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Media release

The hidden impact of the Global Financial Crisis

Women account for up to 80 percent of Australia's hidden unemployed, new research into the current economic downturn by The Australia Institute reveals.

The impact of the recession on women, being launched today by ACTU President Sharan Burrow at the Industrial Relations Society World Congress in Sydney, details the staggering gender imbalance of those people who want to work, but are not included in the official unemployment statistics.

The report finds that not only are child care responsibilities the most common reason why women struggle to rejoin the workforce, but those same responsibilities are a major reason that women are excluded from the official unemployment statistics.

Report author, David Richardson, said the overall picture that emerges is one of significant disadvantage for women.

"While official figures suggest women haven't fared as badly in the recession as men, more detailed analysis shows that women face chronic difficulties in the labour market and that those difficulties have been exacerbated by the global financial crisis.

"The fact that the official statistics conceal more than they reveal simply adds insult to injury," said Mr Richardson.

The report also found that:

- the Budget Papers suggest hidden unemployment is likely to rise significantly in the next 12 months
- there are significant regional and state variations of female unemployment
- many married women who lose their jobs do not register with Centrelink and may miss out on labour market programs and training assistance.

The report highlights the labour market consequences of inadequate child care arrangements, especially out of school hours and vacation care.

It recommends that labour market programs, including training and vocational education, should be more sensitive to the behaviour and needs of women.

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Notes for Editors

- *The impact of the recession on women* by David Richardson, Research Fellow at The Australia Institute, will be launched by ACTU President Sharan Burrow on Monday 24 August at the Industrial Relations Society World Congress in Sydney.

Details of the launch are as follows:

12.20 – 12.30pm
Bayside Auditorium A
Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre

- The regional and state variations of female unemployment are detailed on page 10 of the report.
- The Australia Institute was commissioned to produce this report by The National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW), on behalf of Security for Women (S4W) and WomenSpeak.
- A series of workshops and consultations in various cities will be held to discuss the findings of this report and seek state-by-state solutions. A comprehensive report from these consultations will be brought back to the Commonwealth in 2010.
- For more information on the workshops or for additional comment on the report, please contact Marie Coleman (NFAW) on 0414 483 067.