

Secure Jobs. Better Future

What is insecure work?

- Insecure work describes non-permanent forms of employment, including casual work, fixed-term work, seasonal work, contracting and labour hire. It is also increasingly a problem faced by workers employed part-time and in non-traditional workplaces, such as home-based outworkers.
- Indicators of insecure work include unpredictable, fluctuating pay; inferior rights and entitlements, including limited or no paid leave; irregular and unpredictable working hours; lack of security or uncertainty over the length of the job; lack of voice at work on wages and conditions.

Insecure work in Australia is growing

- Today more than 40% of Australian workers are in “non-standard” employment.
- Almost a quarter of the workforce – more than two million Australian workers – are engaged as casuals, and have no paid leave entitlements. More than half of them have been casually employed in their current job for more than a year, and over 325,000 have been employed casually in their current job for more than five years.
- Two-thirds of workers in hospitality are casual; 40% of retail employees are casual.
- ABS data shows that more than half of casual employees would prefer ongoing employment, even if it meant losing their casual loading.
- Ten per cent of the workforce – over one million workers – are now contractors. About 331,200 Australians are working on a fixed term (non-permanent) basis.
- Over a third of part-time workers have no guaranteed minimum number of hours of work each week – this means they have no steady or guaranteed income.
- 576,700 people found work through labour hire companies in 2008.

How Australia compares

Only Spain, where one in three workers are in temporary employment because of because of a large seasonal, rural workforce, has a higher rate of casual, insecure work. The fact that many other OECD economies have experienced similar structural economic changes and dynamics to Australia but do not have the same levels of insecure work suggests these trends are by no means inevitable or unavoidable.

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