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Casuals robbed nationwide by broken work laws

Casuals around Australia and across a wide variety of industries and occupations are being ripped off, in some cases being paid even less than permanent staff.

A paper released today by the peak body for working people has blown apart the myth perpetrated by the business lobby that casuals are paid a significant premium for the loss of leave rights and job security.

The *Myth of the Casual Wage Premium* paper found:

- Australia has the highest proportion of temporary labour in the OECD at one in four
- Most casuals are not paid 25 percent more than permanent workers in the same job
- The longer someone works in a casual position the more likely they are to be paid less than permanent staff
- About half of all casuals say they would prefer permanent employment with paid leave rights and job security

In most industries and occupations examined, the casual wage premium was five percent or less. For several, including sports and fitness workers, clerks, and packers and product assemblers, the “premium” was actually negative.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“This research shows what people who are being ripped off in casual work already knew – that our work rules are unfair and we need to change them.

“Casual pay on average is actually around two to five percent more in similar occupations, and many people get paid less than permanent staff, particularly in lower-paid work – not the supposed 25 percent premium.

“Casual work should be exactly that – work where shifts can vary and there is no legitimate expectation of ongoing work.

“While some people do choose casual work because they need flexibility, many would prefer the paid leave and security that comes with permanent work.

“People who are engaged as genuine casuals should receive a genuine premium for the lack of paid leave and job security.

“Big business has been rorting our system, using loopholes and underhanded arrangements to pay some casuals even less than permanent workers doing the same job.

“This is another reason for the gender pay gap, as women are more likely to be working as casuals.

“This is unfair and it needs to stop. We need to change the rules so that working people – no matter how they’re engaged – have fair pay and more secure jobs.”

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