

Thursday, 13 August 2020

## 7.5% per cent unemployed, more than a million out of work for the first time

The continued rise of unemployment, with 1,009,400 people now out of work, shows the economy is in deep crisis and we need decisive action to create jobs and begin a long recovery process. We need a National Economic Reconstruction Plan.

15,700 more workers became unemployed in July according to data released today by the ABS. The underutilisation rate, those who are either unemployed and underemployed, is extremely high at 18.7 per cent. The Morrison Government has still not released a comprehensive plan for creating secure jobs.

Despite these alarming numbers we know that the rate of unemployment is being kept artificially low by the 3.5 million people who are currently reliant on JobKeeper. Even a small number of those workers falling into unemployment when that program ends would be disastrous.

The ACTU has put forward a detailed plan for a recovery which would put jobs first and ensure that we don't rebuild a workforce with the same weaknesses caused by insecure work that we have seen exposed by this pandemic.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Even with a national wage subsidy scheme which unions fought for, more than a million people are now looking for work.

"These figures show that Australia is on track – as predicted by the Government's own department – to reach 10 per cent by the end of the year.

"We know that the real rate of unemployment is much higher, there are millions of workers who are currently only in a job thanks to JobKeeper and others who have stopped looking for work.

"These numbers are from before the second lockdown in Victoria, which has stood down hundreds of thousands of workers.

"The million Australians now out of a job, and the millions more who are either reliant on JobKeeper or worried about their future, need leadership from this Government. They need a plan for jobs.

"We need to make sure that the recovery creates secure jobs which will kick-start the economy by putting money in the hands of working people and giving them the confidence to spend it.

"We cannot return to the levels of insecure work that we saw before the pandemic which have led to so many people losing their jobs.

"The ACTU has put forward a detailed plan, what's needed now is for the Government to act to create jobs and to ensure that working people have better rights and more secure work as we recover from this crisis."

**ENDS**

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