

DEMOCRATS MEDIA

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UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ARE MISLEADING ITS TIME TO MEASURE POVERTY

The unemployment rate gives a false picture of Australia's well-being and should be combined with measuring poverty according to Democrats SA lead Senate Candidate Ruth Russell.

"The focus on the unemployment rate is a relic from when most people worked full-time on award wages and housing was more affordable."

"The current rate of 4.9% unemployment in South Australia looks good but we know that many South Australians are doing it tough."

"A 2004 Senate report showed that 1 million Australians and probably around 80,000 South Australians live in poverty despite having a job."

According to the ACTU, almost 90% of the jobs created in Australia in the 1990s were low wage jobs that paid less than \$26,000 per year."

"And we know that the way we measure unemployment disguises underemployment."

"All you have to do is work one hour in the week that the ABS conducts their survey to be counted as employed."

"And anyone who works unpaid for between one and 14 hours in a family business or on a farm is also counted as employed."

"Put the underemployment together with the growing number of low wage jobs and it is clear that the standard measures don't tell us what we need to know to make Australia fair," said Ms Russell.

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