

Michael Gunner
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Dale Wakefield
Minister for Territory Families



Media Statement

\$5 million Worker & Wellbeing Fund

30 March 2020

The Territory Labor Government will establish a \$5 million Worker & Wellbeing Fund to support local workers struggling with the economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis has meant difficult and uncertain times for many Territorians.

The Territory Labor Government is working round the clock to save lives, save jobs and reduce the economic impacts wherever possible. We have implemented strict border and quarantine rules, a Jobs, Rescue and Recovery Package, and a Small Business Survival Fund.

And we're going to keep doing more to protect Territorians – whatever it takes.

The Fund will focus on Territorians who are experiencing unemployment, reduced income or who are affected within their workplace because of the COVID-19 crisis.

The Worker & Wellbeing Fund will help make sure Territorians doing it tough get access to the services they need, such as financial counselling, relationship counselling or general wellbeing support.

Additionally, the Fund will assist Territorians navigate the Centrelink system or look for a new job. This can be a difficult and daunting experience, particularly right now. For many, it may be the first time they have needed to access these services.

An advisory group chaired by Wendy Morton, former Executive Director of NTCOSS, with representation from business, community and unions has been established. This group will be tasked with providing advice on how to target the right resources to the right people, as well as identifying where there are gaps in the availability of services.

The Worker & Wellbeing Fund's main goals are to:

- Help people access the range of wellbeing and other counselling or support services that are available
- Help people navigate the welfare system and access income and any other financial support available
- Help workers who have lost their job find new employment opportunities fast –such as guiding people to job matching services like the Territory Jobs Hub
- Assisting Territorians who require access to accommodation and other essentials

This funding is to meet new and emerging gaps and will be available for people who were not already receiving Centrelink benefits such as Newstart or Youth Allowance prior to the COVID-19 economic downturn. It will also be complementary to any initiatives announced by the Australian Government.

Details about the operation of the fund will be made available on 3 April 2020.

Quotes from Chief Minister Michael Gunner:

“This is a once-in-a-century crisis that’s hurting a lot of Territorians in different ways.

“I want to do everything possible to assist Territorians – whether it’s supporting small businesses, helping people look for new jobs, or providing easy access to support services for people who are being put through the ringer.

“We like to say we’re ‘Territory Tough’ up here. But there’s nothing wrong with getting help when you need it. A lot of people are in the same boat and the Worker & Wellbeing Fund will assist people to access the support they need.

“We’re all in this together, we’ve all got to look out for each other.

“We will continue to work for Territorians and get us all through this difficult time. If we stick together, we’ll come out the other side stronger.”

Quotes from Minister for Territory Families, Dale Wakefield:

“We want Territorians to feel supported during this time. This program will provide information about where to go for help, assistance to access the relevant support and provide additional resources for individuals and for wellbeing services such as counselling.

“Asking for help, or a listening ear is important during this unprecedented time. Whether you’re a worker, self-employed or a visa holder - this package is for anyone who is living in the Territory and has been affected by COVID-19.

“We are bringing together the best advice the union movement, business and community sector can offer to guide government on how to help people address their own unique circumstances.”