

New report confirms GFC has worsened job fears; greater rights are needed for casual workers

The Global Financial Crisis has worsened fears about job security and caused a widening chasm between Australians who are underemployed and those who are working excessive hours, say unions.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said the *Australia at Work* report released today confirmed that the GFC had led to accelerated levels of job insecurity and work intensification.

About one in two workers report that more and more is expected of them for the same pay, and 12% of workers are fearful about losing their job.

More than a quarter of full-time employees want to reduce their hours of work, while one in five part-time employees want more hours.

“An economic downturn that was caused by corporate excess and irresponsible behaviour has left many Australian workers worse off,” Ms Burrow said.

“There is something seriously wrong with the Australian labour market when 885,000 people are crying out for more work so they can have a decent standard of living; while others are overworked and not being paid for their overtime.

“A recent report by the The Australia Institute found that Australians are working 2 billion hours of unpaid overtime each year, the equivalent of more than a million full-time jobs.

“With unemployment set to rise further, this report underlines the need for urgent action to protect the jobs and incomes of Australian workers now and for the future.

“Stronger corporate regulation and better protection of workers’ rights and entitlements are needed.”

Unions are proposing tougher regulation of business, including 100% protection of workers’ entitlements and penalties for directors and CEOs of companies that go broke and fail to pay their workers what they are due.

Unions also want to see improved job security for casual employees, home-based outworkers, dependent contractors and employees of labour hire companies.