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Australian women are underemployed and underpaid, warns major new report

High levels of underemployment and chronic low pay for Australian women are set to worsen as a result of the global recession warns a major new report to be released today (Monday).

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said the new report, along with other data showing women in some sectors earned a massive 31% less than men, was very worrying.

“Big businesses need to do more to promote good jobs for women,” said Ms Burrow.

“Women are missing out on decent jobs and they are being underpaid. It’s just not good enough.”

Recently released data by the Federal Government shows the average woman working full time earns 17% less than her male counterparts and women in senior management positions earn 28% less than men in similar roles.

The impact of the recession on women report released today by The Australia Institute, finds that women comprise the majority of the ‘hidden unemployment’ in the economy and their financial position will worsen as a result of the GFC-induced downturn.

This hidden unemployment has resulted in many women not using labour market schemes designed to help people re-enter the workforce and to protect workers from the worst of the economic crisis.

Almost half the women who are in the workforce work part-time, with many wanting to work more hours. But child care and other caring responsibilities are restricting how women can respond to job opportunities and to labour-market and training programs.

“While not as many women have lost full time jobs as men so far in this downturn, they are starting from such a low base already,” Ms Burrow said.

“Women have more precarious jobs and are over-represented among the hidden unemployed who completely opt out of the labour market. They also have broken working patterns which mean they retire with much smaller superannuation balances.

“Australian women deserve better.

“Employers need to do more. They should provide women with quality jobs, better pay and greater career opportunities,” said Ms Burrow.

MEDIA ALERT

Sharan Burrow will launch *The impact of the recession on women* at the Industrial Relations Society World Congress TODAY (Monday).

Where: Bayside Auditorium A, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre

When: 12.20pm, Monday, 24 August 2009

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