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Unemployment hits 12-year-high not seen since Tony Abbott was Employment Minister

Today's 12-year-high unemployment rate of 6.3 per cent has destroyed any economic credibility the Abbott Government claims to have, said the ACTU.

"This is the highest unemployment rate in Australia since September 2002, when Tony Abbott was Employment Minister," said ACTU Assistant Secretary Tim Lyons.

"The Government needs to stop talking about jobs and start creating them. What we need is a plan for growth that is based on good jobs with decent wages and conditions and strong investment in skills and training.

"The longer we go on with an unemployment rate with a '6' in front of it, the worse the social and economic outlook will be for Australia," said Mr Lyons.

Treasury Secretary Martin Parkinson recently warned that "we want to avoid the risk that cyclical unemployment develops into structural unemployment, which would create significant social and economic costs".

Mr Lyons said the Abbott government needs to heed this warning.

"The longer Tony Abbott and the Coalition tolerate high unemployment and fail to act, the greater this risk becomes.

"All this Government has managed is an agenda of brutal cuts and attacks on workers' rights, wages and conditions that will see the living standards of all Australians fall."

Mr Lyons questioned how the Abbott Government thinks people will get into work given they slashed \$1 billion from skills and training in the Budget and are making it easier for employers to bring in foreign workers on 457 visas.

"Today's figures show youth unemployment has climbed to 14.5 per cent, yet across the country we're seeing employers cutting apprentice numbers and investment in training – then complaining they are unable to find skilled workers while youth unemployment soars."

"Sadly for Australian workers, the Abbott Government's agenda is based on cuts to wages and conditions and no support for Australian jobs."

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