

The AASW is working with members and key stakeholders to address the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. AASW National President Christine Craik said “COVID-19 is deeply affecting all of us. Social workers, like many health professionals, are deeply concerned about the effects of the virus on individuals, groups, families, and the broader community. “The social work profession is over 100 years old and during this long history we have been there working to assist people and communities to support and recover from world wars, pandemics, global and regional crises and recessions. Through it all, social workers have worked side-by-side with people affected, driven by a deep commitment to social justice and human rights.” Social workers know that in times of crisis, we need to consider those who are disadvantaged and most vulnerable. Ms Craik said, “For example, we have already seen reports of an expected increase in family violence related to the conditions of the COVID-19 lock downs, and the broad reaching impacts that a downturn in the economy will have on those already dealing with anxiety and depression, mental health and homelessness, to name a few. “We have confidence in the strength of our communities to support each other through this crisis, but we also need to address potential shortfalls in the social services workforce as more staff become affected by the coronavirus,” she said. The AASW welcomes the extension of small business cashflow support to community services and charities in the second stimulus package, announced yesterday. Ms Craik said, “We await further detail about how and when community services on the frontline of responding to COVID-19 will receive the funding and whether it will be enough to adequately respond to the impending crisis. “We also welcome the increase of \$275 per week to the Jobseeker Allowance (formerly Newstart) and Youth Allowance Job Seeker payment for the next six months. We urge for this to be extended to include students, those on the disability support payment and others on social security income support schemes”. AASW is updating its website for social workers as developments come to hand.

## Contacts

Angela Yin  
03 9320 1005  
mailto: [media@asw.asn.au](mailto:media@asw.asn.au)