

Workers are actually feeling less insecure in their jobs

Written by The Conversation

Despite many commentators, even the [Reserve Bank governor, Philip Lowe](#), speculating on how Australians are feeling more insecure in their jobs, the data actually show the opposite.

[Analysis of a new Australian Bureau of Statistics measure of workers' perceptions of job insecurity](#) confirms what the other data sources have shown: workers aren't feeling more insecure. In fact, over the past 15 years there has been a slight fall in workers' [perceptions of job insecurity](#)

This ABS measure is based on a question to people who are employed on whether they expect to be with their current employer or business in the next 12 months.

The ABS measure shows that the proportion of women who expect not to be in the same job in 12 months decreased fairly steadily between 2001 and 2017 – from 11.2 to 9.5%. For men the proportion has been relatively stable at about 9%.

The people answering this survey question would have been considering whether they'd leave their job – either by being fired or by choosing to leave. So it's possible that an increase in people who think they'd be fired might be offset by a fall in the number of people actually thinking of leaving their jobs.

To get some perspective on this, we can look at the data on the proportions of workers who expect to lose their jobs due to business closure or downsizing, or to a contract for seasonal or temporary work finishing. For this group of workers, the level of expected job loss today is the same as in the early 2000s. It was 2% in 2001-02 and has hardly changed at 1.8% in 2016-17.

ABS data also allow perceptions of job security to be broken down according to whether a worker is part-time or full-time.

Part-time workers are much more likely to believe they will not be with their current employer in

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12 months than full-time workers. But, since 2001, the proportion of full-time workers who believe they will not be with their current employer has been stable at about 7.5%; and the rate for part-time workers has decreased from 15.5 to 12.6%.

It's important to note that workers' beliefs about their job security are not misguided. They are reflecting the reality of the labour market in Australia.

ABS data on the actual length of time that workers spend in their jobs show that the proportion of persons who have been in their jobs for 10 years or more has increased steadily since the early 1980s. At the same time the proportion of people in their jobs for less than 12 months has decreased. On average, workers are spending longer in their jobs today than in previous decades.

Jeff Borland receives funding from the Australian Research Council.

Read more <http://theconversation.com/workers-are-actually-feeling-less-insecure-in-their-jobs-81836>