

# LGRCEU



FORMERLY THE MEU  
FOR OVER 116 YEARS

May 19th ,2020

Hon. Scott Morrison, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
PO Box 6022,  
House of Representatives,  
PARLIAMENT,  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

## **RE: IMPACT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC UPON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES - WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

At the direction of the organisation's Committee of Management and on behalf of the membership of the organisation, we write seeking direct assistance and support for our membership employed in the Industry.

We are deeply concerned that the current position adopted by both the State and Commonwealth Government is one that says to the Industry as a whole that there will be no additional financial support.

We are extremely conscious that within the Industry there has been a growing imbalance in the quantum of higher salary positions relative to that of employees whom we represent.

This structural imbalance in the industry, which we understood the previous State Government attempted to address but ultimately withdrew from, has persisted, and worsened over the ensuing four (4) years.

Our membership who are employed entirely in operational services are among the lower salary bands and have in general terms acted with restraint with wage claims particularly since 2015 onwards.

Notwithstanding their restraint, they appear to be the first to be punished by internal decision making by the various Local Government Authorities, over which neither they nor this organisation have any direct ability to control.

These workers' salaries are generally between \$ 55,000.00 to \$ 60,000.00 per annum.

Already a significant number have been asked to either agree to forgo salary by way of cuts in their hours of work; delay any agreed wage increases arising under current operating collective bargaining agreements or take various types of leave which they usually accrue to use for family and recreational purposes at agreed times with their employers.

*Western Australian Shire Councils, Municipal Road Boards,  
Health Boards, Parks, Cemeteries and Racecourses,  
Public Authorities Water Boards Union, WA Division*

SECRETARY ANDREW JOHNSON

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2.

Whilst they recognise that at present, they are travelling better than many, they are deeply concerned that should the situation deteriorate in their Industry that they may be forcibly stood down with or without pay.

As the Industry is currently excluded from the "JOBKEEPER SCHEME" the critical question arises as to what if any financial protection exists for these employees who may be stood down without pay?

It would seem that they cannot claim "JOBSEEKER PAYMENTS" as they are still employed. So this scenario will create severe hardship for the employees unless there is some practical alternative put in place to protect them:

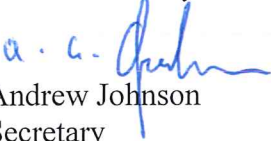
Options that we believe should be considered are as follows:

1. **Accelerate the transfer of all the Local Authorities in Western Australia into the Western Australian Industrial Relations Jurisdiction with protection provisions covering all their existing employment entitlements.**
2. **Amending either or both the State and Federal Awards that apply to the Industry of Local Government in Western Australia to have a guaranteed entitlements similar to or identical to that adopted by consent in the Industry in New South Wales.**
3. **Extending Job Keeper to the Industry.**
4. **Rapidly accelerating untied Capital Works Funding payments to Council to ensure that their prime business of community infrastructure construction and maintenance is continued without interruption.**

Whilst we understand that there are many significant interests to be considered, we seek the Government's support of the immediate and ongoing employment futures of our members in the industry.

We look forward to your advice.

Yours Faithfully



Andrew Johnson  
Secretary