



INDEPENDENT
INQUIRY into
Insecure Work

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Online submission					
First name	J		Surname	B	
Age	Not specified	Gender	Not specified	State	QLD
Occupation (if available)	Aged care nurse				
Text of submission	<p>You know what? Some of us actually prefer casual work. It's a disservice to every worker to assume people want to become full time or even permanent part time. My work FORCED me to become permanent part time instead of casual. For the same number of hours worked - the loss of my casual loading is bigger than what I now get in leave payments.</p> <p>My conditions have remained the same - I already had set hours as a casual and work the exact same hours now - the only difference, other than a decrease in overall pay, is I now have to apply for annual leave months in advance - whereas before I just had to tell them before the next roster came out. And I am limited in the amount of annual and sick leave I can take off - I have health problems which is why I don't work full time. When I was casual, I could just tell my work "hey I have a doctors appointment, I won't be in on a particular day" - now, I don't have that freedom.</p> <p>Yes I am entitled to sick days, but I used up all my sick days for this entire year by the middle of the year, same with my annual leave - so even though I'm permanent, I'm still not getting paid for my time off, but I also am on the verge of getting fired for having so many days off that I've been rostered on to work - as a casual, they didn't do that. And my conditions haven't improved. As I only work part time, my work still calls me before 6am most days asking me to come in - it doesn't matter that I've explained I cannot work more than my current rostered hours due to my health, they still ask me to come in and work. They do this to all of their permanent part time staff because they treat us like casuals but who get lower pay.</p> <p>I was far better off during the 6 months I worked as a casual for the company than than the 12 months I have been permanent.</p> <p>When I was casual, after the 3 month trial period, I had a set roster with the hours I wanted yet the freedom to take those days off without question if I needed to. Now I feel trapped. I have to keep postponing medical appointments because the public hospital clinic I need to see only runs on the one weekday I work and I've already used up my sick days long ago and my work has had enough of me taking unpaid sick leave.</p>				

I have permanent work, I don't want it, my work won't allow me to change back to casual because I signed the agreement saying I'd go PPT.

For a little background of me. I am 31 and have several physical disabilities. Because of this, it was incredibly hard to find work - I have 2 completed university degrees and have nearly completed my third. I am a certified genius and highly educated but employers rarely give me a chance. I only have my current job because it is the lowest paid aged care facility remotely nearby and they cannot keep staff at such low rates of pay.

After escaping a violent marriage 5 years ago, I became a single parent, I only get the minimum child support because my ex keeps changing jobs to get out of paying, I have serious health problems from a combination of injuries he gave me, pre-existing genetic health problems, and the complications that have arisen from the interactions of my injuries with my pre-existing health problems. According to several of my specialists, I'm literally killing myself working, especially in the demanding job as a nurse. I spend my life in agony just working two days a week, and often I cannot do that, and call in sick for around 20% of my shifts - and am on the verge of being fired for it.

But I don't have a choice. The disability pension and family tax benefit barely cover the costs of raising my autistic daughter - in fact, they DON'T cover the costs - my grandmother pays my daughter's school fees, my parents pay for half of her therapy, and I barely afford the rest. With centrelink taking half of what I earn, the tax office taking their chunk of my pay, and the state government taking 25% of what I earn in rent (I live in government housing or I'd have ended up on the street five years ago when I kicked my violent husband out), after the cost of childcare and petrol, I only profit around \$40 for my first shift a fortnight, and not even \$10 per weekday shift and \$20 per weekend shift for every shift after that. but what choice do I have?

It's the choice between eating and not eating. For years I've borrowed money to pay for some of my healthcare and gone without the rest, but all that has done is give me a \$17,000 credit card debt that I now give up 90% of my much needed healthcare expenses simply so I can keep up with the interest.

Disabled people like me, who are in constant agony, should not have to be working. It's disgusting that the government gives us the choice between working - or living in the gutter starving. At the very least, people like me NEED to be casual so we can work on our better days and not work on our bad days or when we have necessary medical appointments.

What my workplace is like? Well firstly, anyone who doesn't suck and wants to be full time is more than welcome to be. Everyone else they try to force into becoming permanent part time (after three months, they either push for you to be PPT or anyone who isn't pushed, they believe is incompetent and trying to find ways to let them go before they seriously hurt or kill a resident with their incompetence). They treat their PPT staff as if they were casual - no matter how many set shifts you have, they try to bully people into taking more. The only exceptions is workers on visas who can only work 20 hours a week because they know they will be fined if they get them to work more.

The reality is, most part time staff like the casual nature of their job - they can pick and choose their hours - most are students with variable uni hours, many are parents and like being able to take time off to take their kids to school events etc, and a lot of people at my work who are part time, it is their second job, and need their hours to be flexible around their first (usually full time) job.

Realistically, I'm probably the only person who doesn't like the current arrangement - because I wanted to lock in certain days because they are the only times I can get my autistic daughter cared for, but at the same time, I need too many days off sick. I can't sacrifice the set shifts because I need the guarantee of those days.

I have no fear of my hours being cut - I am competent with my work, and they are happy to give me as many hours as I'm willing to take. my only fear is getting fired from so much time off sick.

There are no opportunities for promotion in my job. I am an AIN. If I want more a promotion, I have to become an EEN or RN - which I'm already studying to be. But as soon as I get my registration next year, I've been offered a hospital job and will be leaving my current workplace. The work they expect an RN in an aged care facility is a pathetic joke - especially with how much less they get paid than hospital RNs. Our RNs are responsible for 120 residents with a few EENs (one per 30 residents) and AINs to help out.

It's disgusting too, that as an AIN, we are getting paid just a few more cents than minimum wage - I got more base rate of pay as a shelf filler 12 years ago. Checkout operators, with no qualifications or experience get paid more than we do - and we have people's lives in our hands. We deserve a hell of a lot more than \$18 hour.

Especially when after centrelink, ATO and state government are finished with my income, I take home less than \$2 an hour most shifts.

	<p>I never get to see my friends. Other than short trips to see my fiancée who had to move interstate for work, of which we don't get to do anything leisure based during those trips, I have had one holiday since my daughter was born - she turns 10 next week - and I only had that trip because my fiancée's family paid for it all.</p> <p>I am over \$100,000 in debt - even including centrelink income, that is more than 4 times my annual income. And that amount is just growing. I have to rely on charity frequently just to eat, and I am constantly in unnecessary pain and illness because I can't afford my medical care. Half of my pain and illness is untreatable - but there is a big proportion of it that is treatable if I had money.</p> <p>I cannot work more hours, I need to work less, but I need to get a fair amount per hour rather than the unfair slave fee I get paid now - and the government needs to stop ripping away nearly everything I make.</p> <p>I desperately need to get a fair rate of pay for the intensely hard (physically, emotionally and intellectually) work I do - and for the government to stop taking away nearly everything I make.</p> <p>I am very literally killing myself to work - I am taking years, perhaps decades off my life to work, but what choice do I have? live on the streets? not eat? because that's what I'm facing. Even with my current level of work, which is the absolute maximum I can do, I am still getting deeper into debt and very soon I may very well be on the streets.</p>
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This submission was received online at the Inquiry's web site:

<http://securejobs.org.au/independent-inquiry-into-insecure-work-in-australia/>

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