

CORRECTED VERSION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Labour Hire Employment in Victoria

Melbourne — 21 February 2005

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Dr I. Campbell, Senior Research Fellow, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

The CHAIR — The committee welcomes Dr Iain Campbell, Senior Research Fellow at RMIT. As you know, the Economic Development Committee is an all-party committee of Parliament. We have been engaged for the last year or more on an inquiry into labour hire. We have delivered to Parliament an interim report which you have told me you have a copy of. We have been granted an extension to the end of May to both receive some feedback on our interim report and to canvass other matters pertinent to the subject. Those are outlined in the report. We welcome your attendance today. You are the first witness to come along since we delivered our interim report, so it is very useful for us to get your feedback on matters in the report and on other issues we want to canvass. For the purpose of your attendance today, this is a formal hearing of the committee so we are recording your comments and our questions, and it will at the committee's discretion at a later date that it be made public so other people will be able to look at the evidence you have given. Any comments you make here today are protected by parliamentary privilege, but that does not extend to once you leave the room — not that we expect there is any need for you to worry about that, but just to inform you as a matter of course. Perhaps we could invite you to make a few comments to start with.

Dr CAMPBELL — Thanks very much. I am happy to assist the committee in any way I can. I thought perhaps the best thing to do before we have a discussion or exchange of views or questions is to run through some of my research which might be relevant to the work of the committee. I have been working basically as a researcher looking at different forms of employment for nigh on 20 years. I have been looking at it from all sorts of perspectives, although I should stress from the start that I am no labour lawyer. I have never been able to manage that particular skill.

The CHAIR — That might work in your favour in this forum, not against!

Dr CAMPBELL — Thanks. So it is strictly social science research. Primarily I have been interested in casual employment, part-time employment and, recently, working hours, working families sort of issues. I have taken up a little bit of an interest in labour hire or temporary agency work, partly because it so clearly overlaps with the issue of casual employment. I guess in the recent period I have written or helped to write maybe three pieces which I think might be relevant to the committee. In the book that was co-authored with Ian Watson, John Buchanan and Chris Briggs, *Fragmented Futures*, there is a chapter on non-standard employment, and that contains a brief discussion of maybe four or five pages on labour hire. I guess all that we really try to do in that is to assess its significance, to say it is a growing issue and to perhaps signal a bit of what we think are the concerns of researchers or people out in the field — confusion about lines of responsibilities, divisions within the work force, occupational health and safety issues, skills issues. That was one piece.

The second piece is probably a more substantial thing. It is a recent chapter from a special book on temporary agency work around the world. There were two chapters on Australia: one by Richard Hall and one by myself together with John Buchanan and Ian Watson, and that is more of a conceptual piece — that is, we asked what is this thing that we prefer to call temporary agency work but which you are considering as labour hire; what is it in Australia and to what extent is it a problem or a boon — or just to canvass what was known about it, and not much was known about it, and to perhaps again float what we saw as difficulties or problems with it. If you have not had a chance to look at the piece, the argument just to roughly summarise it is that we saw labour hire as a reasonably healthy phenomenon when it is confined to supplementary labour, when it is doing what it traditionally does, which is covering absences, perhaps adjusting to peaks and fluctuations in demand and getting specialist skills into a firm. That is the traditional supplementary labour. You could see it maybe 20 or 30 years ago in temping in office work; that was the way in which it operated. We said it was more of a problem when it seemed to overflow into the provision of what we call substitute labour, when it was used as a direct alternative to permanent employment, and that could happen in all sorts of different ways. We were suggesting that insofar as there is a problem in Australia it is a problem not of labour hire in general but in a particular sense of spilling over into the provision of substitute labour. I guess we floated the argument a bit that if you look the European situation and at all the research that is being done in this, because there is quite a big discussion in Europe, it instead all seemed to suggest that far more than in Australia temporary agency work in Europe is confined to the provision of supplementary labour so it is not all that much different from traditional recruitment or employment broking even though that triangular relationship between the host firm, labour hire firm and the worker is a much more solid one.

The third piece that I think might be vaguely relevant to the committee is last year, together with Barbara Pocock and John Buchanan we did a report for the Chifley Research Centre which looked at options for regulations. The options were for regulating casual work and to some extent also part-time work. We were interested in how you integrate part-time work into social protection, but we did float the argument that this is a whole package of issues

in Australia. You could devote a lot of regulatory attention to casual work and other forms of employment would spring up at the margins and would perhaps be even more detrimental to the health of the economy and the society than casual work, and vice versa I guess as well. Labour hire is probably a part of a broader package of issues too.

Those three are all a bit on the margins of your interests and deliberations, but it seems to me that perhaps I have something to contribute, particularly on casual work and casualisation and perhaps because one of my areas of expertise is European social protection systems. I keep a bit of an eye on what is happening in Europe in terms of regulation around things like fixed-term contracts and temporary agency work, part-time work. I will leave it open to anyone here to follow it up. Maybe those are the two areas in which I would have something to contribute.

The CHAIR — Thank you for those comments. I will start by asking you if you are aware of whether, in the other jurisdictions we have had some familiarity with, there has been any successful attempt to ameliorate, either by legislation, regulation or directly, what you might consider to be the least appealing aspects of casualisation or labour hire spreading into substitutional labour? Is there any jurisdiction where efforts have successfully been made to shape this rather than relying on it to shape other things?

Dr CAMPBELL — When you say ‘jurisdictions’, do you mean jurisdictions in Australia?

The CHAIR — Europe and Australia.

Dr CAMPBELL — It is a bit hard to summarise what is happening in Europe because this is a fluid discussion, and as you are probably all aware there is a discussion at the European level to try and bring in a temporary work agency directive which would be a successor to the fixed-term contract directive and then the previous part-time directive. So there is a kind of a fluid discussion and, of course, it has stalled at the moment so far as I understand it, partly because of their attempt to regulate parity wages and conditions between workers in the temporary work agencies and workers in the host firms. Nevertheless it seems to me that this is a very interesting topic for the committee to have a look at, because from what I have read it seems to me — chaotic as the situation is in Europe, unfinished as it is and fluent as it is — that Europe has nevertheless been far more successful in regulating temporary agency work and keeping it to this level of supplementary labour and not allowing it to overflow into substitute labour. There are still obviously concerns, which is why they are worried about the principle of parity, but from the Australian point of view it looks to be a bit of a success. Funnily enough, the trend in Europe over the last 10 years has been to liberalise provisions around temporary agency work even though 10 or 20 years ago it was prohibited in a lot of countries. So they have had to think out their regulatory approach almost from scratch. They prohibited it, then they thought, ‘What do we object to about it?’, and they have tried to devise a form of regulation which would allow the healthy aspects to flourish and the bad aspects to be discouraged. I do not want to exaggerate and suggest that all the answers are there in Europe, but there are a lot of interesting underlying principles that could be brought into the discussion here in Australia.

Mr PULLEN — You mentioned Europe as a whole. There is a situation in Germany at the moment where they are freeing up their workplaces and stuff like that. I am particularly interested in your comment that it is healthy when it is confined to just temporary agency work for people. In Australia we certainly have labour hire people working alongside full-time employees, doing exactly the same work because a company may feel that is a better way for it to operate. Are you trying to tell us that that is not the position in a lot of European countries?

Dr CAMPBELL — In all forms of temporary agency work people go in and work alongside permanent workers, but I guess what they are trying to do in Europe is to stop that logic whereby you get the displacement or the substitution because there are cost advantages for labour hire workers. That is the kind of lever that they try and work on. They try to make sure that it is used to grease the wheels of the labour market rather than to replace permanent wages and conditions. I think that is not a bad, unhealthy starting point. I have just been pretty rough and ready. I have just given the nuts and bolts of that kind of approach. We could talk a little bit more about the principles in the European regulation if you like. It has been discussed quite extensively in a couple of recent reports. The OECD has done an interesting report on employment protection. The European Foundation in Dublin has done a couple of really interesting reports and there are a couple of books. It is a bit hard to read from here because the presumption in Europe is always that the worker for a labour hire company — you might as well call them a labour hire company rather than keep tripping over temporary agencies — will always be an employee, and will either be a fixed-term employee or a permanent employee, given that casuals do not exist in the same form and certainly not on the same scale in Europe. Then the regulation is usually along the same principle as the fixed-term

regulation, which is to do things like limit the uses to which labour hire workers can be put. So they cannot be used to replace strikers or be in dangerous sectors. Generally that is pretty light. The main regulations are things like maximum duration of contracts for workers within a labour hire firm so they cannot be kept on labour hire books for ever and ever. I think that is fair to say. Also, there is the clarifying of the status of the employer and the employee: the worker in Europe is always an employee of the labour hire firm. There might be provision in some regulation, like occupational health and safety, to share the responsibility because, of course, the host firm is operating the work site and has to take care of things like occupational health and safety. But in general the presumption is that the worker is an employee of the labour hire firm and not an independent contractor and not a casual. He is either a fixed-term or permanent employee. As I understand it, in Germany you cannot even be a fixed-term employee — I would not swear to that — you have to be a permanent employee of the labour hire firm. Sorry, once I get going it is hard to stop.

Mr BOWDEN — Following on that same line, and if we look at the European moves on the use of temporary people, and coming back to the Australian experience, it has been suggested by some previous witnesses that here in Australia we tend to use temporary labour hire people for peak loading where labour is required to meet a peak demand situation. I would be interested to hear your thoughts on whether or not you think the use of temporary employment personnel in the labour area has developed a culture leaning towards casualisation, or the establishment of a culture of casualisation, and not just necessarily catering for peak demands loads for labour. Have we arrived at a point where this is facilitated casualisation to some extent in Australia?

Dr CAMPBELL — In my opinion there are significant problems around labour hire, and they are the problems of labour hire workers as substitutes. It seems to me that you only see that in a few industries. It is predominantly blue-collar, strongly unionised industries where there is a general tradition of good wages and conditions, and there the opportunity to use a labour hire triangular arrangement is an inducement to employers. They can cut their absolute labour costs by using labour hire. That is a problem because if you are committed to a safety net, and one way or another of wages and conditions, then this looks like a way of undercutting the safety net. It is important to get a grip on the scale of the problem. I think it is a significant problem, but it is not the source of the problem of casualisation in Australia. Given that most labour hire workers are casuals — they are not permanent workers and we do not quite know how many are independent contractors; it seems that the bulk of labour hire workers are casuals — they are still only 6 per cent of all casual workers in Australia. In other words, 94 per cent of casual workers are directly employed. So you could not say that labour hire — except maybe in a couple of industries — is the source of the problem of casualisation. Perhaps it is another variant of it, although I am not even sure that I can argue that. I suppose it becomes important when you are trying to think of regulation and regulatory options. You can devote a sledgehammer to labour hire, but if all that does is develop more and more direct hire casual employees then it is not necessarily an achievement. Conversely, if you develop a regulatory sledgehammer to address the problems of direct hire casual employees by letting labour hire be a secondary channel, then you might not solve the problems. Does that start to — —

Mr BOWDEN — Yes, I think so. Thank you.

Mr DELAHUNTY — This probably goes back to your history in this, and you have touched on it a little bit with Ron: what do you believe is the cause of increasing casualisation? Is it lifestyle issues; is it financial? Do you want to comment on those two things? You mentioned 6 per cent of the work force, but our figures show increasing numbers. Do you have any comment on why there is increasing casualisation of the work force?

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes, I have tried to look at this issue in a reasonable amount of detail in much of my research. Roughly, to my mind it is a demand-side phenomenon not a supply-side phenomenon. Obviously many people are interested in reduced hours of work, but they are not necessarily interested in the casual conditions of work. It is primarily driven by employer needs. I think you can trace it to the pressure that many employers are under for a variety of reasons. I also give a bit of stress to the fact that we have had a particularly porous regulatory system in Australia around labour. We have had a rather inadequate system that we inherited from the turn of the last century and that created a number of holes so that in Australia, in comparison with almost all other countries, casual employment has flourished whereas in most other countries employers have been under the same sorts of pressures and they have responded in similar sorts of ways. The regulatory system has continually been modified in order to try to balance out employer and employee needs. To my mind in Australia we have had a very poor record around labour regulation. We had an inadequate system and we have failed to modernise or improve it over the past 20 years. It is a balance of employer needs and interests and the regulatory system.

Mr DELAHUNTY — We have heard anecdotal evidence of people who like the casualised work force. They are getting more money in their hand directly in some cases. For others it gives a bit of flexibility in their work hours. You say that it is more the employers who are driving this.

Dr CAMPBELL — There is an emerging body of interview-based material with casual workers. Last year Barbara Pocock published a very good report based on interviews with casual workers. Generally I would endorse her conclusions, which is that there is always a small group of workers who will appreciate casual work, for whatever reason, whether it is genuine or because it is the work that they do. They have a positive attitude to whatever work they do. Nevertheless she found a series of discontents around casual employment. One particular discontent was around the casual loading. You mentioned two advantages of casual employment from the point of view of some employees, but for many employees those were the sites of disadvantage. So far as I can tell, not all casual workers get the casual loading, or when they do get a casual loading it is a loading on a base rate which is significantly lower than what is paid to the permanent worker in the same workplace. So you get this quite strange situation emerging where even in those best of circumstances, where workers are getting a casual loading, they are still getting paid less than the equivalent permanent worker, either because they are on a different award or agreement or on a different classification rate, or they do not have access to the same rosters or penalty rates. There are all sorts of reasons, but this is the solution to the conundrum. Whenever you look at the aggregate figures you see that the hourly wage rates of casuals versus permanents are lower despite the fact that ostensibly they have a casual loading.

The other issue is flexibility of hours. This is a really interesting issue because it is undoubtedly true that where you have skill shortages people can use casual employment in order to get flexibility of hours. The classic case is probably agency nursing. Every agency nurse you talk to is delighted because they feel they can choose their own rosters. They do not have the hassle and the responsibility of a permanent, and they often get paid more than their permanent colleagues. That is a classic case of skill shortages giving the workers power, even within what from outside looks like just a classic labour hire arrangement. But in the majority of cases what tends to happen is that if you want continued work — and most people do want continued work, perhaps with the exception of students who want work in short bursts during their holidays — as a casual worker you are really dependent on always being available. So far from your having flexibility of hours, often the employer — maybe the host company or the labour hire firm if we are talking about labour hire — is able to come to you and say, ‘I need you tomorrow. Are you available?’. You dare not say no for fear of disappearing from the books or being cut out. A common complaint of many casual workers seems to be that despite the promise of flexibility of hours, the reality is one of quite rigid demands. I am suggesting that it is a bit of a blurred picture. There are circumstances in which everything you say is perfectly true, and that anecdotal evidence you pointed to is absolutely true, but I would say for the majority of cases that it is a bit darker.

Mr JENKINS — You talked about looking at the social science side of the issue. What is the known effect of overcasualisation on family life and the wider implications of this that will come in? I understand that it is different in Europe. It would be good to get some of the articles to which you have referred and look at the experience in Europe. What has been the effect of increasing casualisation there?

Dr CAMPBELL — It depends partly on what form the casualisation takes. If it is irregular work and irregular income, it is far worse than if it is for a regular casual job for the individual worker. Again, I would refer to the program of research done by Barbara Pocock, which tried to draw out some of the implications for families, for households and even for communities of an overreliance on casual work. She refers to things like general insecurity. This is not just the insecurity about your job, but the insecurity about your hours and about what job you will be doing from day to day. There are often problems around low pay. All of this has ramifications for households and even for communities if there is too much casual work in a community. I think what she does very well, and with which I fully agree, is try to tease out the implications of casualisation for the broader society and even for the economy. I would hate to give the impression that casualisation is a success, even for employers. There is a good argument that while it might be in the short-term interests of employers in cutting their costs and responding to pressures they are under, you could say that in the long term of a particular business it is inimical to the productivity development that we need. It gives employers too much opportunity to rely on driving down wage costs and discourages them from thinking out different and better ways of work organisation, better and more innovative ways of producing or providing services, or even more innovative products. If there is too much opportunity in the system to concentrate on wage costs, you lose the opportunity for those dynamic productivity gains over the long term. That is a problem not only for the individual firm, and that probably is where we come in as observers, regulators or politicians. We are looking at it from the broader point of view of the society. We are

thinking, 'How do you get a dynamic, prosperous, modern economy going as the foundation for a good society?', and this does not look like the basis on which you could construct a good economy.

Mr JENKINS — From what you spoke about earlier, are you saying that in Europe, culturally, casual employment is not as highly regarded or thought of as the first option, therefore they have no need to regulate in the same way and that we might have to be one of the earlier jurisdictions to look at regulation?

Dr CAMPBELL — To some extent the fact that we have got so much casual employment in Australia is a bit of an accident. It is not something that someone thought of 20, 30 or 50 years ago and said, 'Let us have a lot of casual employment'. It is an accident of the interrelation between regulation, employer needs and perhaps employee inadequacies as well. Perhaps trade unions were not doing their job as well as they should have been. I think what happens in Europe is that you have got a very small proportion of what they often call 'on-call workers'. They could be seen as being a little bit analogous to our casual workers. Generally they are 1 or 2 per cent of the work force. These people are in casual employment for a short period of time. Often it is because they are heading towards retirement or perhaps they are students. They might be doing jobs in hospitality. Of course there will always be a need in a society for some short-term irregular work. Every society has it. In Europe they have a little bit of it, but it is only 1 or 2 per cent, whereas here we have this strange phenomenon — —

On that basis you do not bother to have paid annual leave. They are only working for two days this week or maybe four or five days the next. There are provisions in all regulatory systems for that. But in Australia we have allowed this situation to develop where we have 25 per cent of all employees casual, ostensibly because they are doing short-term and irregular work, but in practice they are not. They are often regular workers and on that basis they are then deprived of the standard rights and benefits of employment — for example, in Europe everyone gets paid annual leave; you cannot cash it out. You get fairly generous paid annual leave, looking at it from our point of view. In Australia we have the situation where 25 per cent of all employees do not get paid for holidays and have no entitlements to paid annual leave. It looks a bit aberrant from the point of view of the society.

Mr JENKINS — To follow up, we have talked Europe this and Europe that. To an extent it is one jurisdiction, but it is also a number of small jurisdictions. Are there examples within Europe that would give us some immediate guidance in terms of regulation of temporary agencies?

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes.

Mr JENKINS — I know you are working on it collectively, but are there others where it is already the case?

Dr CAMPBELL — Of course I would start with the Netherlands, a society which has liberalised quite consciously its rules around temporary agency and work. Whatever political perspective you are coming at it from it is bound to be pretty interesting. It is a society with a reasonably high proportion of temporary agency work. It seems to me looking at it from afar that they nevertheless have pretty good regulations to make sure there are no bad effects, but it is a case of a society that is liberalised. It is always interesting to look at the United Kingdom as well because, in the absence of that temporary agency directive, the United Kingdom has a regime that is very lightly regulated. There are hardly any regulations around temporary agencies, so it would be interesting to look at that again. Also, it probably would be good to look at a society with maybe a longer tradition of regulation around temporary agencies, and I am not sure what I would suggest there — perhaps Germany. Perhaps Sweden is an example of another society that has liberalised its laws and regulations recently in this area, but probably Swedes tend to think these things out pretty carefully and try to devise regulations that everyone can be happy with — employers, employees, trade unions and governments.

The CHAIR — I am going to ask you a question. I apologise, I am not an economist, but it is a question that ought to be directed to an economist. I am interested in your view. There is a debate emerging, in part sponsored by the Reserve Bank and others, that Australia is at full capacity, and that the economy has capacity constraints on it that are fuelling inflation and whatnot. There are two questions about Australia's love affair with casualisation, if you like — I think 25 per cent, as you have just said, is higher than anywhere else in the world. To what extent has the ability of workers to work for labour hire firms and become this mobile work force — transporting their skills around to where they are needed; that is the economic model — taken advantage of the growth in the economy? By rights you would think labour hire employees, even though they are casual, would be in a position when the economy is charging at full steam to demand higher real wages? I would have thought that

was self-explanatory in economic terms. I would like to get your comment on whether you have seen anything along those lines in your work. Secondly, and perhaps conversely, if we accept that an awful lot of the 25 per cent of casual workers are not working full time, but 20 years ago — before this phenomenon really took off — if they were employed it would have been in a full-time position, to what extent is the rising tide of casualisation itself a constraint on the economy — that is, you have a lot of people working in labour hire, but they effectively are not working full time? I do not know what it averages out at — 75, 80 or 90 percent — but they are not working full time as they once would have. I want to get your thoughts on both of those points.

Dr CAMPBELL — I am not sure that I can do justice to all those questions. There is still a bit of a question mark in my mind as well. I know the dominant discussion is, as you quite rightly put it, in terms of capacity constraints and almost full employment, and often unemployment figures are cited as the index of that. I feel there is still a substantial amount of slack in general in the economy. You have pointed to one aspect of that, which is underemployment. It is not purely to do with labour hire work, of course, but many directly hired employees are technically underemployed and they are working only a couple of hours and trying to patch together one, two or three jobs, as we see from the statistics on multiple job holding. As far as I can see, there is still a significant problem of underemployment in Australia, and that would suggest there is still a degree of labour slack. Indeed it is always important to look at this because Australia in OECD comparisons always had the highest rate of underemployment of all OECD economies. Of course there is the general problem of hidden unemployment and perhaps people who are technically out of the labour force. My general feeling is that there is still a significant amount of labour slack. Nevertheless I think employers in some areas are exactly right to point to skills shortages. Particularly in skilled trades areas it seems to me that, listening to employers and reading some of the data and some of the discussion, that it is true there is a problem of skills shortages. That then starts to come back to why, after 20 years of talking about training, skills development and the need for a modern economy to be based on continual upgrading of skills, we suddenly have a problem of skills shortages. Again, I would not blame labour hire full stop, but I think it does exacerbate the situation, and there is a significant problem that if you shift workers to casual employment or shift them to a labour hire arrangement, then skills development tends to get lost. It is precisely one of the reasons why it is shifted by the host firm. It is an overhead cost that they want to avoid, but it is a direct cost to the labour hire firm. It is hard for a labour hire firm that is reliant on continual profit margins as a result of hiring out those workers to justify a major investment in training. Skills development is one of those classic obligations that tends to disappear. I do not want to say that it is purely a problem of labour hire, although because labour hire is precisely in those blue-collar areas in which we are now talking about skills shortages it is probably worth trying to tease it out a bit more. Certainly my colleague John Buchanan has argued for a couple of years that there is a significant looming problem with skills shortages in these trades areas. He has talked about farmers eating their own seed. No-one is game to be responsible for taking up obligations around training, I do not think this is a problem that could not have been foreseen, but maybe in certain areas of the economy we are encountering difficulties now. It is a bit of an on-the-one-hand/on-the-other-hand type of answer, is it not?

Mr DELAHUNTY — I am surprised that my colleague Noel Pullen has not asked this question, but do you see any financial implications for people who are in the casual work force, whether they be casualisation or labour hire people, having difficulty getting loans and what the impact of that is on the community?

Dr CAMPBELL — This certainly seems to be a common complaint. Again, when I did my own interview material or relying on that work by Barbara Pocock, or indeed by other people, this seems to be a very common complaint by casual workers. They go to a bank and try to get a loan, perhaps for housing or something else, and then they have to show that they have some kind of secure employment. It is pretty automatically struck out when they say they are a casual. I have not had any direct experience of it myself, but this does seem to me a very common complaint.

Mr DELAHUNTY — We know the difference between casualised employment and fixed-term contracts.

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes.

Mr DELAHUNTY — So the same thing could apply if they were on a three-year contract or even on a five-year contract?

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes.

Mr DELAHUNTY — They could have the same problem when going to get a loan for a house or a car or something?

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes, I suppose I can only point to my own experience. Maybe the banks have different rules. When I got a home loan, or was persuaded to get a home loan, it was when I was on a fixed-term contract and they certainly did not even blink an eye. Maybe it was because it was a fixed-term academic research job; I just do not know. Maybe it is to do with the length of the contract; if it was for six months you would not have much chance of getting a loan. It is a problem, of course, in Australia because we expect people to try to leverage their wages into home loans, don't we? This has been a persistent complaint for the past 10 or 15 years from casual workers. I am surprised someone has not spoken to the banks and asked them what is going on and whether there is some way. It does not seem to be an insuperable problem, does it? If someone has had a record of 20 years of continuous work, even with the fact that they are currently a casual, there should be something to be said for — —

The CHAIR — We might call Noel as our next witness, because I think he can give us a perspective on that. It actually is a problem. It should not be, but it does remain a problem.

Mr DELAHUNTY — We are hearing a little bit of anecdotal evidence, particularly more so about women in the work force, and some areas like casualised employment, and they tend to be the primary caregiver at home.

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Are you picking up any of those vibes through your research?

Dr CAMPBELL — Yes, there are those traditional problems of casual workers traditionally being concentrated amongst women, amongst part-time workers. We were talking earlier about hours. It can create enormous havoc if you have caring responsibilities. You really have a fixed schedule around your child-care arrangements, and if you are subject to irregular hours at very short notice as a casual it can be enormously disruptive. The point to keep in mind, though, and especially when talking about casual work within labour hire, is that if you look at the statistics for over the past 20 years, the big growth in casual work has been with full-time male workers. They are starting from a lower base. It is still concentrated amongst female part-time workers, but the big growth seems to have been with full-time male workers, often blue-collar workers who might have lost their jobs in retrenchments, or have been outsourced, or whatever. They come back into the industry, into employment, as casuals. So to some extent there is an enormous range of problems, depending on who we are talking about and what industry. But the common underlying thing is the casual status, I think, which does not give you enough rights and benefits for a citizen in a modern economy.

The CHAIR — We have exhausted our questions, Iain, but it has been very useful. As I said, this is the first time we have been able to come together as a committee and get some feedback after putting in our interim report, so you have stimulated our dormant minds. We have had a few months off and we are back into it now. That has been very good. I will check with Russell and Kirsten on a couple of points you have referred to with some of the OECD surveys. We want to make sure we have that. We will be in Europe in the next few weeks. We will be meeting with OECD officials and we will test them out on some of the material you have referred to — similarly with the Barbara Pocock interviews. I do not know if we saw that material — yes, we have that on file. You have referred to the Netherlands as well. We might look more at some of that. It has been quite useful for us, and we thank you for your time. Our final report is due at the end of May, and it will be presented to Parliament. Just as we sent you a copy of this, we will also send you a copy of that.

Dr CAMPBELL — Thank you.

The CHAIR — Thank you for your time. We will send you a copy of the transcript in about two weeks. You can make any corrections you like.

Dr CAMPBELL — If I have any material on the European regulation that will be useful to the committee, I can consult with Kirsten and give it to her.

Committee adjourned.