

Thursday, 19 February 2026

Australian Unions welcome growth in secure jobs

Australian Unions welcome today's labour force figures, which show unemployment steady at 4.1%.

January saw around 50,000 workers in full-time jobs, up from December. The strong increase in full-time jobs continues the trend of workers moving from part-time, insecure jobs into full-time, secure work, supported by the Albanese Government's industrial relations reforms undertaken since 2022.

While unemployment and underemployment remain relatively low, the Coalition could jeopardise the recent strength of employment with its call for an overhaul of the Reserve Bank of Australia's mandate.

Shadow Treasurer, Tim Wilson, has suggested the RBA needs to focus more on reducing inflation than on its dual 80-year legislated mandate to maintain full employment and fight inflation.

The RBA's view is that for inflation to be on target, the unemployment rate needs to rise to 4.5%, which could see 65,000 more Australians pushed out of work before they act if full employment is not part of the RBA's mandate.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus:

"It's disgraceful that Tim Wilson's first economic policy is to say that more Australian workers should be unemployed.

"These are the views of some in big business who love having a large pool of unemployed and underemployed people, so they can keep wages down and profits high because workers become desperate.

"It's this type of 'design feature' policy that kept real wage growth low for a decade under the Coalition. It created an epidemic of wage theft and is the surest way to tip power back into the hands of employers.

"Anyone who thinks increasing unemployment is good economic policy clearly does not care about the devastation it causes for workers and their families.

"It is good that today's figures are positive because more Australian workers are getting secure jobs they can rely on, with 50,000 workers in full-time jobs since last month."

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