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## Casual workers experience higher financial stress, save less, worry about their future: report

New research released today reveals that people in insecure work experience higher levels of financial stress, struggle to save, and are more likely to rent than be able to buy a house.

The findings, contained in a national survey conducted for ME Bank's annual *Household Financial Comfort Report*, confirm the toll that casual work is having on people's lives, said ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver.

Mr Oliver said the financial comfort rating of 5.07 (out of 10) for casual workers was below that of both full-time (5.65) and part-time (5.37) permanent workers, demonstrating that job insecurity was a factor in causing financial stress.

"About one in five Australian workers are employed casually, and are not only missing out on basic workplace rights but are suffering financially," Mr Oliver said.

"At work, casuals do not have access to paid leave, have no job security, and can experience wide fluctuations in their rostering and income. This is bleeding into their lives outside of work.

"We know that casuals cannot get home loans, but this new research reveals that they are also struggling to pay bills, worry they will rely on the taxpayer-funded pension in retirement, and have difficulty saving. Insecure work is a house of cards that is stressing communities and increasing economic fragility."

The ME Bank *Household Financial Comfort Report*, is based on a survey of 1500 households and maps their level of financial comfort on a score out of 10 based on 11 criteria. The overall average for 2012 was 5.39, a slight improvement on 2011.

The survey found that comfort with savings and household income was linked to fears about job security. Other findings include:

- Almost half (48%) of casual workers were likely to spend all their income on essential household expenses with nothing left over, compared to 36% of full-time employees.
- Only 5% of casuals were likely to be able to save any money after paying essentials, compared to 15% of full-timers.
- 35% of casuals are very or somewhat uncomfortable with their household income, compared to 21% of full-time employees.
- Over 40% of casuals felt insecure in their job, compared to 24% of full-time employees; and 66% said they would have difficulty finding another job within two months if they became unemployed.

"This is yet another wake up call for politicians and policy makers about the damage that insecure work is doing to the Australian economy and community," Mr Oliver said. "How can people build a life or contribute to the economy as consumers if their life is wracked with insecurity at work and around the kitchen table?"

The full report is available at <http://www.mebank.com.au/media/>

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