

Monday 13 August 2, 2018

Casual conversion extended to hundreds of thousands

Hundreds of thousands of casual workers on 85 awards could have the right to convert to permanent positions after 12 months thanks to a union victory in the Fair Work Commission.

A new clause will be added to 85 awards from October first, giving casual workers the option to convert to permanent part-time or full time status if they have worked a pattern of hours on an ongoing basis for 12 months that is compatible with permanent work.

The decision also provided that casual workers should have a minimum shift length of two hours (or more in some industries), from 1 October this year. In addition, unions have also been successful in securing rights for overtime payment for casuals in many industries as part of these proceedings.

Insecure work remains a national crisis and issues such as sham contracting, labour-hire, improper use of ABNs, short-term contracting and the gig economy must be addressed, but this is a significant win for working people.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Working people need jobs they can count on.

"There is still a lot left to do to turn around the insecure work crisis, but for the hundreds of thousands of workers on these awards this is a great win and only happened because unions fought for it.

"Now we have to change the rules for all insecure workers."

"We have one of the highest rates of insecure work in the developed world.

"Our level of job insecurity is not normal and needs to be reversed."

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