

Thursday 17 February 2022

## Data shows toll of “let it rip” policies on workers

At least half a million workers lost hours or worked zero hours due to being forced into taking leave due to the “let it rip” policies that allowed Omicron to explode, according to ABS data released today. This was exacerbated by the Morrison Government’s failure to prepare and provide enough RATs or make them free and accessible.

The unemployment rate this month has been propped up by insecure work, with even more women taking part-time jobs, underutilisation above 10 per cent and 6.7 per cent underemployment.

Unemployment data doesn’t represent the reality of life for millions of working people, with more than 2.1 million working multiple jobs to get by according to December figures, and those in multiple jobs on average earning thousands less than the overall median income. Australians are working multiple jobs at the highest rate in recorded ABS history.

Today’s jobs data proves yet again that Mr Morrison has no plan to address the crisis of insecure work and no plan to address the workforce crisis which has resulted from his mishandling of the pandemic response.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“Working people paid for the mistakes of the Morrison Government during January with a steep loss of earnings caused by loss of hours through illness and shutdowns.

“Scott Morrison told Australians to enjoy January, but it was instead a horror month as those who needed to work could not. This has translated directly into less money for workers who literally paid the price of “let it rip” policies.

“Again, we see increasing levels of insecure work, with underutilisation above 10 per cent and 6.7 per cent underemployment – a problem for our country that this Government has been utterly unable to address.

“The Morrison Government’s failure to prepare, or to order enough RATs or make them free means at least half a million people worked less or zero hours than normal. That’s less money in their pockets that was desperately needed to help the economy recover during the holiday period.”

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