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New research shows Australia has second highest rate of temporary workers in OECD

New research to be released at today's National Community Summit: Creating Secure Jobs and a Better Society shows Australia has the second highest rate of temporary workers in the OECD, people are worried about their children's future, and there is support for a significant increase in the Newstart allowance.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said another surprising finding in the research was people's perceptions of the importance of the mining industry to the national economy were vastly exaggerated.

Empirica Research was commissioned to gain insights into people's attitudes towards insecure work, the economy and the welfare system ahead of the National Community Summit which starts in Old Parliament House in Canberra this morning. It will bring together more than 100 people from the community sector, government, unions and academia.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the Summit would be presented with new data showing that Australia had overtaken Spain and now lagged behind only Chile for the highest rate of temporary work in the OECD at 27.9% of the workforce.

In her opening speech, Ms Kearney will say that the social compact that has bound Australia together for more than a century is under threat from fundamental changes in the workplace.

"Many of the changes to our workplace have had negative effects on workers and their families," she will say. "We have forgotten that the burdens of economic change do not fall equally, that the drive to a more efficient and flexible economy has hurt some people more than others and increased inequality."

When Empirica Research asked people for their greatest concerns about the future, 55% nominated their children not having access to good jobs when they grew up, followed by 54% who nominated a growing number of working poor in low-paid, insecure jobs.

Other findings from the research included:

- People believed the contribution of the mining sector to the economy was 38% (it is actually 10% of GDP) and underestimated the services sector at 33% of GDP (it is 60%).
- People overestimated the value of the Newstart Allowance (currently \$246.30) and supported increasing it by an average of almost \$70 a week.

Ms Kearney said the growth of job insecurity in Australia requires meaningful discussion and a plan of action.

"Those who argue that insecure work is inevitable, it is not an issue, or somehow what workers want, are missing the point and are increasingly finding themselves on the wrong side of this debate," she says.

The Summit opens at **9.30am in Old Parliament House today**, with speakers including Ms Kearney, the CEO of the Australian Council of Social Service, Cassandra Goldie, and John Buchanan, Director of the Workplace Research Centre at the University of Sydney. Prime Minister Julia Gillard will address the Summit tomorrow.

The full agenda and further information is available at www.actu.org.au/Events/. The Empirica Research report is available on request.

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