

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY BY DECREASING UNEMPLOYMENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, WITH NO-ONE LEFT BEHIND

Anthony Albanese stated **“improving productivity is essential to maintaining a high standard of living and creating more opportunities for all Australians, so that everyone is better off”**. For those struggling to get by on income support, a decent job is a life-changing pathway out of poverty for them and their family.

As of June 25th there were approximately **985,000** Australians on unemployment payments, including Jobseeker and Youth Allowance Jobseeker. This equates to **6.4%** of the Australian Labour Force. ABS statistics puts the unemployment rate in Australia at **4.3%** or 639,500 Australians, but this does not include youth unemployment (16-21 year-olds). There has been an **8.5%** increase in the number of Australians on unemployment benefits in the past 12 months. In the ACT alone there are 9,600 Australians on unemployment benefits and this figure has increased by **15.8%** over the last 12 months.

Over **half a million** Australians, including younger and older workers, people with disabilities including dyslexia, and parents with children, are trapped on unemployment income-support long-term due to the lack of appropriate entry level jobs and training pathways. **If we are going to ensure that everyone who wants a job can find one, we need to fix our employment services system so that it supports Australians to connect them with the right job.** It cannot be expected that every unemployed person has the written skills to apply for a job, particularly on a computer. They also do not usually have internet or phone plans. It is also not easy for them to “pop into an office”. They usually do not have cars or petrol or live in areas with good public transport. Most unemployed people do not even get concession fares. People who are on unemployment payments live in poverty! We can change that so no-one has to live in poverty.

Australia currently has a shortage of skilled workers, what if we could use skilled workers more productively? I am sure that every tradie would like to take on an assistant to do the unskilled work, especially if there were wage subsidies. And the assistants would learn on the job and maybe even go into apprenticeships etc. And this would certainly help in getting those houses built more quickly for people in Australia who need them. And what about other professionals who could utilise assistants to improve their own productivity? And what about other employers who would just like to help a fellow human being? **If we get the labour market program settings right, we can lift our fellow unemployed Australians into work and it won't cost the budget a \$.** In fact, it will increase productivity for now and will have positive labour force growth into the future.

ON THE JOB EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM - WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE AN UNEMPLOYED FELLOW AUSTRALIAN A FAIR GO?

If we could give unemployed Australians a subsidised job for a year, their unemployment benefits could subsidise their wage and Australia would gain the increased productivity growth. Jobs could be part time or full time and employers would only need to pay award or minimum wage minus the unemployment payment. eg \$25,000 pa instead of \$45,000 pa

100,000 unemployed Australians into jobs (100,000 x \$20,000 pa) - \$2 billion into productivity gains
500,000 unemployed Australians into jobs (500,000 x \$20,000 pa) - \$10 billion into productivity gains

The list of “on the job” possibilities would be endless and with the right approach including placement assistance, mentoring, regulation and monitoring where necessary the results could be amazing!