

Position Statement



Secure Work

Secure work is about giving people stability beyond the next pay cheque. But more than that, work is also about people developing their identity and contributing to their communities. Anglicare Australia believes that work is about more than paid employment - those who volunteer, care for others, and help their communities must also be recognised for their work and rewarded for their contribution.

Our Experience

The Anglicare Australia Network knows the impact of insecure work on the people and communities who depend on our services. Our Network supports 11,300 people a year with employment and training programs, helping people to find or prepare for work.

Our agencies also support people in crisis who have lost work or who do not have enough work or income to get by. Over 60,000 people use emergency relief services provided by the Anglicare Australia Network across the country. Our agencies have found that more and more people who are in work still turn to us for extra support.

The Anglicare Australia Network also strives to be a fair and caring workplace, valuing the staff and volunteers who help us do our work.

Key Issues

Work in Australia is changing. People are working longer and retiring later. As the economy changes, some jobs are disappearing altogether. And casual and insecure is increasing.

Australia now has the highest rate of temporary work of any OECD country.¹ For the first time, less than half of all employed Australians are in full-time work. Around one in four are working casually.

People looking for low-skilled, entry-level jobs are bearing the brunt of these changes. These are people who are looking for work, but who might not have education or recent work experience. Anglicare Australia's Jobs Availability Snapshot shows that there are simply not enough jobs for people facing these barriers. Just 14 percent of all vacancies were low-skilled jobs at the entry-level. At the same time more and more jobs are being aimed at people with advanced skills. 39 percent of vacancies called for a degree or at least five years' work experience.

This paints a dark picture for those without work experience, education, or who have been without work for a long time. Those who do find a job can end up in roles that don't meet their needs. Over 1.13 million Australians are now underemployed – almost one in ten people in the workforce.

Young people are also impacted by these trends. While young people are more educated than ever before, they are more than twice as likely to be unemployed compared with other workers.² Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is especially high in regional and remote areas.³ Casual and insecure work is also a particular problem for young people, with only half of young Australians gaining full time work by the age of 25.⁴

Australians living with disability or illness are especially vulnerable to being trapped in cycles of insecure work and inadequate income. Low-skilled work is more likely to lead to higher turnover, lower income and less chances to develop skills.⁵

It is clear that Australia's industrial relations laws have not kept pace with the changes we're seeing in the economy. We need to provide everyone with work security and strong legal protections. These must include protections against unpaid overtime, which is rampant across Australia. These work patterns are hurting our health and wellbeing, and undermining productivity.

We must also find ways to tackle the gender pay gap. This should include legal protections, affordable childcare, and parental leave for both parents.

We also need to fix Australia's broken employment services system. By any measure the beleaguered Jobactive network is failing, taking an average of five years to find work for those who need the most help. Instead we should move towards a tailored approach for each person. This means working in partnership with people taking into account their situation, strengths and goals. It means helping people find the right training programs and jobs for them. And it means supporting them to stay in work – something our current system is failing to do.

And finally, we must raise the rate of Newstart and Youth Allowance. People looking for work should not be trapped in poverty while they search for a job, and current rates are so low that they are a barrier to landing a job in and of themselves.

Recommended Actions

Anglicare Australia calls for:

- An overhaul of Australia's workplace laws to protect and restore the rights of workers, including work security
- Ongoing education and skills development for people at every stage of their life
- Publicly funded direct job creation, and employment development, that is accountable to local communities. This must include help for people with barriers to finding and keeping work
- A real social safety net that supports people through life and work transitions. That includes employment services which are individually tailored, and a fair rate of Newstart and Youth Allowance.

1 Carney, T., and Stanford, J. (2018) The Dimensions of Insecure Work: A Factbook.

2 In October 2018, 30 percent of young people were unemployed compared to the national average of 5 percent.

3 Brotherhood of St Lawrence (2018) An unfair Australia? Mapping youth unemployment hotspots.

4 Foundation for Young Australians (2018) The New Work Reality. New Work Order report series.

5 Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT (2014) Limiting Futures: Youth Unemployment in the ACT.