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## Access to childcare, skills and training can fill growing job vacancies

Job vacancies have doubled since before the pandemic, with 480,100 current job vacancies in Australia according to data released by the ABS today, amplifying the need to increase labour force participation through training and access to Early Childhood Education and Care.

Nearly half of businesses reporting job vacancies have done so due to an increased workload, and more than a quarter need more staff due to an expansion of their business.

Today's data illustrates the importance of accessible, and affordable quality childcare to boost workforce participation, and the importance of addressing the enormous skills gap left by the previous Coalition Government's neglect of higher education and TAFE.

The latest ABS data on potential workers (for February) also shows more than 113,000 Australians, most of them women, want to work but cannot because they cannot access affordable childcare.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Australia has half a million people unemployed and 1.2 million constrained from looking for work – our government needs to re-invest in skills and training including in TAFE and accessible, and universal childcare to ensure anyone who wants to is free to work.

"More than 100 thousand people, most of them women and many of them highly skilled, are locked out of the job market because they shoulder the majority of child caring responsibilities and cannot access or afford early childhood education and care. We welcome the Albanese Government's commitment to accessible and affordable early childhood education and care and this needs to be put in place urgently to address shortages.

"Many businesses are recovering well from the pandemic and are looking to hire more workers, we need to make sure that all Australians are in a position to take these jobs, and that we are generating the wage growth needed to ensure that they are paid a fair wage."

**Media contact:** Isabella Hope Tilley