

Thursday, 15 October 2020

Unemployment increases as Morrison pulls support

Unemployment has climbed again to 6.9 per cent, with youth unemployment at 14.5 per cent and 11.4 per cent of working people underemployed according to data released this morning by the ABS. 29,500 people lost jobs in the last month.

This backward step comes in the month leading up to the Morrison Government's cuts to the critical JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments and with 3.5 million people still reliant on JobKeeper.

The Morrison Government should reverse the cuts to JobSeeker and JobKeeper, expand JobKeeper to cover excluded workers and industries, and provide certainty about the future of JobSeeker.

Real unemployment – accounting for those who would be out of work if not for government support and other factors, is believed to be substantially higher. Millions of Australians face an uncertain future once the JobKeeper payment ends.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“Unemployment increased - especially for young people - as the Morrison Government cut back critical support payments and with millions who are reliant on the JobKeeper program for work.

“Now is not the time for the Government to be cutting back. 160,000 workers are expected to lose their jobs between now and the end of the year. The Government needs to recommit to supporting these workers and start creating secure jobs to lift the economy out of recession.

“The Government should reverse the cuts to JobSeeker and JobKeeper and expand JobKeeper to cover the industries and workers who have been excluded from government support since the start of the pandemic.

“It is incomprehensible that in the midst of a recession the Government is refusing to provide clarity about the future of the JobSeeker payment. It should reverse the cuts and guarantee the payment at the original rate into the future.

“The ACTU's National Economic Reconstruction Plan lays out how strong government investment in infrastructure, manufacturing, tourism, training and early childhood education can create the secure jobs we need and put money in the hands of working people who will spend it.

“The Prime Minister might want to make it seem like we're through this pandemic but working people are still facing it head on and they need support from a Government which has too often turned up too late with too little in response to this crisis.”

ENDS

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200