

# WORKING TOGETHER

## THE FACTS

### CASUAL EMPLOYMENT

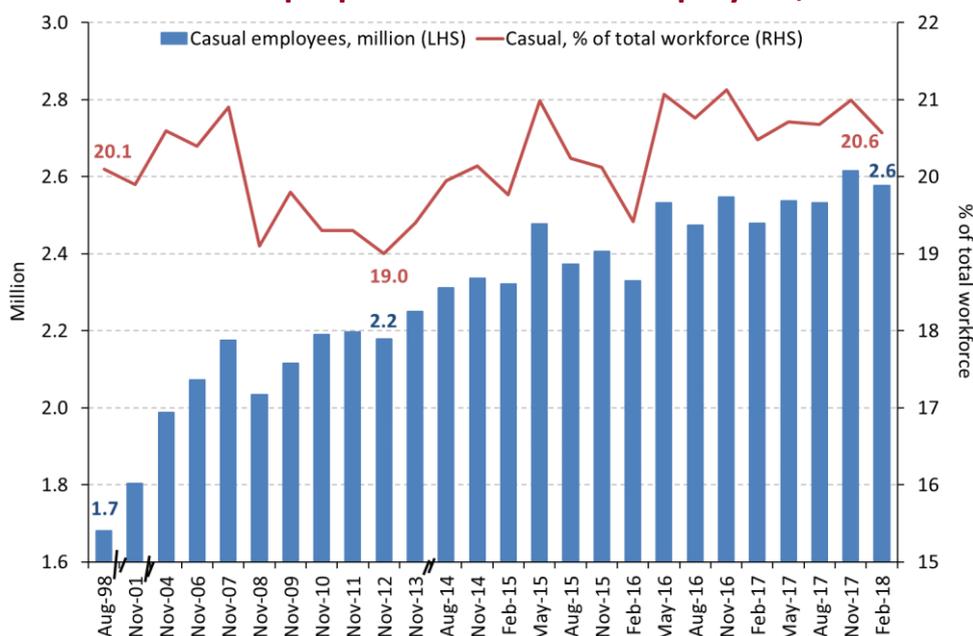
## CASUAL EMPLOYMENT PROVIDES VITAL FLEXIBILITY

Businesses and workers have a shared interest in ensuring that casual employment arrangements remain widely available. Casual employment enables businesses to deal with peaks and troughs in demand for their products and services, and to employ people in circumstances where there is uncertainty about how long the work will be available. Casual employment is preferred by many employees because it provides them with flexibility that they need to balance their work, family, study and other commitments.

## THE LEVEL OF CASUAL EMPLOYMENT IS NOT INCREASING

The level of casual employment in Australia has been stable for the past 20 years. Casuals comprised 20.6% of the total workforce (24.7% of employees in the workforce) in February 2018 compared with 20.1% in 1998 (25% of employees). During this period, casual workers as a proportion of the total workforce hit a low of 19% in November 2012, and a high of 21.1% in November 2016 (chart 1).

**Chart 1: Number and proportion of 'casual' employees, 1998 to 2018\***

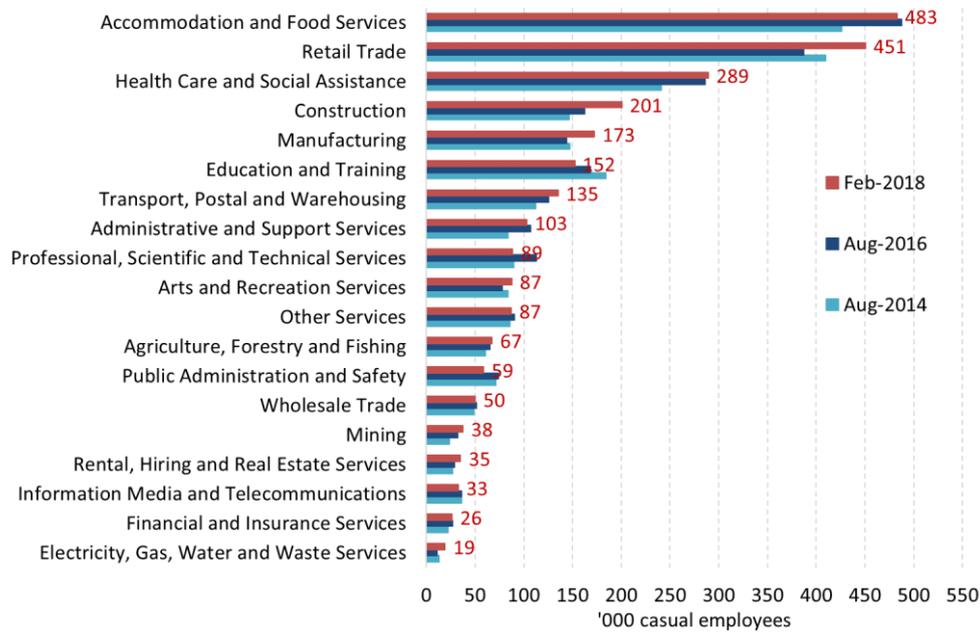


\* Data available intermittently from August 1998 to August 2014. Data available quarterly from August 2014. Sources: ABS characteristics of employment; Labour Force Australia, Detailed Quarterly.

The number of casual employees has grown steadily over the past two decades, but casual work has grown at a fairly similar rate to other categories of employment over this period.

The number of casual workers is highest in hospitality (food and accommodation services) retail and healthcare services. Together they account for close to half of all casual workers in 2018 (chart 2).

**Chart 2: Number of casual workers by industry, 2014 to 2018**



## RESTRICTING CASUAL EMPLOYMENT WOULD DESTROY JOBS

Restricting casual employment would destroy jobs, particularly for young people. Youth unemployment in Australia is much higher than the overall level of unemployment.

The demographic profile of casual workers in Australia largely tells a 'life-cycle' story of employment and career progression. In August 2017 (the latest available data), 18.5% of Australia's casual workers were aged 15-19 years, and a further 19.8% were aged 20-24 years. 18.4% of casual workers (of all ages) were a dependent student within a family household, and a further 13.8% were a non-dependent child within a family household.

Of the 623,000 young people aged 15-19 years with some paid employment in August 2017, 75% were employed on a casual basis. Of the 1.2 million people aged 20-24 years who were working in August 2017, 42% were employed on a casual basis. For workers aged 25 to 60 years, the proportion of workers who are in casual work drops dramatically (about 13% for those aged 45-59 in August 2017).

### Data

ABS, *Characteristics of Employment*, various years.

ABS, *Forms of Employment*, various years.

ABS, *Labour force Australia, quarterly detail*, Feb 2018.

ABS, *Labour force Australia*, April 2018.