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MEDIA RELEASE

Charities will step in as Government plans cuts to COVID support

The National Council of St Vincent de Paul said the Federal Government's decision to cut COVID-19 funding to the states and territories once certain vaccination levels have been reached exposes highly vulnerable people to more unnecessary risk.

Speaking shortly after the announcement, National President, Claire Victory said using a vaccination benchmark to cut off the COVID disaster recovery payment is a blunt instrument being used to manage a complex issue that impacts the wellbeing of 1.7 million people currently receiving the payment.

'We already know that for a number of reasons, there are communities that are not vaccinated,' Ms Victory said.

'Engaging and working with those communities to lift their vaccination rates should be the urgent priority of all governments.'

'The Federal Government's disaster payment was not designed to be long-term, but it should only be withdrawn once it can be demonstrated that these communities are no longer at risk.'

'There is currently no national detailed data available that shows vaccination rate by local government area.'

'The only information available on the Commonwealth Department of Health's website is state and territory data.'

'This makes it impossible to pinpoint areas that need more targeted help to get vaccinated.'

'Right now, we should all be focused on greater transparency, effort and community engagement.'

'But instead, payments will be severed when they are most needed.'

'The reality is it will take time for people to find work as businesses get back on their feet.'

'We've come this far. Let's see it through together,' Ms Victory said.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

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