

**From:** Committees  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 20 June 2017 4:30 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Submission to ACT Insecure Work Inquiry

[UNCLASSIFIED] ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
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**From:** Charles Campbell Macknight [REDACTED] UTH'D  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 20 June 2017 4:08 PM  
**To:** Committees  
**Subject:** Submission to ACT Insecure Work Inquiry

Attn: Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs

This is a submission into the Inquiry into the extent, nature and consequence of insecure work in the ACT, via the submission tool provided by UnionsACT. I have agreed to provide the following:

**Submission by:** Charles Campbell Macknight, [REDACTED]

I was directly employed as a casual more than three years ago.

I am a retired senior academic who for most of my career has enjoyed 'tenure'. Forty years ago, however, I observed the ANU moving towards more short-term and casualised academic employment. Though it did not affect me directly, I was motivated to involve myself in Union affairs where it was possible to mitigate the situation slightly. Since then the employment policies of all Australian universities — and I have since worked elsewhere than the ANU — have become ever more punitive, especially towards junior staff. Universities enjoy prestige and academics are cursed with a commitment to research and to the welfare of their students, so universities can get away with being unscrupulous employers.

The most egregious practice is fixed-term contracts to allow 'churn'. There may be a place for some fixed-term contracts to complete specific research tasks or even to fill in for another staff member who is, for some good reason, absent for a particular period. All too often, however, there is no particular reason for the fixed term, but the arrangement allows a new appointment again at a base level. The previous appointee is effectively disqualified and forced out of work.

Another practice is the casualisation of teaching staff, where tutors and lecturers are paid on hours worked only. Again, there is a place for this on a very restricted basis. What is now scandalous is the extent of the practice which affects not only the casual employees, who invariably spend much longer on tasks than they are paid for, but also the standard of the education delivered. Despite the attempts of administrators over the years, there is, in fact, no means of measuring the quality of teaching, but what does help is experience, and even a bit of training and encouragement. Typically, the casual employees are younger and do not have, or do not yet have, any specific training in teaching.

I recommend that the inquiry request a submission — if they have not already received one — from the National Tertiary Education Union on these matters. Tertiary education is a major industry in the ACT and all is not well in the employment policies of the institutions.

I have answered the specific questions in this survey not from my own perspective as a tenured academic, but from the situation of untenured junior staff or casuals.

I experienced excessive workloads to tight deadlines.

I experienced worry about the possibility of continuing employment and the stress that placed on my family..

If I were the Government, I would encourage the local universities to offer as much continuing, 'tenured' employment as possible for the sake of the community..

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