

Thursday 18th February 2021

2 million still unemployed or underemployed, with JobKeeper cut looming

Just over 2 million people are unemployed or underemployed according to data released by the ABS today.

These levels are alarming as Job Keeper is to be cut at the end of March with JobSeeker payments set to be reduced to \$40 a day.

It is still unknown when borders will reopen and industries like aviation, higher education and tourism will recover.

Strong government support to keep working people connected to employers is necessary as large parts of the economy continue to recover slowly and is likely to be necessary until the vaccine rollout has been completed – which is not expected to be until late this year.

The economic recovery would be further harmed by proposed changes to IR legislation, which will make it easier to cut workers' pay, and make it more difficult to negotiate better pay and conditions.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“With just over 2 million people unemployed or underemployed our Government shouldn't be acting like the pandemic is over.

“JobKeeper and JobSeeker have been the backbone that held our economy together during the pandemic and to cut them while entire sectors are still feeling the effect of the crisis is short-sighted and dangerous.

“Genuine recovery from the pandemic recession will require comprehensive support, job creation and wage growth. To hit workers by cutting JobSeeker and JobKeeper, while also introducing IR legislation that hurts wages is irresponsible.

“1.5 million people still rely on JobKeeper to keep them in work, they face an uncertain future once the program is cut at the end of March.

“The Morrison Government's plan to introduce IR legislation that cuts workers' pay and conditions will worsen unemployment, increase insecure work and further drive down wage growth.”

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