

Thursday 16 September 2021

## Australians have lost 66 million hours of work in the month of August

146,000 workers lost their jobs, and those still in jobs have lost 66 million hours of employment in the month of August alone. Youth unemployment increased to 10.7%, and underemployment also rose to 9.3%, according to data released this morning by the ABS.

This data reflects the reality of sweeping lockdowns across the country without the JobKeeper wage subsidy in place to keep working people connected to their jobs, with NSW the hardest hit.

Unions are urging the Morrison Government to bring in JobKeeper 2 – available for all workers and with safeguards to prevent the business rorts we saw last year – to give Australian workers, and the small businesses that employ them, a safety net. Current Covid disaster payment schemes are not sufficient or fit-for-purpose, and do not provide a crucial connection for the worker to their employer.

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

“The current Covid disaster payment system does not work for a crisis like this. Limiting eligibility to people who live or work in a hotspot doesn’t take into account that jobs and industries across the whole country are affected now and will be affected for a long time into the future.

“There is no more compelling reason to bring in JobKeeper 2 than seeing a loss of so many hours worked and jobs in one month alone. And thanks to the shambolic vaccine rollout, it could likely get worse before it gets better.

“Unions have been warning the Morrison Government for months; bring in JobKeeper 2 – available to all workers and with stronger safeguards to prevent the business rorts we saw last year - or Australia’s insecure job crisis will worsen.

“With over 200,000 people dropping out of the labour force and 66 million hours of work lost, there is an urgent need for a recovery plan for areas, workers and sectors hit hard by lockdowns.”

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