruff
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