

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

2019 - 2020

Division: Macroeconomic Conditions Division
Topic: 001 - Economic recovery - V shape recovery for Australia
Reference: Written questions from Senator Siewert, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000088

Question:

1. Please clarify evidence from the Treasury Secretary about economic recovery - does Treasury consider that there is no V shape recovery for Australia?

Answer:

While GDP is expected to fall sharply in the June quarter of 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, it is expected to grow strongly in the September quarter with the easing of health restrictions, but is not expected to immediately recover to where it was before the crisis.

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Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
2019 - 2020

Division: JobKeeper Division
Topic: 002 - Which Government agency is responsible for monitoring employers and employees for JobKeeper
Reference: Written question from Senator Siewert, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000089

Question:

2. Which government agency is responsible for monitoring whether employers and employees receiving Jobkeeper are eligible for the scheme?

Answer:

- The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is responsible for administering the JobKeeper program and ensuring that payments are made to eligible employers in respect of eligible employees.

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Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
2019 - 2020

Division: JobKeeper Division
Topic: 003 - Eligibility criteria for JobKeeper
Reference: Written question from Senator Siewert, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000090

Question:

3. Have all employees and employers who have received JobKeeper to date been confirmed as meeting the scheme's eligibility criteria?

Answer:

To enrol as an eligible employer, an entity will self-assess against, and declare it meets, the relevant criteria in the law which is explained on the ATO website:
<https://www.ato.gov.au/General/JobKeeper-Payment/Employers/Enrol-for-the-JobKeeper-payment/>.

Unless the ATO determines at the time of enrolment, or in subsequent compliance activity, that the relevant criteria is not met, the entity is considered an eligible employer.

Employers are required to nominate their eligible employees. They do this by:

- notifying all eligible employees of the employer's enrolment, including information for the eligible employee on how to be nominated
- collecting notices from each eligible employee who wishes to be nominated (which may later be requested by the ATO)
- providing information about each nominated eligible employee to the ATO
- notifying each nominated eligible employee that their details have been provided to the ATO.

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2019 - 2020

Division: JobKeeper Division
Topic: 004 – 007 Manipulation of revenue to be eligible for JobKeeper
Reference: Written questions from Senator Siewert, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000091

Question:

4. Is Treasury aware of how companies could manipulate revenue so as to make them eligible for Jobkeeper?
5. If so is the Treasury aware or suspicious of any companies that have tried to do this?
6. If so how and what action has Treasury taken to share with ATO?
7. Is this sort of manipulation something that would convince Treasury to change the design of the Jobkeeper program? If so in what way?

Answer:

4. Special rules apply in the payment framework to allow the Tax Commissioner to take action against contrived arrangements. Under these rules, if the Commissioner is satisfied that an entity has undertaken a scheme or part of a scheme in order to gain the benefit of the JobKeeper Payment, then the Tax Commissioner may undo the effect of the scheme and recover any overpayments. The rules allow the Commissioner to deny the effect of any arrangement undertaken just to increase the payment an entity could receive.
5. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is responsible for administering the JobKeeper program and ensuring that payments are made to eligible employers in respect of eligible employees.
6. Should Treasury become aware of any concerning behaviour, this would be passed to the ATO as a matter of course.
7. Treasury responds to feedback from the ATO about compliance risks the ATO sees in the operation of tax laws and in the tax system. Should the ATO identify any concerns that are not adequately covered by the existing legal and administrative framework, the ATO would raise these matters with Treasury and Treasury may advise Government that a law change is justified to correct the issue. This process would apply for any compliance concerns the ATO had in the administration of JobKeeper or any other ATO administered program.

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Division: JobKeeper Division
Topic: JobKeeper and PPL
Reference: Written question from Senator Siewert, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000105

Question:

Amendments were made to ensure that being on JobKeeper would not disqualify eligible women from meeting the work test under the Paid Parental Leave Act. However, many women who would otherwise have satisfied the work test may not be eligible for JobKeeper (because of their work arrangements or the status of their employer), or their employer may have elected not to participate in the JobKeeper scheme. Can the Department provide any information about how many women would have met the work test but for COVID, but have not been able to go onto JobKeeper to protect their Paid Parental Leave entitlements?

Answer:

There are no data available to provide information on women that would have met the work test but for COVID.

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2019 - 2020

Division: JobKeeper Division

Topic: JobKeeper Statistics

Reference: Written question from Senator Siewert transferred from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000106

Question:

Will up-to-date JobKeeper statistics be publicly and frequently available? This includes the number of people who are receiving the JobKeeper payment but have been stood down or are working zero hours

Answer:

The Department of Treasury has been providing updated JobKeeper data through its appearances at the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19.

Data are not available on the number of people who are receiving the JobKeeper payment but have been stood down or are working zero hours.

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2019 - 2020

Division: JobKeeper Division
Topic: Apprenticeships and Traineeships during COVID; Registered Training Organisations
Reference: **Written questions from Senator Gallagher transferred from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 22 May 2020 – IQ20-000107**

Question:

Apprenticeships and Traineeships during COVID

1. How many apprentices and trainees have received the Job Keeper wage subsidy? (please provide for apprentices and trainees separately and as a total)
 - a. How many employers?
 - b. Top 5 industries/occupations impacted

Registered Training Organisations and COVID

2. How many Registered Training Organisations are receiving Job Keeper?
 - a. How many RTO employees have received Job Keeper?

Answer:

1. Data of this nature, going to the training status of employees, are not collected.
2. Data of this nature, going to the training status of employees, are not collected.