Election 2025

Secure Work

Anglicare Australia
in every Community

Secure work is about giving people stability beyond the next pay cheque. But more than that, work can also be 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.

About this statement

Anglicare Australia is releasing position statements on key issues ahead of the 2025 Federal Election to outline our position on key issues and resource the Anglicare Australia Network to undertake its own advocacy.

These election position statements are being released alongside our Investing in People manifesto, a budget and election roadmap that includes costings to raise the rate of JobSeeker and other key payments, and make a major investment in social housing. Investing in People forms the backbone to our election advocacy, and has been sent to key Government and Opposition spokespeople.

About Anglicare Australia

Anglicare Australia is a network of independent local, state, national and international organisations that are linked to the Anglican Church and are joined by values of service, innovation, leadership and the Christian faith that every individual has intrinsic value.

With a combined income of $2.19 billion, a workforce of over 20,000 staff and 5,600 volunteers, the Network delivers more than 50 service areas in the Australian community. Our services are delivered to over 500,000 people and reach close to 1.17 million Australians in total. In all, Anglicare services reach almost one in every twenty Australians.

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 8,900 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 71,000 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 work is increasing.[1] Around one in five are working casually.[2]

People looking for 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. The 2024 Snapshot showed that just 10.8 percent of all vacancies were entry-level jobs, and that there were 21 people with barriers to work for every entry-level job.[3] 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.

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.[4] Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is especially high in regional and remote areas.[5] 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.[6]

Australians living with disability or illness are especially vulnerable to being trapped in cycles of insecure work and inadequate income. Not only are they more likely to be underemployed, Australians living with disability or illness are twice as likely to be unemployed compared to Australians without disability.[7]

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 adequate parental leave for both parents.

There is a desperate need to fix Australia's broken employment services system. Despite recent changes, it is clear that Workforce Australia is doing very little to help Australians with long term barriers to employment into work. The system of mutual obligations is crushing and demoralising, making it more challenging for unemployed Australians to find work. The current system is so broken, that it is hindering people from finding work by "drowning them and those paid to help them in a mountain of red tape, compliance requirements and pointless mandatory activities."[8]

Further, allowing for-profit providers into the system has created a perverse incentive for providers not to help people into work. They have a vested interest in using threats or coercive means to guide jobseekers into their courses. Providers also have power to issue breaches against jobseekers, penalising them and potentially having payments suspended, with a complete lack of due process.

Finally, we must raise the rate of JobSeeker 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:

- Stronger 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 JobSeeker and Youth Allowance.

References

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) Charts on casual employment, occupation, industry and job mobility, February 2023.

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024) Working arrangements.

3 Anglicare Australia (2024) Jobs Availability Snapshot 2024.

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025) Labour Force, Australia.

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

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

7 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) People with disability in Australia.

8 Senate Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services (2023) Rebuilding Employment Services.