

New Social Contract for Recovery and Resilience Union Wins March 2020

ACTU Australia

- Wage subsidy – the ACTU campaigned for the government to implement a wage subsidy to prevent mass layoffs. On 30 March, the government announced the ‘JobKeeper’ scheme, paying **\$1,500 a fortnight for a period of six months**. The money is paid to employers and must be passed on to workers in full in the form of wages. The scheme was extended to March 2021 at a reduced rate.
- Social dialogue / legislation – the government has set up five tripartite working groups to create a **new workplace relations deal** by late 2020. Before this, the government withdrew its anti-union ‘Ensuring Integrity Bill’.
- Social protection – the government announced the ‘JobSeeker’ payment on 30 March, which, for six months, **replaced and doubled the old unemployment benefit** that was set at below the poverty line. The government extended the payment beyond September at a reduced rate. In early September, the ACTU criticised the government for cutting back JobKeeper and JobSeeker, and called for a comprehensive national economic reconstruction plan.
- **Free early childhood care** was announced on 2 April. This temporary measure ended in July, but the ACTU is campaigning for it to become permanent.