



Online submission					
<b>First name</b>	Christine		<b>Surname</b>	Allsopp	
<b>Age</b>	51-60	<b>Gender</b>	Female	<b>State</b>	NSW
<b>Occupation (if available)</b>	TAFE teacher				
<b>Text of submission</b>	<p>My name is Christine Allsopp and I work as a part-time casual teacher of ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) at TAFENSW. I have been doing this work on a regular basis for almost 6 years, mainly at one college. By regular, I mean I have a timetable of regular classes that I teach over the whole semester. This timetable is generally provided at the end of one semester for the following semester. The number of hours I work varies between 10 and 18 per week (19 hours is a full-time load). For example, over the last semester I was initially timetabled to teach 10 hours per week over 3 days. This was then increased to a regular 14 hours per week. Occasionally, I did 3 or 4 extra hours teaching in a given week replacing teachers who were absent. This replacement teaching, known as relief teaching, is casual work as it is usually understood. The number of hours I, and others, are allocated has decreased over the last 18 months due to the loss of Federal government funding (via DIAC for the AMEP, and via DEEWR for the LLNP) on top of the dwindling state budget allocation. Previously the same uncertainty was present from one semester to the next about the number of hours I would be allocated but I generally had around 14 or 15 hours per week. At TAFENSW part-time casual teachers are paid an hourly rate (currently \$69.84) and, since 2006, we have received a number of other conditions on a pro-rata basis, eg sick leave and related duties (eg paid 3 additional hours when working 12-14 hours/week, or 5 additional hours for 15 hours/week). (Please refer to the TAFETA of the NSW Teachers Federation submission for details relating to payment and general award conditions.) However, in my workplace, in an effort to deal with limited budgets this last year, managers have been timetabling us in such a way that payment of these related duties can be minimized. That means spreading the available work around a larger number of teachers.</p> <p>As is evident from the above, the uncertainty around having enough work is constant and makes me feel very vulnerable. I have lived under such conditions for many years, teaching in France and then at TAFENSW, and with other local institutions. Because of that, I have become quite good at managing my money, especially by setting aside as much as possible on a regular basis. This is necessary to survive the times when I have no work, eg TAFE holidays and non-teaching weeks. Even so, the level of financial insecurity is very high and affects many things in my life. The main one is worry about my capacity to pay for essentials such as rent, bills, health insurance and transport. I live alone and must rely on</p>				

my earnings and savings to live. I daren't take out a loan because I dread not being to repay it. Rent continues to increase in Sydney and it is extremely difficult, almost impossible, to find ways of reducing the proportion rent is in my total income. By living even further from work and paying more in transport? By saving \$40 on rent but paying it out instead on increased bus & train fares?

The precarious nature of my employment means I cannot plan for the future. I rarely have a holiday and when I do, it involves staying with friends to minimize costs. I can only sometimes afford to pay for some small voluntary contributions to superannuation. It is hard to estimate my annual income in advance yet such an estimation is necessary to evaluate my eligibility for co-contribution to superannuation. I have only made voluntary contributions when I estimated I would be eligible for at least a partial co-contribution. I will never have much superannuation due to my many years of uncertain income.

The long summer break from employment at TAFE (9 weeks) cannot be considered holiday time as I have no income from TAFE over that period. For this reason, I often dread the arrival of holiday time. I generally try to find employment for at least part of this period and over the last three years was successful. I worked 3 days/week for 5 weeks on a preparation for university course for international students. However, the preparation and marking involved made this work really full-time in effect, if not in pay. This year, due to lower enrolments of international students, I have just been informed that they have not been able to timetable me on a class but will contact me for casual relief teaching when teachers fall sick. Recently I have been contacting Navitas centre managers to tell them of my availability for casual relief teaching anytime from now until early February and have now been asked to teach next week for 2 to 4 days, the number of days depending on student attendance. Navitas is the large, private RTO which has won the bulk of Federal government funding in NSW through competitive tendering. I plan to try to obtain some regular part-time with Navitas in the next year but have no certainty about being able to do so.

This brings me to another aspect of this insecure employment as a teacher. Because one employer does not provide full-time work, or not reliably, teachers like myself feel the need to obtain work with another employer where possible. However, this amounts to spreading the vulnerability even if it might increase our income in the short term. Working over a number of workplaces adds to stress levels as there may be increased travel time to & from work or between workplaces, different managers to cope with, different working conditions, different administrative requirements and different work cultures. Trying to get work in an additional place is often complicated by the lack of certainty about hours, timetable, and what days or part-days are available. It can be difficult to weigh up whether or not to accept, for example, an evening class which would mean getting home at 10pm when timetabled to start at 9am the following morning.

	<p>My contribution as a teacher is also affected by my insecure and precarious employment. Liaising with co-teachers on a given class is necessary for coherent, professional delivery but is very difficult to arrange when teachers do not work on the same days and are not free at the same time. We usually have to phone each other in our own time to attend to some of these concerns. I make myself available for students after class and by email. This is mostly done in my own, unpaid time. Checking and selecting materials, lesson preparation, marking, entering attendance, contacting students who are absent are all done in my own time. My hourly rate does not compensate me for this work. Stepping in and taking on extra classes for teachers who were absent due to injury and caring responsibilities over a lengthy period is one of the ways that I and some other teachers contribute greatly to the section where we work. Testing and interviewing new students for placement in courses is another way we make essential contributions to the running of the section. Keeping up-to-date with my profession is also necessary, both for my own satisfaction of doing my job well and to be competitive in the marketplace. At TAFENSW professional development activities are open to part-time casual teachers like me free of charge. However, it is extremely rare that we can take part in them as they frequently take place at the same time as our teaching commitments. To take part in a PD activity would result in loss of income. This week I said no to a last minute offer of a day's relief teaching because of planned attendance at a workshop on use of technology in learning. By contrast, permanent teachers are replaced on their classes to allow for participation in professional development activities. In 2006-2007 I did a master's degree (MA TESOL) to increase my employability after 25 years as a teacher. In my field, an MA is now considered a minimum requirement. Last year I had to upgrade the version of a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment that I already possessed in order to continue to be employed by TAFENSW.</p> <p>All of this - my high-level qualifications, my dedication, my professional expertise, my concern for student learning, my reputation with my managers for professionalism and reliability %œÛ means nothing in terms of potential, secure work in the future. Provision of quality, public education is clearly not considered important by successive state and Federal governments. If it were, teachers, such as myself, would be offered secure employment. The work I do as a teacher cannot be considered casual.</p>
--	--

*This submission was received online at the Inquiry's web site:*  
<http://securejobs.org.au/independent-inquiry-into-insecure-work-in-australia/>

*Certain information, including full contact details, have been withheld to respect the privacy of the submitter. Further details about the publication of submissions and a privacy statement are available at the website.*

