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Joint ECE-Eurostat-ILO Seminar  
on Measurement of the Quality of Employment  
(Geneva, 3-5 May 2000)

Topic 1

**MEASURING THE DIVERSITY OF EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS  
IN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET**

Supporting paper submitted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Summary**

1. In recent decades, major changes have occurred in the Australian labour market. There has been strong growth in casual employment, temporary work and people working on fixed term contracts; also increasing numbers of people are now working flexible or irregular hours; and new more complex employment relationships such as employment through agencies or labour hire firms are emerging. These changes have coincided with labour market changes such as growth in the service industries, an increasing female labour force participation rate, a higher rate of unemployment, and changes in technology.

2. The purpose of this paper is to describe some of the issues and statistical developments related to these changing employment arrangements in the Australian labour market.

3. The paper commences with a brief description of some of these new employment arrangements and highlights the issues that labour market analysts want addressed. Within this context, the limitations of the traditional labour market measures used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics are then discussed. Two new surveys, the *Forms of Employment Survey* and the *Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation*, aimed at better distinguishing between the wide range of employment arrangements that now exist are then introduced. Discussion of these surveys focusses on the usefulness of the data items that they collect; and the development of a new set of categories to better identify key groups of workers.

4. Throughout the paper, current and emerging issues such as the definition of a casual worker, the usefulness of the 'self-identified' casual measure, the concept of 'non-standard' and 'precarious employment' and the impact of changes in the wage determination system are discussed.