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## Cuts to public sector jobs are driving a rise in unemployment and putting pressure on services

New research by the ACTU reveals that the number of public sector jobs in Australia has fallen for the first time in more than a decade after Coalition state governments last year sacked tens of thousands of workers and made harsh cuts to public services.

More than 50,000 public administration and safety jobs were lost around the country in the year to November 2012, with about half of those cuts taking place between May and November as state governments in New South Wales and Queensland executed radical job cuts. And more job losses are on the way as state governments foreshadow further deep cuts to their wages bills.

The [ACTU Jobs Report](#) found that employment in public administration and safety fell by 6.9% - by far the biggest yearly fall in employment in that industry on record going back to 1984 - with these cuts to public services being a major factor in the rise in Australia's unemployment rate.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said cutting public servants had led to more pressure on vital services like health and education and an impact on unemployment rates.

"The Federal Government, as well Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and WA, and local governments, have reduced the size of their public sector," Ms Kearney said.

"This is likely to continue this financial year, and into 2013-14. For example the Newman Government in Queensland only took office in March and the bulk of their savage cuts took effect in the second half of 2012."

"Cutting public sector workers is a short-sighted policy which will lead to reduced services for all Australians. Many of the workers who lose their jobs will spend long periods of time in unemployment.

"What is most concerning is that Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey have said they will slash 20,000 Commonwealth government jobs as soon as they are elected, and are looking for savings of more than \$50 billion."

The National Secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union, Nadine Flood, said public sector workers were fiercely proud of the work they do, but warned Australia's world-class public service is under threat from conservative politicians at the State and Federal level, keen to make deep budget cuts.

"With the public sector already under pressure, cuts like those put forward by Tony Abbott will severely damage public services in Australia," Ms Flood said. "No matter how the Coalition tries to spin it, deep cuts to the public sector mean cuts to the services that Australians rely on."

Ms Kearney said that the ACTU's analysis of unemployment data showed that while the official unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent had stayed steady over the last three months, the total number of hours worked had dropped.

The ACTU's Jobs Report for February is available in the Publications section at [www.actu.org.au](http://www.actu.org.au)

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