

Australian Services Union Local Government & Energy Delegates Conference 2020

“COVID AND BEYOND - Well Paid, Secure & Safe Jobs”

Common Objections to why Secure Work is important and Possible Responses

Objection - It doesn't affect me, I'm a permanent employee

Response - Being part of the union is about supporting workers' rights, not just about your own. Labour hire workers are not covered under agreements and casual workers are often of the belief that unions can't help them, leading to a large group of these workers not being part of the union. This undermines our bargaining power. Think of how much more we could achieve if we were all members? The union is only as strong as its members. If your employer contracts out service after service, we lose our power and we would have to fight hard to keep any of the conditions the union has achieved.

Objection – Some people like being casual/labour hire, it provides flexibility

Response – A casual job may suit some workers. But the idea that the majority of casual and labour hire arrangements provide 'flexibility' for people is inherently false. So many people under these terms want more hours, and a secure job they can rely on. It's really tough on many working families who have less certain incomes, rising household costs unable to plan for the future. How would you feel?

Objection – Casuals get loading so what's the problem?

Response – Casual workers are not being paid more, yet they are losing basic entitlements. Even with the casual loading it does not fully compensate the employee for all the foregone benefits. We are in the middle of a global pandemic. Workers need sick leave so they will stay home when they get sick. The casual loading won't compensate for the lost pay if they don't work. Unlike permanent workers, casual workers have no guaranteed hours so they could work only a few hours in a week. How would anyone eat off that?

