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Media Release

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Monday 3 August 2020

Sheed warns local businesses will close without JobKeeper changes

Independent Member for the Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed MP has called on the Federal Government to change JobKeeper 2.0 eligibility requirements for regional Victoria, warning the economic outcome will be dire without more latitude.

“Unless we can get a better set of rules in place for the new JobKeeper provisions at the end of September, I’m hearing from local businesses that some will not be able to survive the latest round of lock-downs,” Ms Sheed said.

Under current arrangements, the JobKeeper extension will be based on turnover in the June and September quarters for 2020.

“Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg hinted this morning that the Commonwealth Government is open to changing that to just the September quarter for businesses and not-for-profits in light of these new lock-downs in Victoria,” Ms Sheed said.

“No-one would deny that Victorian businesses are suffering more than any other in the country due to the latest outbreak and the necessary need for lock-down measures which I fully support.

“But it also needs to be acknowledged that many of us in regional Victoria are effectively collateral damage for what is going on in Melbourne. Greater Shepparton has one active case and my community has shown a fierce respect for the social distancing rules and lock-down measures which are clearly working here.”

Stage Three lockdown rules due to be enforced in Greater Shepparton later in the week will have a devastating effect on the local economy, according to Ms Sheed.

“We already have the highest unemployment rate in regional Victoria. Our local economy has been severely impacted by the first round of lock-downs. We need all the support we can get and easing the JobKeeper 2.0 eligibility requirements is one of the most obvious and easiest to implement.”

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