

Infographic: A Portrait of Employment Insecurity in Australia:

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The insecure nature of work in Australia today can be illustrated through the following infographic (based on 2015 data published by the ABS). Australia has over 19 million residents of working age (which the ABS defines as anyone over 15). Of those, 12.5 million “participated” in the labour market (by working or actively seeking it). Participation has declined in recent years, in large part because of poor job prospects; that’s a turnaround from earlier decades when participation (especially by women) increased steadily.

Of those 12.5 million, around 11.75 million were “working.” But that doesn’t mean they were all “employed.” Because 2 million of those Australians nominally worked “for themselves,” mostly in small businesses (often not even incorporated) which have no other employees. Conservatives celebrate the expansion of self-employment as a sign of “entrepreneurship.” And some small businesses are indeed rewarding, productive undertakings. But all too often self-employment is more of a desperate act than an opportunity: many sole proprietors can’t find any other way to support themselves, and end up scraping together casual work out of their homes, with hardly any capital (other than their own savings) to back them up.

Not counting self-employment, an average of 9.75 million Australians held *paying* jobs in 2015. But close to one-third of those (3 million) were part-time. Again, some part-time jobs are decent, desirable jobs, especially when schedules are reliable and fit well with workers’ preferences and family situations. But most part-time jobs are not: hours are inadequate, schedules are unreliable, wages are low. Two-thirds of all jobs created in Australia in the last year (to April 2016) were part-time, and the share of part-time work in total employment has reached a record 31.5 percent.

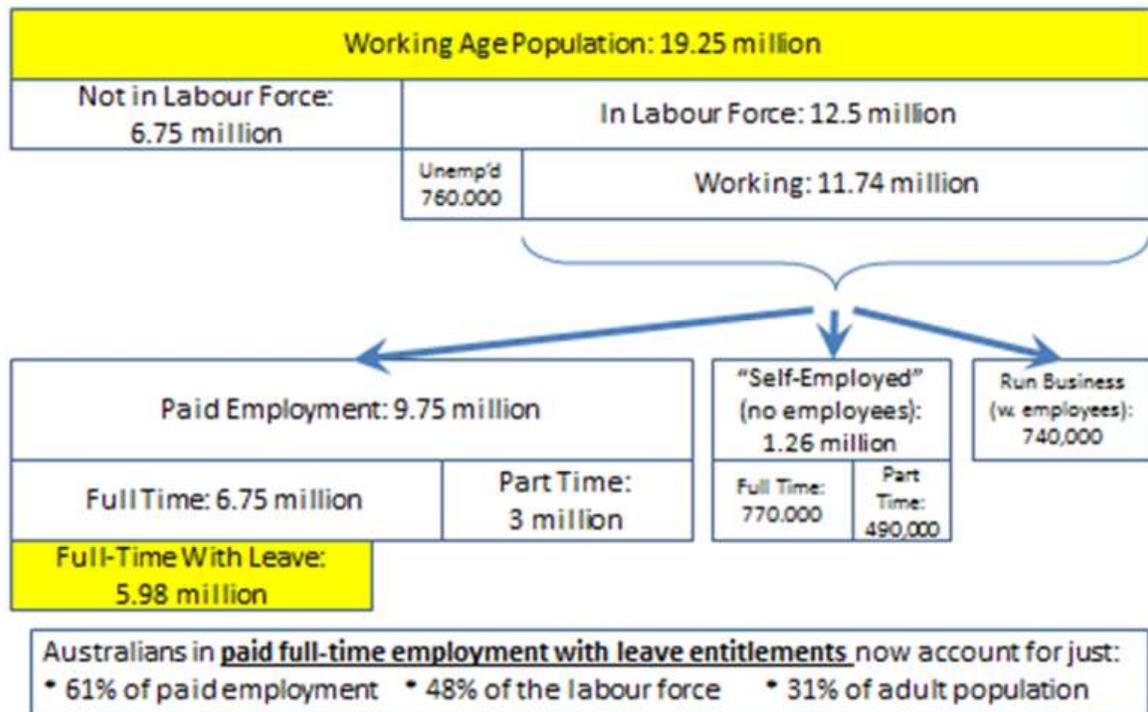
That leaves 6.75 million Australians in full-time paid jobs. But of them, over 750,000 had no leave entitlements (for illness, vacation, or family reasons). Absence of entitlements generally indicates that a job is temporary, contingent, or otherwise very insecure.

Therefore, a grand total of 5.98 million Australians held a paying full-time job with basic leave entitlements last year. That’s less than half of the labour force. And less than one-third of the working-age population.

It’s no wonder that holding down a regular full-time job with basic benefits seems like a rarity these days. Statistics confirm that it *is* a rarity.

Who Has a Good Job Anymore, Anyway?

(2015 data)



Source: from ABS Catalogues 6202 and 6291.0.55.003. Some totals do not add due to rounding.

Plus...

- 1 million workers are "independent contractors."
- 600,000 found their job through a labour hire agency.
- 360,000 are working on fixed-term contracts.
- 1.05 million workers don't expect to be with their current employer in a year.
- 1.35 million part-time workers have no guaranteed hours.
- 1.85 million workers earn minimum wage (national or award).
- 1.4 million workers earn less than \$400 per week.