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## ABS figures on potential workers finds additional 250,000 unemployed

A quarter of a million Australians, not captured in unemployment figures, are locked out of the job market due to a lack of access to affordable childcare or are being discouraged from looking for work by the lack of jobs, according to ABS figures released today.

This data reveals that 250,000 people either cannot find work and have stopped trying or are ready to work but cannot access childcare. Of that number;

- 138,700 Australians want to work but are not actively looking for work because they cannot access childcare. Of that 92 per cent are women.
- 113,000 Australians want employment but are not actively looking because they have given up on all job prospects.

In addition to these figures, 1.75 million Australians are currently unemployed or underemployed – meaning that they cannot find enough hours at their current job.

The figures also show that of the 808,000 unemployed people who looked for work, the vast majority found difficulty in finding work, with the main reason given being that there are too many people applying for too few jobs.

To combat more workers falling out of the job market all together, the Morrison Government must introduce universal free early childhood education and care. This will also combat the growing gender divide in Australia that has seen Australia fall to 50<sup>th</sup> place on gender pay equity in the OECD from 15<sup>th</sup> in 2006.

The Morrison Government has resisted calls to use investment in social and physical infrastructure and procurement to create more jobs for Australians through the recovery from the pandemic. More must be done to help those who want to work but cannot because not enough jobs are available or suit their care commitments.

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

“138,700 Australians are locked out of the job market because they cannot afford or access childcare, with the vast majority being women. This should not be a barrier to anyone entering the workforce and it is critical that the Federal Government introduce free universal early childhood education and care.

“Today’s figures show what we have known for a long time – unemployment numbers don’t show the reality of the job market. Anyone not applying for work doesn’t count in unemployment figures, despite being out of work. The real number of unemployed and underemployed people stands at 2.2 million.

“The Morrison Government has long resisted calls to use Federal Government investment and procurement to create more Australian jobs and it is this failure that’s responsible for the hundreds of thousands of Australians who want to work but are locked out childcare and other barriers.

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