



Online submission					
<b>First name</b>	Anonymous		<b>Surname</b>		
<b>Age</b>	41-50	<b>Gender</b>	Female	<b>State</b>	WA
<b>Occupation (if available)</b>	various				
<b>Text of submission</b>	<p>My name is Heidi and I am 41. I am single, live alone in rental accommodation in Perth. I am not a member of a union. I am a self employed (subcontracting) remedial massage therapist, and have been in this insecure form of employment for 7 years now. However, I went into subcontracting with my eyes open, knowing it would not offer the same level of security as my previous job, working as an Occupational Therapist for the Health Department. I chose the move for personal reasons, largely burnout in my professional career. It has been quite an adjustment to rely on subcontracting work with no super holiday or sick pay other than that which I put aside for myself. I live very very frugally and I am glad that I do not have a family to support. I have very little spare cash at the end of paying for all the necessities, and it does affect my ability to socialise etc. However, the nature of the industry is that you only get paid if there are clients, and this is a choice I have made.</p> <p>However, the comments I would like to make are not so much about my current situation but my observations about the casualisation of the labour force in general.</p> <p>In my previous career as an OT I was generally in permanent employment, which was pretty typical of the way the Health department worked when I started in the early 1990s. However, by the time I left OT, there was an increasing amount of short term contracts evident in the child health services. This is a huge problem I think, as it creates a very unstable work force, with casual employees always on the look out for more stable employment. When I started we had a very stable team with people who had worked together for years. This was an absolute boon in community health as it allowed people to develop long term strategies to help the community in which clients lived including outreach to schools day cares and so on rather than just short term intervention with one child/family. It allowed the development of good working relationships within both our team and other services in the area. This was gradually eroded as the casualisation of the staff meant faster and faster turnover, until everything becomes focussed on very short term goals and intervention..not sustaining! And thats the negatives for the clients, never mind the negative impact on staff who want to be able to build a secure life for themselves by buying a house etc. In that job I was also aware of how many teachers that I worked with were only employed on a year to</p>				

	<p>year basis (and school psychologists). Again, very disruptive for clients and families, and stifling the development of long term plans. It was also very difficult for the teachers themselves, for example not knowing whether or where they should buy a house when they might be working in Baldivis one year and Joondalup the next. I think that as human beings we want to be part of a community and part of that is having stable employment and building our lives around that job and the area that it is situated in.</p> <p>More recently I have been employed (subcontracting!) at an NGO providing services to refugees with severe PTSD. The casualisation of labour in NGOs is horrific. I have other contacts who have also worked in NGOs. Often staff are working with clients in the most desperate of circumstances, while earning very poor pay and often on contracts that may only be 6 months long. Again, terrible disruption for clients (who have to keep trying to establish a trust relationship with a new counsellor/worker all the time), terrible impact on the organisation as the turnover means a loss of expertise constantly and the inability to plan long term strategies. And for the staff themselves, working with desperate clients, for terrible pay and no job security? Burn out is rife, there is no sense of security or being able to establish a secure base yourself. The current state government in its wisdom is devolving many services to NGOs. While I think the NGOs have their place, I think their funding and staffing structures are too unstable and they should NOT be the front line for delivering services to the most desperate and needy. These services should be provided by government, with well paid and permanent staffing who can work towards excellence in service with stable and not burnt out staff.</p> <p>When I heard on Life Matters that we were one of the most insecurely employed nations in the OECD I was kind of shocked but not surprised. I am not sure what can be done about it but I think there should be definitely greater security in employment in essential government services (health welfare, education) and I think there should be some kind of assessment of how long term employees in other industries can be employed other than casual - eg permanent part time. We need more stability and more community. Its better for staff and its better for employers to have a sense of loyalty and commitment to each other.</p>
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*This submission was received online at the Inquiry's web site:*  
<http://securejobs.org.au/independent-inquiry-into-insecure-work-in-australia/>

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