



Analysis of Coronavirus Supplement Recipients, 5 May 2021

The Federal Government replaced the \$75 per week Coronavirus Supplement with a \$25 per week permanent increase from 1 April, meaning they are \$50 per week worse off¹ This has plunged up to 3 million Australians, including over 1 million children, into deeper poverty, with the majority of adult recipients being women. The Government has missed an historic opportunity to right the wrong of children growing up in poverty and consigned far too many Australians to a shocking struggle to put food on their table, pay their rent and search for work. As one of the wealthiest nations in the world, we can and must protect those most vulnerable. It's simply the right thing to do.

Revised payments from 1 April 2021 are well below the poverty line

- Even with full rent assistance and energy supplement, a single person now receives a maximum of \$55 a day, \$10 a day below the poverty line of \$65 for a single person. In Australia, the poverty line is generally defined as 50% of median household income.² Before deducting housing costs, in 2017-18 this was \$457 a week for a single adult (**\$65 a day**); \$731 for a sole parent with two children (\$104 a day); or \$960 for a couple with two children (\$137 a day).

Assume single, no dependents, renting privately	<u>Max Weekly amount from 1/1-31/3/21</u>	Max Weekly amount with \$25 per week from 1/4/21	Age Pension Single	Full-time JobKeeper to 28/3/21
JobSeeker Payment	\$282.85	\$285.40	\$430.30	\$500
Rent Assistance (if paying at least \$155.37 rent pw)	\$69.80	\$69.80	\$69.80	
Energy Supplement	\$4.40	\$4.40	\$7.05	
Pension Supplement (max)	\$0	\$0	\$34.80	
Total without Coronavirus Supplement	\$357.05	\$359.60	\$541.95	
Coronavirus Supplement /Permanent increase	\$75.00	\$25.00	n/a	
Total with Coronavirus Supplement/Permanent increase	\$432.05	\$384.60	\$541.95	\$500
Daily rate	\$61	\$55	\$77.42	\$71.43

See also [Peter Whiteford and Bruce Bradbury, The Conversation 24/2/21](#) and [The Grattan Institute Blog 24/2/21](#).

- The National Council of Single Mothers & Their Children as part of their **550 Reasons to Smile** campaign September 2020 survey found 94% of respondents said it was either critical (76.5%) or very important (17.5%) to keep the Coronavirus Supplement of \$550 per fortnight. CEO Terese Edwards said: *“the supplement is helping women get the bond together to leave a situation of domestic violence, buy a family computer so kids can home school, put healthy food on the table three times a day and make it possible to repair cars and pay for other essentials like regular medication.”*³
- According to the ABS Survey conducted in November 2020, **paying household bills** was reported to be the most common use of the Coronavirus Supplement (67%).⁴

Number of people affected

- Before it ceased on 1/4/21, **1.9 million** people were receiving the Coronavirus Supplement (**plus ~1.1 million children**), including almost **1.3 m people receiving unemployment payments** JobSeeker or Youth Allowance Other. APW estimates **56 percent of the total receiving CVS were women** and ACOSS estimates more than half a million people receiving JobSeeker & Youth Allowance Other (549,000) live in regional Australia⁵. Tables 1-5 provide more data.

Concerns for children and families

- We are extremely concerned about the impact on families with more than 1 million children. Many of these where the youngest child is at least eight years old receive the JobSeeker payment rather than parenting payments. Growing up in poverty is simply bad for children. We have summarised the experience and evidence in our 2020 Fast Fact [Child Poverty in Australia](#). As [Professor Sharon Bessell at ANU](#) says *“children will wake up hungry, go to school hungry, and go to bed hungry. And based on our [research](#), they will be reluctant to tell anyone, because of a sense of shame and a desire not to further worry their parents.”*
- Research undertaken by the **ANU and published 20/4/21** alarmingly predicts that due to cuts in payments which took effect from 1/4/21, child poverty rates for single parent families will soar to 41% – more than double the rate during the peak of COVID-19 and higher than pre-pandemic levels. Poverty rates for children under 5 years of age in single parent families is expected to increase from 12% to 46%.⁶
- Responses to the National Council of Single Mothers & Their Children **550 Reasons to Smile** campaign elicited the following:

“When the \$550 ends I dread living like before again. I dread the kids going without. I dread the hunger, and fear of homelessness.”

“I lost my job through no fault of my own through covid lockdown and will not get be getting it back unfortunately... without the CVS I would not be able to afford everyday living expenses and I am concerned about what will happen when it finishes...”

About Anti-Poverty Week

- *Anti-Poverty Week supports the Australian community to have an increased understanding of poverty and to take action collectively to end it. We are a diverse network of individuals and organisations who share this purpose and we focus our activity each year in the week around the United Nations Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October.*
- Our key message is **Poverty exists. Poverty hurts us all. We can all do something about it.** It is one of hope, not despair. Since the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 we have been focusing on the need to keep income support payments above the poverty line as well as ensuring all Australians have a safe, affordable place to call home (and supporting the [Everybody's Home](#) campaign).
- See more at our website www.antipovertyweek.org.au including our 5 May JobSeeker and Poverty Briefing, or contact **Toni Wren, Executive Director** on ed@antipovertyweek.org.au or 0405 705 442.

Table 1) Coronavirus Supplement eligible payments over time

DSS Payments CVS eligible	Dec-19	26-Jun-20	25-Dec-20	12 Feb 21	26 March 2021
Newstart/JobSeeker Payment	728,405	1,441,287	1,324,316	1,245,016	1,167,082
Youth Allowance (Other)	85,316	173,125	150,005	138,496	129,005
Parenting Payment Single	228,606	243,433	243,100	241,699	241,342
Parenting Payment Partnered	68,087	92,022	95,551	94,705	94,087
Partner Allowance	977	652	unknown	unknown	unknown
Widow Allowance	7,342	5,549	3,557	2,913	2,427
Special Benefit	6,709	9,638	8,979	8,502	8,309
Sickness Allowance	5,172	6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Youth Allowance (student and apprentice)	134,456	225,483	177,979	186,146	205,520
Austudy	27,634	41,391	36,772	37,108	40,767
ABSTUDY Living Allowance	7,595	9,806	9,527	8,705	9,332
TOTAL	1,300,299	2,242,386	2,049,786	1,963,290	1,897,871

Source: [DSS Demographic Data](#) December 2019 and June 2020, noting CVS was introduced in March 2020 due to the pandemic. December 2020 – 12/2/21 data from Income Support Recipients by State at 25/12/20 published at [Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 Additional Documents](#) #45, #52 and #56.

Table 2) Women as a Percentage of CVS recipients, December 2020

Payment type	Male	Female	Total
JobSeeker Payment	698,985	625,331	1,324,316
Youth Allowance (other)	78,150	71,855	150,005
Parenting Payment Partnered	8,973	86,578	95,551
Parenting Payment Single	11,959	231,141	243,100
Partner Allowance	27	375	402
Special Benefit	4,921	4,058	8,979
Widow Allowance	0	3,557	3,557
Youth Allowance (student and apprentice)	74,394	103,585	177,979
ABSTUDY (Living Allowance)	3,830	5,697	9,527
Austudy	16,068	20,704	36,772
Total	897,307	1,152,881	2,050,188
Percentage	44%	56%	100%

Source: [DSS Demographic Data](#) December 2020.

Table 3) Children with a parent receiving CVS, 31 July 2020 and 12 February 2021

Dependent children with parent on CVS eligible payment	31-Jul-20	12 Feb 2021
JobSeeker Payment	503,860	438,249
Youth Allowance (Other)	2,261	1,948
Parenting Payment Single	493,922	485,258
Parenting Payment Partnered	125,379	136,750
Widow Allowance	N/p	37
Special Benefit	3,156	2,754
Youth Allowance (student and apprentice)	930	883
Austudy	13,151	11,567
ABSTUDY Living Allowance	1,180	1,080
TOTAL	1,143,839	1,078,526

Source: July 2020 from [Senate Committee on COVID-19 Answers to Questions on Notice #269](#), Question SQ20-000532, not their total is 1,143,916. February 2021 is same but #604. IQ21-000006.

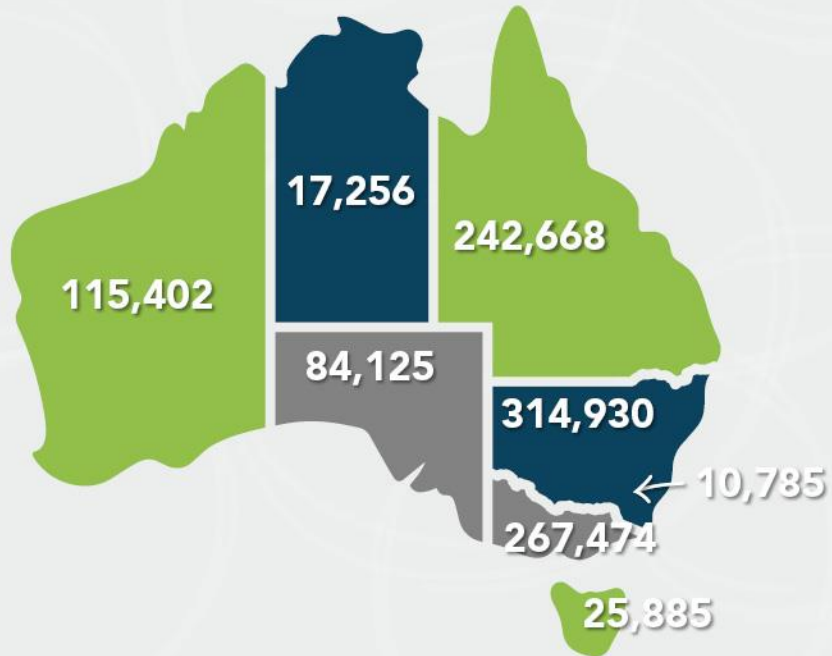
Table 4) Adults & Children with a parent receiving CVS 12 February 2021 (by State and Territory)

State/Territory	Number of adults receiving CVS 12 Feb 2021	Number of children with parent receiving CVS 12 Feb 2021	Total CVS Adult & children 12 Feb 2021 (APW estimates)
New South Wales	572,412	314,930	887,342
Victoria	485,936	267,474	753,410
Queensland	442,097	242,668	684,765
Western Australia	210,497	115,402	325,899
South Australia	152,903	84,125	237,028
Tasmania	152,903	25,884	178,787
Northern Territory	47,999	17,256	65,255
Australian Capital Territory	31,336	10,785	42,121
Australia	1,962,774	1,078,526	3,041,300

Source: Adult data from [Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 Additional Documents](#). Children data estimated by APW based on [Senate Committee on COVID-19 Answers to Questions on Notice #604 IQ21-000006](#).

Number of children with parent receiving Coronavirus Supplement

12 February 2021



1,078,525 TOTAL

Table 5) Anti-Poverty Week Analysis of top 14 Coalition Federal seats receiving the CVS, 26/6/20 and 8/1/21.⁷

MP Name	Political Party	Fed Electorate & State	% Job Loss 14/3/20-18/4/20 (Grattan Institute analysis) Where workers live not work	Total Recipients CVS 26/6/20 (DSS data Q on N #222, Senate COVID Committee .)	Total Recipients CVS 8/1/21 (The Guardian)	CVS Expenditure lost per fortnight from 1/4/21 (millions) (The Guardian)
		Australia	7.5%	2,242,392	~2,000,000	~\$300 million
Entsch	LNPQLD	Leichhardt, QLD	8.5%	25,491	22,984	\$3.448 m
Price	Lib	Durack, WA	5.5%	21,502	19,484	\$2.922 m
van Manen	LNPQLD	Forde, QLD	6.7%	21,313	19,490	\$2.923 m
Bell	LNPQLD	Moncrieff, QLD	9%	21,360	18,122	\$2.718 m
Robert	LNPQLD	Fadden, QLD	9%	21,271	17,891	\$2.683 m
Conaghan	Nat	Cowper, NSW	11.6%	19,852	17,877	\$2.681 m
Young	LNPQLD	Longman, QLD	5.7%	20,216	18,587	\$2.788 m
Ramsay	Lib	Grey, SA	8.6%	19,305	18,510	\$2.776 m
Porter	Lib	Pearce, WA	5.4%	19,432	17,046	\$2.556 m
Thompson	LNPQLD	Herbert, QLD	6.5%	19,811	18,045	\$2.706 m
Hogan	Nat	Page, NSW	9.7%	18,964	17,456	\$2.618 m
Pitt	LNPQLD	Hinkler, QLD	7.6%	18,066	16,405	\$2.460 m
O'Brien	LNPQLD	Wide Bay, QLD	8.6%	17,636	15,294	\$2.294 m
Howarth	LNPQLD	Petrie, QLD	5.7%	17,920	15,541	\$2.331 m

ENDNOTES

¹ [Joint Ministerial Media Release, 23/2/21](#)

² Davidson, P., Saunders, P., Bradbury, B. and Wong, M. (2020), [Poverty in Australia 2020: Part 1, Overview](#). ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 3, Sydney: ACOSS, note Federal Government funds the [HILDA survey](#) from University of Melbourne who also use this measure as well as others.

³ APW news, [Single parents 'dreading' cuts](#), 9/9/20

⁴ Proportion of people receiving the Coronavirus Supplement who reported using the payment for each item in the last four weeks ([Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey November 2020](#) published 14/12/20).

Household bills (%)	Household supplies/Groceries (%)	Mortgage /rent (%)	Saving it (%)	Medical services or supplies (%)	Credit card/personal debt (%)	Recreation/leisure activities (%)	Clothing/footwear (%)	Furnishings/household equipment (%)
67.4	63.3	38.9	26.3	26.1	19.1	17.5	14.9	7.7

⁵ Regional data from [Cassandra Goldie in the Newcastle Star](#).

⁶ Ben Phillips and Vivikth Narayanan, [Financial Stress and Social Security Settings in Australia](#), ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods, April 2021. Also [5 page summary](#).

⁷ See also <https://antipovertyweek.org.au/apw-2020/poverty-covid-19/>

For breakdown by CVS and estimates of number of children for **all Federal Electorates** at December 2020.