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## Budget cuts won't Close the Gap on Indigenous unemployment

The Abbott Government's lack of progress in closing the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is disappointing but unsurprising, given it cut more than half a billion from Indigenous programs, the ACTU said.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said it seems a large part of the Abbott Government's strategy to boost Indigenous employment is Work for the Dole, which has been proven to be ineffective.

"Work for the Dole is not a pathway to on-going jobs, said Ms Kearney.

"Unemployed people who are placed into work experience must be paid the legal minimum wage with all of the usual conditions of employment – these programs do nothing to tackle unemployment.

"Whether in Indigenous or non-Indigenous communities - we know Work for the Dole doesn't work.

Ms Kearney said Aboriginal communities have unique and locally focused solutions to engage their communities in work.

"Employment initiatives must be based on real consultation, self-determination and an understanding of the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"These communities must be involved in the development and implementation phases rather than the paternalistic, one-sized fits all approach of the Abbott Government."

Ms Kearney said funding of Indigenous employment, health, education and community programs must be increased.

"The Abbott government slashed \$534 million from Indigenous programs in last year's budget – so the lack of progress in closing the gap is hardly surprising.

"With all of these funding cuts comes the loss of jobs for the workers who have been providing these essential services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Abbott Government's \$534 million cut to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs include:

- More than \$160million cut from Indigenous health programs
- \$3.5 million cut to the Torres Strait Regional Authority
- \$9.5million cut over 5 years to Indigenous language support
- No funding commitment to 38 Indigenous childhood development centres, which will close if not funded

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