

Thursday, 16 July 2020

7.4 per cent unemployed, Morrison must extend JobKeeper and adopt jobs plan

Today's unemployment figures show there has been no economic snap back and underscore the need for a serious and comprehensive economic reconstruction plan to get Australia working again.

992,300 people are now unemployed, with the rate jumping 0.4 points to 7.4 per cent, according to data released this morning by the ABS.

There are currently 3 million people reliant on JobKeeper and we know many of them will fall into unemployment if the program ends in 10 weeks. The Treasurer claims that the "real" unemployment rate is already more than 13 per cent.

The ACTU will be announcing a plan on Sunday for a jobs-led reconstruction. We stand ready to work with the government on creating secure jobs and improving rights for workers.

The funding announced this morning for skills training replaces 2/3rds of the \$3 billion cut from skills training by the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison Governments. The ACTU has called this a "good start" but raised concerns that the funding may be misused by dodgy private providers rather than being earmarked for TAFE, and that the apprenticeship program requires apprentices to have already commenced and there is no pathway into roles on government projects.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"If the Government follows through on cutting JobKeeper in September we will see a huge jump in unemployment. No one wants to see more people fall through the gaps which is why we need to extend JobKeeper and deliver a comprehensive plan for a jobs-led reconstruction.

"People need reassurance that Australia isn't going over an economic cliff so the sooner the Government tells people the plan the better for everyone.

"We have 13 times more unemployed people than jobs available, and record rates of young people either out of work or needing more hours.

"We need government to help build ongoing local jobs, more training and education opportunities to get people into jobs and support for people who are making things here in Australia.

"The JobTrainer plan restores some of the money in the training sector but it needs to be targeted to TAFE, which we know works, not handed over to the privatised sector which we know is full of dodgy providers. Not only does this wage subsidy only reach existing apprentices, it expires in March 2021.

"People need a real pathway that builds on skill development into real work so expanding the program to include new apprentices and making sure there are government projects with mandated minimum numbers of trainees and apprentices is what we need to see now."

ENDS

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200