

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## Catholic Religious Australia Supports the Fair Work Legislation (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) has supported the government's proposed *Fair Work Legislation (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023* (the Bill) in a submission supporting better protections for workers in precarious employment arrangements, where they may be exploited.

In the submission, CRA endorsed the Bill's changed definition of 'casual,' which places primacy on the reality of employment over time, allowing a worker to apply to their employer to become permanent after six months if work arrangements have changed.

This would reverse a previous definition set by the Morrison government whereby the contractual "casual" title when employed remains in place for the duration of employment. CRA had highlighted concerns with this definition at the time, as it denies the shifting dynamics of employment relationships, especially in relation to casuals.

"The increasing casualisation of the Australian workforce can leave many Australians in an unstable and precarious financial position, without access to the benefits of permanent employment," said CRA President Peter Jones OSA.

CRA also applauded the Bill's provision to provide the Fair Work Commission the power to set Minimum Standards Orders for gig workers employed via digital platforms, on matters such as payment terms, deductions and working time.

"Many CRA members are employers with staff members working in the social and community services sector, which is increasingly interacting with digital platforms to secure workers, many of whom fall outside current labour laws. Our members would support the Bill's provisions to enable minimum standards to be set in place for their workers," said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

"While this is a positive step, the Bill does not give the Fair Work Commission the power to implement a full suite of minimum standards, with overtime rates, rostering arrangements, and the ability to turn a platform worker into an employee, outside their remit," she added.

"We encourage the government to consider further measures to protect the gig economy from becoming an entrenched underclass of "employee-like" workers, with limited security and rights," concluded Fr Jones.

Read CRA's submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment (the Committee) inquiry into the *Fair Work Legislation (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023* (the Bill) [here](#).

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