



Friday January 20, 2012

General Media Enquires

P: (08) 9323 3800

(request Publicity Office)

F: (08) 9323 3878

E: publicity@cpsu.org

Permanent public sector must be preserved

A permanent workforce is essential for the public sector to best serve the community and is a key Community and Public Sector Union submission to a national inquiry.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions has commissioned the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia with submissions closing this week that will form the terms of reference for public hearings around the country, including WA in February.

Community and Public Sector Union Branch Secretary Toni Walkington said it was in the community's interests to have a permanent, independent public service that provided frank and fearless advice to the government of the day and delivered services in an impartial manner.

She said insecure work undermined the fundamental Westminster principles that were the basis of the WA political system.

The overwhelming prevalence of fixed-term contracts at higher levels results in the politicisation of the public service.

Ms Walkington said public servants who were insecure in their employment could be compromised or limited in their ability to give the frank and fearless advice due to the tenuous nature of their employment.

"The loss of knowledge and skills from the sector when contracts expire also has a detrimental impact on the quality of the public service as a whole," Ms Walkington said.

"Insecure work is rife in the WA public sector with insecure work growing while permanent work is decreasing and the use of fixed-term contracts is widespread."

In 1994 85% of employees were permanent compared with 71.2% in 2009, seeing a reduction of almost 14% in a 15-year period.

Ms Walkington said there were high numbers of workers in fixed-term contracts which pointed to the widespread misuse of contract employment in the public sector.

WE MAKE
WORK LIFE
BETTER

The lack of financial security on a fixed-term contract hampered the ability to plan for the future and get approval for bank loans.

Ms Walkington said the lack of security was particularly difficult when a worker was the sole income earner.

She said the lack of certainty about future employment put a lot of stress on the employee, both emotionally and financially and this stress often had an impact on the employee's family.

FOR COMMENT:

Toni Walkington
CPSU/CSA Branch Secretary
P: (08) 9323 3800

FOR INFORMATION:

Darren O'Dea
CPSU/CSA Media Liaison Officer
M: 0421 934 794
P: (08) 9323 3855
E: darren.odea@cpsucsa.org

WE MAKE
WORK LIFE
BETTER