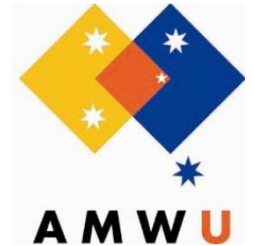


Precarious Work in Australia

The trade union campaign to stamp
out this global scourge



Focused on awareness raising, largely centrally driven

- **Launched in September 2011**
- **Roundtables: October-December 2011**
- **Howe Inquiry: November-May 2012**
- **Congress: May 2012**
- **National Community Summit on Insecure Work: November 2012**

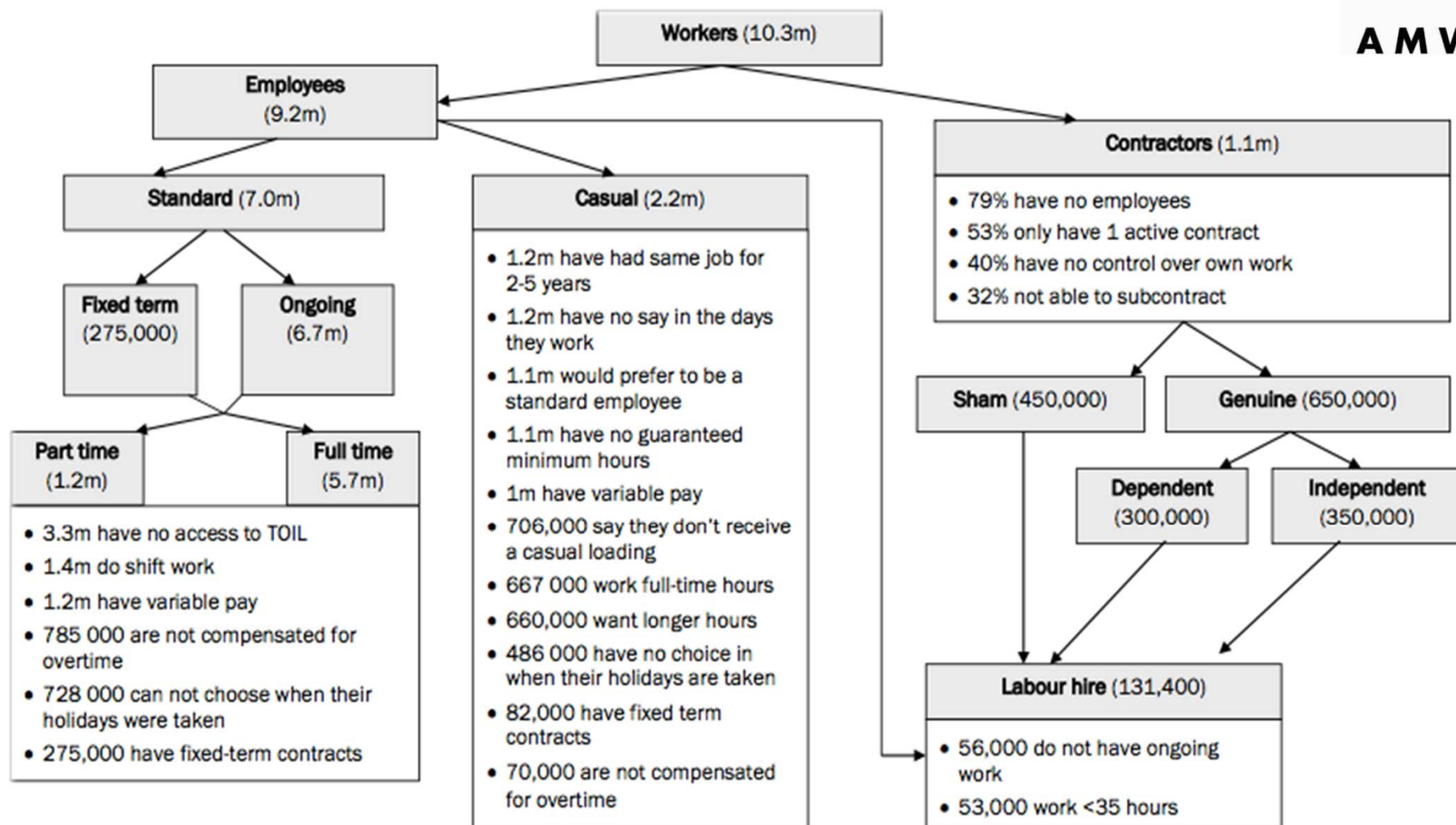
The challenge for the next stage of the campaign:

- **Set out a vision for what sort of jobs our economy should provide.**
- **Shift from raising awareness to advocating solutions.**
- **Broaden the campaign – involve the whole of the movement.**

The Howe Inquiry



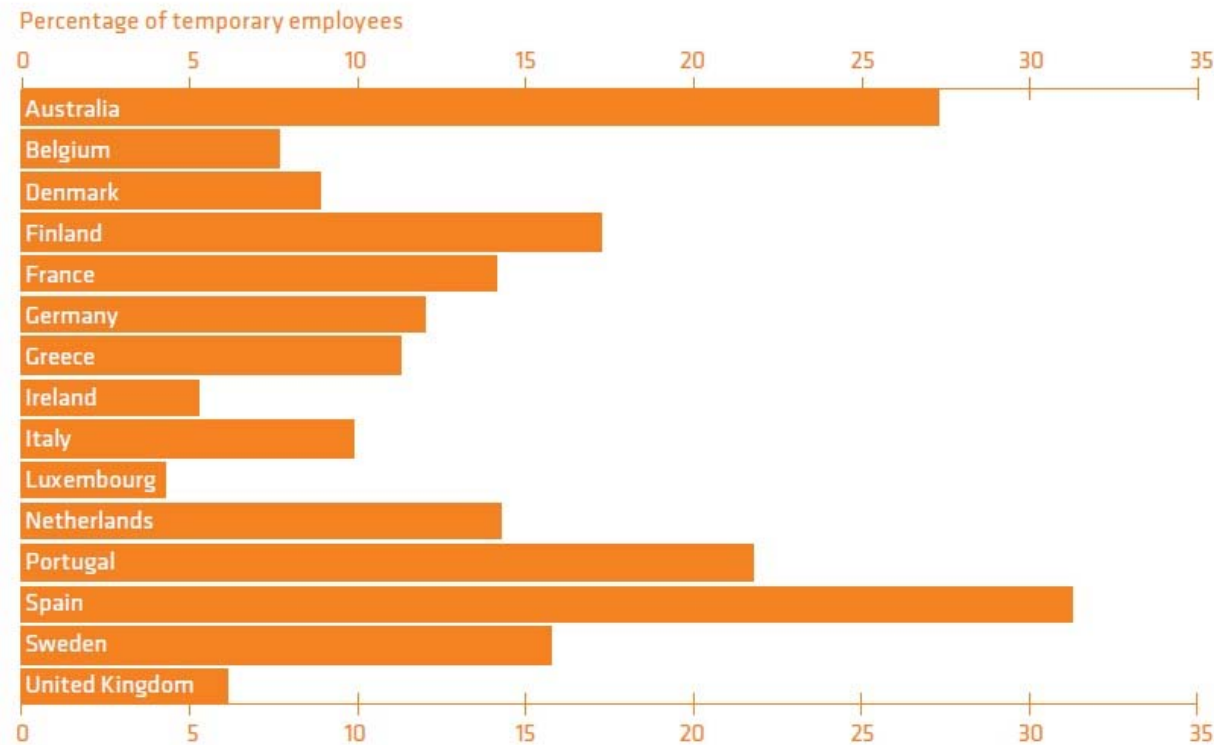
- In October 2011 the ACTU initiated an independent inquiry to help understand the impact of these changes on the nature and distribution of work.
- Prof. Brian Howe AO (Chair), Deputy Prime Minister in the Hawke & Keating Governments.
- Paul Munro (Deputy Chair), former Senior Presidential Member of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.
- Assoc. Prof. Sara Charlesworth, Principle Research Fellow at the Centre for Work + Life, University of South Australia.
- Jill Biddington, a former union leader with experience organising and representing workers in the finance, hospitality and service sectors.



The scale of the problem



Figure 4: Australia compared with the OECD

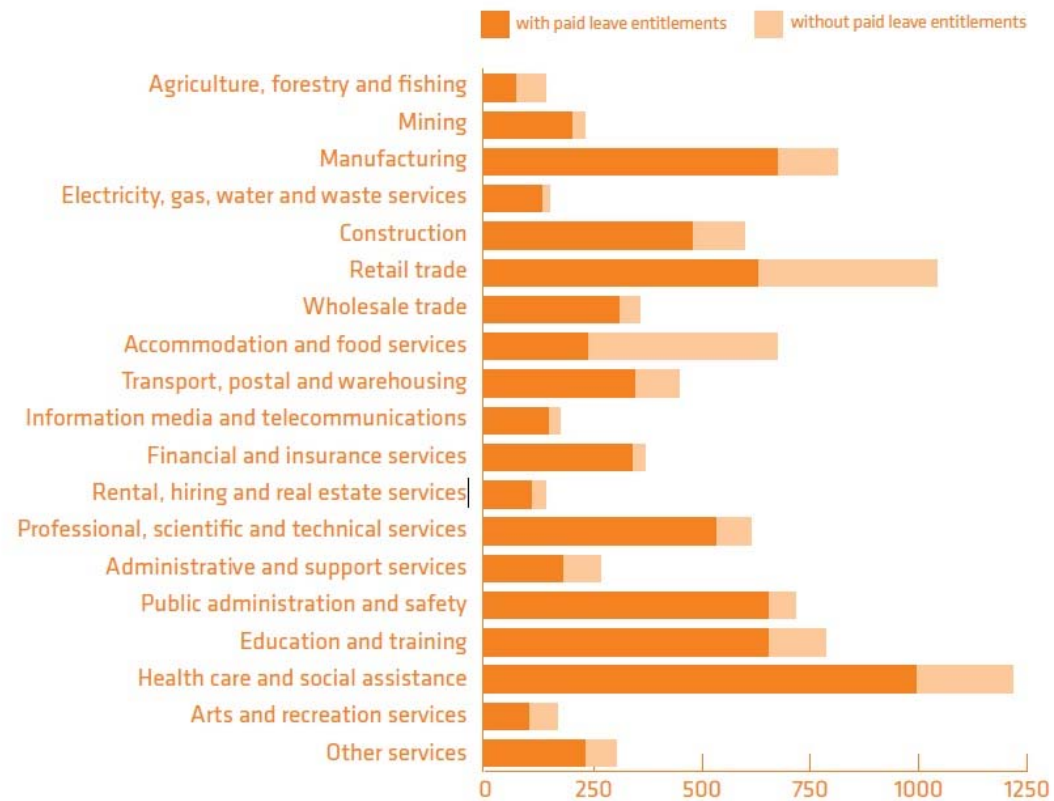


Graph: Temporary employees as proportion of total employees in selected OECD countries, 2002

The scale of the problem



Figure 2: Casuals by industry - number of employees (thousands), 2011



Source: ABS, Forms of Employment, November 2011 (Released April 2012), Cat 6359.0

Recommendations: Labour law



- **Australia must pursue universality in labour law. Doing this effectively requires:**
 - **Expanded definitions of employers and employees;**
 - **Reforms to better capture indirect employment arrangements like labour hire and dependent contracting;**
 - **A firmer definition of casual work; and**
 - **Expanded National Employment Standards that create a set of inclusive minimum standards that protect all employees.**
- **Our industrial relations system also needs stronger legal pathways from insecure work to ongoing employment.**

Recommendations: Investing in the workforce



- A broader focus on work-life transitions, rather than the narrow preoccupation with the transition between employment and unemployment that has given led to an emphasis on 'Welfare-to-Work' initiatives.
- A commitment to lifelong learning, including a call for the ACTU to investigate learning accounts as a model for investing in the capability of workers over the lifetime.
- Reform to Australia's tax and transfers system to provide a stronger safety net by:
 - Addressing the inadequacy of the Newstart Allowance;
 - Simplifying income declaration systems; and
 - Abolishing the Liquid Assets Waiting Period.
- Changes to the way Job Services Australia interacts with forms of insecure work such as labour hire.

Recommendations:

The role of governments

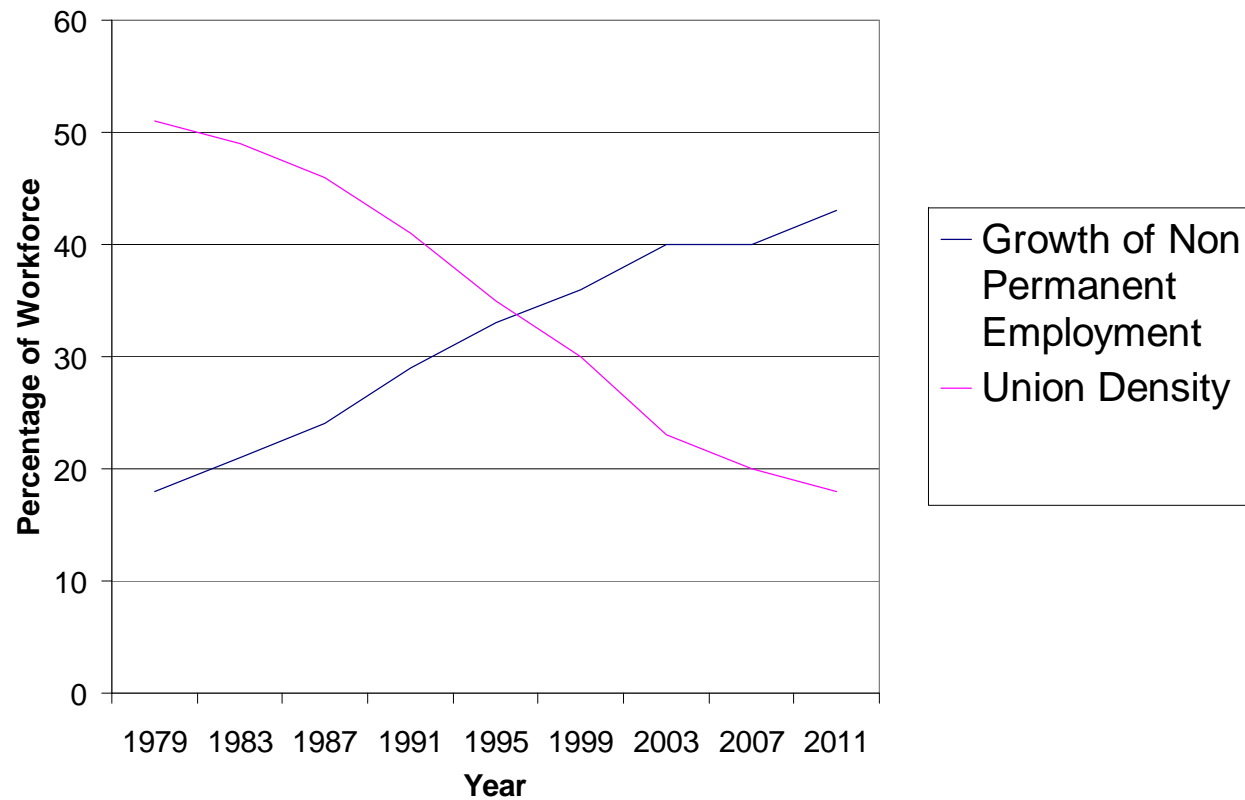


- **Government must take its role more seriously and recognise just how influential it is as one of the largest employers in the country.**
- **Governments at all levels need to make stronger use of their leverage as employers, funders and purchasers to support secure forms of employment.**
- **This applies to direct government employment in the Commonwealth and State public services, in funded sectors such as public and tertiary education, and through government procurement**

Insecure Work & union membership



Casualisation vs Union Density



Protections – Manufacturing Award



14. Casual employment

14.1 A casual employee is one engaged and paid as such. A casual employee for working ordinary time must be paid an hourly rate calculated on the basis of one thirty - eighth of the minimum weekly wage prescribed in clause 24.1(a) for the work being performed plus a casual loading of 25%. The loading constitutes part of the casual employee's all purpose rate.

14.2 On each occasion a casual employee is required to attend work the employee must be paid for a minimum of four hours work. In order to meet their personal circumstances a casual employee may request and the employer may agree to an engagement for less than the minimum of four hours.

Protections – Manufacturing Award



14.4 Casual conversion to full – time or part - time employment

(a) A casual employee, other than an **irregular casual employee**, who has been engaged by a particular employer for a sequence of periods of employment under this award during a period of six months, thereafter has the right to elect to have their contract of employment converted to full - time or part - time employment if the employment is to continue beyond the conversion process.

Conclusion



- Australian Union movement seeking to deal with precarious employment on
 - economy-wide i.e. legislated, basis
 - industry-wide i.e. award basis
 - enterprise/ company level i.e. collective agreement basis
- Arguably failing due to low levels of union membership...and levels are low because precarious employment is high
- Shows importance of all 3 levels working in coordinated manner