

Tuesday, 25 September 2018

Business “permanent casual” proposal could destroy permanent work

The business lobby’s proposal for changes to workplace laws to create a new category of “permanent casuals” would remove rights for millions of working people and lead to the rapid casualisation of the workforce.

People working under the business lobby’s proposal would have their casual loading cut from 25 percent to 10 percent, would not have guaranteed hours and could not predict their income or hours from week to week. They would accrue leave at a rate relative to the number of hours they work.

The proposed introduction of this new category would worsen the insecure work crisis currently affecting Australia, as big business moves more and more people onto “permanent casual” contracts with no control over their working hours.

The big business proposal is a response to the Federal Court decision *Workpac v Skene* which ruled that a truck driver classified as a casual by his employer, but assigned to a regular pattern of work for 12 years, was not a true casual and was entitled to annual leave.

Business has cried foul about the decision and is actively lobbying new Industrial Relations Minister Kelly O’Dwyer to change the law to remove rights for millions of workers so they avoid paying people they have falsely classified as casual their accrued leave entitlements.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“Everyone needs a job they can count on, that gives them the security they need to provide a decent life for their families.

“The business lobby’s push to make workers permanently casual threatens the job security of all working people. Unfortunately, many employers would jump at the opportunity to casualise their workforce so they can chop and change their hours of work whenever they like.

“Our workplace laws are out of balance and Australia has an insecure work crisis. The courts have determined that if you work regular hours for years you are not a casual. This is just common sense.

“Some employers have been getting away with robbing workers of their rights and security by claiming workers are “casual” when they are not for far too long. Employers should accept the decision and accept workers are also people with bills to pay and families to support.

“We call on Kelly O’Dwyer to condemn this attempt to spread permanent casual work across Australian workplaces and to rule out any changes to the law.

“Australia doesn’t need this. We need to change the rules so people have jobs they can count on, so that people have the choice of converting from casual to permanent if they work regular hours. And we need a proper definition of casual that protects the rights people have fought for, not erodes them like this proposal does.”

ENDS

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