



Fair Work
Commission

Labour mobility of award-reliant employees

Justin Strong and Jamie van Netten
Fair Work Commission

February 2026
Research Report 1/2026



Fair Work
Commission

Labour mobility of award-reliant employees

ISBN 978-1-7636196-3-0

© Commonwealth of Australia 2026

This work is copyright. You may download, display, print and reproduce this material in unaltered form only for your personal, non-commercial use or use within your organisation, or for any other use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968. Content from this document must be attributed as '© Commonwealth of Australia (Fair Work Commission) 2026'. All other rights are reserved. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to enquiries@fwc.gov.au. To the extent that copyright subsists in a third party, permission will be required from the third party to reuse the material.



Fair Work
Commission

Research undertaken or commissioned by the Fair Work Commission for the Annual Wage Review 2026 is pursuant to the research program set by the Fair Work Commission's President. The consultation process for the research program is available on the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Review 2026 web page.

A draft of this report was presented for comment to the Minimum Wages Research Group (MWRG) prior to finalisation. The MWRG comprises a Chair from the Fair Work Commission, and representatives nominated by:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI);
- Australian Industry Group (Ai Group);
- Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS);
- Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU);
- Australian Government; and
- State and territory governments.

The authors would like to thank the MWRG for its comments.

The authors would also like to thank Professor Robert Breunig from the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University as well as Samantha Farmakis-Gamboni and David Rozenbes from the Fair Work Commission for their comments on the paper prior to finalisation.

The contents of this report remain the responsibility of the authors and the research has been conducted without the involvement of members of the Fair Work Commission.

An appropriate reference for this report is:

Strong J & van Netten J (2026), *Labour mobility of award-reliant employees*, Fair Work Commission Research Report 1/2026, February.

This report uses unit record data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA) conducted by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS). The findings and views reported in this paper, however, are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Australian Government, DSS, or any of DSS' contractors or partners. DOI: 10.26193/NBTNMV



Executive Summary

The minimum wages and modern awards objective under the *Fair Work Act 2009* states that the Fair Work Commission must take into account ‘promoting social inclusion through increased workforce participation’, while the modern awards objective must also take into account ‘the need to improve access to secure work across the economy’. This paper investigates the labour mobility of self-reported award-reliant employees compared with those on other methods of setting pay. The analysis uses data from the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey to examine rates of job switching along with an analysis of broader labour market transitions. It also considers the rates of job switching by individual and job characteristics, the outcomes of job switching, and award reliance across a 10-year period.

Data and methodology

The HILDA survey is the only data source that allows for linking an employee’s method of setting pay with a measure of whether they switched jobs in the last year, along with various individual and job characteristics. The HILDA Survey also follows the same individuals over time, making longitudinal analysis possible. We examine job switching between 2008 and 2023 as the variable used to indicate an employee’s method of setting pay was first included in the survey in 2008.

Job switching refers to when an employee changes from one job to another. Job switching is defined in this report as when an employee reports changing employers between one year (period t) and the next (period $t+1$). An employee’s method of setting pay is determined at period t , and this is also the case for most characteristics analysed. The analysis also examines outcomes of job switching, in which case, we observe a number of additional variables at period $t+1$, such as whether employees change occupations.

Key findings

The results show that the job switching rate of award-reliant employees (21.7 per cent) is higher than employees on collective agreements (9.6 per cent) and those on individual arrangements (17.0 per cent). In line with this, award-reliant employees also had higher rates of job searching and lower



average job tenures. The reasons that award-reliant employees provided for leaving their previous job is consistent with responses from other employees, with the most common being 'to obtain a better job/just wanted a change/to start a new business'.

For broader labour market transitions, 11.6 per cent of award-reliant employees on average leave employment each year (either moving to unemployment or exiting the labour force). This is about 1.7 times higher than those on individual arrangements, and 2.2 times higher than those on collective agreements.

Job switching by individual characteristics

Consistent with previous Australian research, our analysis found that job switching rates are highest for younger employees and decline with age. We also found that this trend holds across all methods of setting pay.

Male award-reliant employees were found to have higher job switching rates than females. This was the case across all age groups except for 15–24 year olds, where females had a higher job switching rate than males. Similar trends were observed for males and females on collective agreements, however those on individual arrangements reported slightly different trends, with females switching jobs at a higher rate than males, on average. This was mainly due to those aged below 45 years.

The analysis shows that award-reliant employees were more likely to be dependent students and non-dependent children, and that these two groups were among the top three highest job switching rates across all household relationship types. This trend was consistent across all methods of setting pay.

Job switching by job characteristics

For all methods of setting pay, job switching rates were higher among casual employees than both permanent full-time and permanent part-time employees. For permanent full-time employees, job switching rates were higher for females, while males reported higher job switching rates among permanent part-time and casual employees. These trends were consistent across all methods of setting pay.



The three occupations with the highest rate of award reliance (Sales workers, Labourers and Community and personal service workers) were among the four occupations with the highest rates of job switching for each method of setting pay.

Award-reliant employees reported higher job switching rates than other methods of setting pay in seven of the nine most award-reliant industries. The three industries with the highest rates of job switching among award-reliant employees were Accommodation and food services, Administrative and support services, and Construction. These industries also reported the highest rates of job switching for those on individual arrangements and collective agreements, though only employees in Accommodation and food services reported similar job switching rates to award-reliant employees.

Outcomes of job switching

The median growth rate in hourly earnings was almost twice as high for award-reliant employees who switched jobs than for those who did not, with a similar pattern observed for those on other methods of setting pay. More than two in three award-reliant employees who switched jobs also changed occupation, compared with less than one in 10 who did not switch. A similar trend was observed for those on other methods of setting pay.

Female award-reliant employees who switched jobs were found to have a greater increase in the median growth rate in hourly earnings than those who did not switch jobs, compared with their male counterparts.

Analysis of occupational distributions both before and after switching jobs, for employees who also changed occupation, revealed that the largest movements for award-reliant employees were out of Sales workers and Labourers.

About half of award-reliant employees who switched jobs recorded an improvement in job satisfaction, compared with less than three in 10 who did not, with comparable results for those on other methods of setting pay.

Award-reliant employees who switched jobs were less likely to move house for the new job than those on collective agreements but at the same rate as those on individual arrangements. When they did move, award-reliant employees tended to move the smallest distance of all methods of setting pay.



Employees who are not students

Younger people and dependent students had the highest rates of job switching. Removing students from the sample reduced the rate of job switching across all methods of setting pay. However, award-reliant employees still recorded the highest rate at more than double that of employees on collective agreements. Removing students reduced the rates of job switching for females more than for males, a trend observed across all methods of setting pay. It also reduced the median growth rate in hourly earnings for award-reliant employees, so that it was below that of employees on individual arrangements who switched jobs.

Award reliance across a 10-year period

In the final chapter, individuals were followed over a 10-year period (2014–2023) to better understand the number of years employees were receiving an award rate of pay. Using a pooled sample of individuals over the period who were employees for at least five years, these individuals were classified into five categories according to the proportion of the years they were paid an award rate. The results indicated that over half of individuals who were employees for at least five years during the period did not report being paid an award rate for any year, and approximately 5.6 per cent were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee.

Individuals who were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee were more than twice as likely to be female than male, were more likely to be older and represented the largest share of Community and personal service workers and Labourers. They were also more likely to be in Health care and social assistance and they recorded the second-lowest rate of job switching, exceeded only by employees who were not paid an award rate during the 10 years.



Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	15
2. Literature review	18
2.1 Job mobility as a driver of real wage growth and productivity	18
2.2 Factors contributing to job mobility.....	19
2.3 Occupation and industry mobility	20
2.4 Job mobility of low-income workers.....	22
3. Data and definitions	24
3.1 The sample	24
3.1.1 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey.....	24
3.1.2 Employee sample.....	24
3.2 Definitions	26
3.3 Summary statistics of award-reliant employees.....	29
4. Job mobility	30
4.1 Job switching and broader labour market transitions	30
4.1.1 Why do employees switch jobs?.....	33
4.1.2 Why do employees transition to out of employment?	34
4.1.3 Job searching.....	35
4.2 Job tenure.....	36



5. Job mobility by individual and job characteristics	38
5.1 Individual characteristics	38
5.1.1 Age	38
5.1.2 Sex.....	40
5.1.3 Education	42
5.1.4 Relationship in household.....	42
5.2 Job characteristics	43
5.2.1 Employment type	43
5.2.2 Hours worked	44
5.2.3 Occupation	45
5.2.4 Industry	47
6. Employment outcomes from job switching	50
6.1 Outcomes from job switching for all employees	50
6.2 Outcomes from job switching for males and females	52
6.3 Other outcomes from job switching for all employees	54
6.3.1 Switching both jobs and occupation	54
6.3.2 Job satisfaction	55
6.3.3 Moving house.....	56
6.4 Job security	57
7. Employees who are not students.....	59
7.1 Sample of non-student employees.....	59
7.2 Job mobility of employees who are not students	59



8. Award reliance across a 10-year period 69

 8.1 Sample 69

 8.2 Number of years paid an award rate 70

9. Conclusion 77

Reference list 79

Appendix A 81

Appendix B 85

Appendix C 90

List of tables

Table 1: How pay is currently set for employees in the sample (all employee sample)	25
Table 2: How pay is currently set for employees in the sample for job switching analysis (job switching sample)	26
Table 3: Labour market transitions and job switching rates by method of setting pay	31
Table 4: Main reason stopped working in previous job, employees who switched jobs	34
Table 5: Main reason stopped working for those who transitioned from employee to either 'unemployed' or 'not in the labour force'	35
Table 6: Job searching, by those who switched jobs and method of setting pay	36
Table 7: Job tenure by method of setting pay	37
Table 8: Job switching rates, by method of setting pay and age group	39
Table 9: Job switching rates, by method of setting pay and sex	40
Table 10: Job switching rate, by method of setting pay and highest education level attained	42
Table 11: Job switching rate, by method of setting pay and relationship in household	43
Table 12: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and employment type	44
Table 13: Rates of job switching by employment type and sex for award-reliant employees and all those on other methods of setting pay	44
Table 14: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and the number of hours usually worked per week in main job	45
Table 15: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and occupation	46
Table 16: Rates of job switching by sex and occupation for award-reliant employees and other employees	47
Table 17: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and industry	48
Table 18: Rates of job switching by sex and industry for award-reliant employees and other employees	49



Table 19: Changes in employment characteristics by method of setting pay and job switching	52
Table 20: Changes in employment characteristics by sex for award-reliant employees and employees on other methods of setting pay	53
Table 21: Proportion of employees across occupations, before and after job switch, by method of setting pay, of those who switched jobs and changed occupations	55
Table 22: Changes in job satisfaction, by method of setting pay and job switching	56
Table 23: Employees who switched jobs and moved house for the new job	56
Table 24: Employment outcomes for award-reliant employees employed on a casual basis	58
Table 25: Proportion of employees who reported to be students	59
Table 26: Job switching rates and labour market transitions by method of setting pay, non-students	60
Table 27: Job tenure by method of setting pay, non-students	60
Table 28: Job switching rates by method of setting pay and selected individual characteristics, non-students	61
Table 29: Job switching rates by method of setting pay and occupation, non-students	62
Table 30: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay, occupation and sex, non-students	63
Table 31: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and industry, non-students	64
Table 32: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay, industry and sex, non-students	65
Table 33: Changes in employment characteristics by method of setting pay and job switching, non-students	66
Table 34: Changes in employment characteristics by method of setting pay, job switching and sex, non-students	67
Table 35: Proportions of occupation by method of setting pay of those who switched jobs and changed occupations, non-students	68
Table 36: Individual characteristics of employees by proportion of years spent as award-reliant, 2014–2023	72
Table 37: Job switching rates of employees by proportion of years paid an award rate, by sex, 2014–2023	73



Table 38: Occupations of employees by proportion of years paid an award rate, 2014–2023	74
Table 39: Industries of employees by proportion of years spent paid an award rate, 2014–2023	75
Table A1: Individual characteristics of award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023	81
Table A2: Employment type of award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023	82
Table A3: Occupation of award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023	83
Table A4: Industry of main job for award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023	83
Table A5: Hours usually worked per week in main job by age cohort, 2008–2023	84
Table B1: Labour market transitions of males and females by method of setting pay	85
Table B2: Main reason stopped working in previous job for employees who switched jobs by sex	86
Table B3: Main reason stopped working for those who transitioned from employee to either 'Unemployed' or 'Not in the labour force' by sex	87
Table B4: Job switching rates by method of setting pay and industry	88
Table B5: Job switching rates by method of setting pay, sex and industry	89

List of charts

Chart 1: Job switching rate by method of setting pay, 2009–2023	32
Chart 2: Job switching rates by method of setting pay, by gross domestic product (GDP) growth	33
Chart 3: Job switching rates, by method of setting pay and age	40
Chart 4: Job switching rates, by sex, age group and method of setting pay	41
Chart 5: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years, 2014–2023	71
Chart A1: Proportion of employees by method of setting pay and age	82
Chart C1: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years, 2014–2023, by sex	90
Chart C2: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years, 2014–2023, by age group	91
Chart C3: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years and not students, 2014–2023	91
Chart C4: Number of years paid an award rate as proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years and not students, 2014–2023, by sex	92
Chart C5: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years and not students, 2014–2023, by age group	93

1. Introduction

This paper presents an analysis of labour mobility among employees who self-report having their pay set by an award. This is done by investigating the rates at which these employees switch jobs and their outcomes compared with employees who report being paid by either a collective agreement or an individual arrangement. The paper is a descriptive analysis and does not claim any causal inferences from the results. The terms job switching and job mobility are used interchangeably throughout this report.

Past research has indicated that higher rates of job switching are associated with higher rates of wage growth, raising wages for both those who switch jobs and those who do not. Therefore, it is important to understand how the rate of job switching among award-reliant employees compares to employees on other methods of setting pay and if those who switch jobs have better outcomes.

This research is motivated by the minimum wages and modern awards objective under the *Fair Work Act 2009* that states the Fair Work Commission (Commission) must take into account ‘promoting social inclusion through increased workforce participation’ under the minimum wages objective¹ and ‘the need to improve access to secure work across the economy’ under the modern awards objective.²

The data analysed are taken from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey. The HILDA survey was selected as it captures whether employees change jobs each year and their method of setting pay, along with the many other individual and job characteristics. The analysis is conducted using a pooled sample of employees between 2008 and 2023. These years were selected as the method of setting pay variable commenced in 2008.

Not all job switches occur for the same reason. An employee may switch jobs because they have found an opportunity that offers better earnings or working conditions, or one that suits their preferred working hours. However, they may also switch jobs due to being laid off or because their employer is going out of business.

¹ Sections 284(1)(b) and 134(1)(c), *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

² Section 134(1)(aa), *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).



Overall, the results indicate that, between 2008 and 2023, the rate of job switching is highest for award-reliant employees at more than twice that of employees on collective agreements. The rates at which award-reliant employees transition from employment to non-employment is also higher than for other methods of setting pay. However, the reasons award-reliant employees provide for leaving their previous job is consistent with other employees—the most common being ‘To obtain a better job/Just wanted a change/To start a new business’. In line with a higher job switching rate, award-reliant employees also had higher rates of job searching and lower average job tenures.

The analysis finds that younger employees tend to switch jobs at a higher rate and award-reliant employees are more likely to be younger than those on other methods of setting pay. Similarly, students and non-dependent children also tend to have higher rates of job switching.

Several job characteristics also show some association with higher rates of job switching, such as casual employment, working as Sales workers and Labourers, and working in Accommodation and food services. These job characteristics also tended to be associated with higher rates of award reliance.

Award-reliant employees who switch jobs are more likely to change occupation, transition from full-time to part-time employment, and receive a higher increase in hourly earnings, when compared with both award-reliant employees who do not switch jobs and employees on other methods of setting pay who switch jobs.

Given job mobility tends to be higher for younger employees, and award-reliant employees are on average younger than all employees, we perform a similar analysis after removing students—a young cohort of employees. This reduced the job switching rate for award-reliant employees, though they still maintain the highest rates when compared with those on other methods of setting pay. Removing students also reduced the median growth in hourly earnings, both for those who switched jobs and those who did not.

Finally, we examined the amount of time employees report being paid an award rate over a 10-year period between 2014 and 2023. We find that just under half of all employees were paid an award rate for some of the 10-year period, while 5.6 per cent were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee.

We observe that those who were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee were more than twice as likely to be female than male and were more likely to be older than other employees who also reported some years paid an award rate. They also had the highest



proportion of employees who worked as Community and personal service workers and Labourers, and the highest proportion of employees in Health care and social assistance.

The paper proceeds as follows: Chapter 2 provides a literature review that explores previous findings on the nature of job mobility, including the possible drivers and the extent to which it is associated with improvements in wages. Chapter 3 provides details of the sample used. Chapter 4 then examines the differing rates of job switching and broader labour market transitions among employees on different methods of setting pay, including the reasons employees left their last job. Chapter 5 examines job mobility by individual and job characteristics to more thoroughly explore any differences in the job switching rates between award-reliant employees and other employees. Chapter 6 examines the outcomes of job switching. Chapter 7 removes students from the sample to assess if they may be driving any differences in job switching rates. Chapter 8 follows individuals over a 10-year period to better understand how long they are paid award rates. Chapter 9 provides a conclusion.

2. Literature review

Job mobility has declined in Australia, falling from 11.7 per cent in 2000 to 7.7 per cent in 2025 (ABS, 2025). This, in part, has motivated new research into labour mobility in recent years, though to the best of our knowledge the labour mobility of award-reliant employees has not yet been separately analysed in any Australian research. The closest paper identified to this report is Wilkins and Zilio (2020), which focused on the transition rates of low-paid award-reliant employees to higher-paid employment and non-employment and did not compare across methods of setting pay.

This chapter summarises Australian research on labour mobility and relevant international research.

2.1 Job mobility as a driver of real wage growth and productivity

Although this paper focuses on job mobility at the individual level, much of the research into job mobility over recent years has been at a macroeconomic level, focusing on its importance in driving productivity and real wages growth.

Empirical research has found that local labour markets with higher rates of job switching correlate with faster wage growth. For example, Deutscher (2019), using an Australian employer-employee dataset, found that an increase of one percentage point in the rate at which workers switch jobs is associated with an increase of half a percentage point in the growth in average wages, after controlling for cyclical factors. He also observed that job switching appears to be an important mechanism for individuals climbing the job ladder, by switching to jobs that reward the skills they have developed. Likewise, a review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) into the decline in labour mobility in the United States (US) found research to indicate that job switching tends to be the main mechanism that assists workers to progress in their careers and increase their earnings (Azzopardi et al. 2020).

Research has also found that job switching allows workers to move from less-productive to more-productive firms, boosting aggregate productivity and incomes. For example, an analysis by Andrews and Hansell (2019) using firm-level microdata of Australian businesses suggests that around one quarter of the slowdown in average annual aggregate labour productivity growth between 2003 and 2016 was a result of a slowdown in workers relocating from less to more productive firms. The authors

stated that the ‘decline in the efficiency of labour reallocation is likely to carry material consequences for aggregate labour productivity performance’ (Andrews and Hansell, 2019: 15).

2.2 Factors contributing to job mobility

A range of factors may contribute to job mobility, including macroeconomic conditions, demographic characteristics, educational attainment and location.

Research has found that job mobility is typically pro-cyclical, rising during economic booms and falling during recessions. In Australia, Deutscher (2019) identified that job switching rose in the 2000s, when economic growth was strong, falling during the global financial crisis, before recovering somewhat thereafter. Likewise, a report by the OECD into labour market transitions within the US and Europe found that job switching is pro-cyclical, declining during downturns and rising as economic conditions recover (Causa, Luu and Abendschein, 2021). Further, Yuen and Cumming (2021) analysed how employees moved between labour market states during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. They found that as the economy recovered from the middle of 2020, more than half of workers returning to work had changed industries or occupations.

Research by the OECD found that job switching across different levels of educational attainment do not differ notably in developed economies. However, they did find that hirings from, and separations to, non-employment are on average around two times higher among the low-educated than among the high-educated (Causa, Luu and Abendschein, 2021), with the OECD reporting similar findings for Australia (Sila, 2019).

The Productivity Commission found that those with university degrees and post-graduate degrees are 35 to 60 per cent more likely to change occupation than those with only a Year 12 education, even when remaining with the same employer.³ It was suggested that this may be evidence that higher qualifications represented a higher degree of generalist, transferrable human capital (Productivity Commission, 2024).

Local labour markets may also contribute to job mobility, as areas with a lower concentration of firms provide fewer employment options for workers to move jobs. For example, Hambur (2023) found that more concentrated local labour markets (i.e. when employment is concentrated among fewer firms)

³ Changing occupation does not necessarily mean changing employer: “Across 2015–2023, between 58–64 per cent of occupation changes at the 1-digit level also involve a change of employer” (Productivity Commission, 2024: 10).



had lower wages growth and that '[t]here is likely to be less job switching when there are fewer employers to switch between' (Hambur, 2023: 1). The study found that more remote areas typically had more concentrated labour markets.

Job switching rates are also found to decline with age, for both men and women. Deutscher (2019) found that job switching rates for Australian workers was highest for those in their late teens and early 20s, at over 20 per cent, falling to below 15 per cent by age 40, before dropping to below 5 per cent for those in their late 60s. The study also found that men are slightly more likely than women to switch jobs in Australia. However, gender differences in job switching rates were not found to be constant throughout a person's working life, with women switching at slightly higher rates than men during their 20s, before falling to be below the job switching rate of men during their 30s. This gap then closes with age, with job switching rates only slightly higher for men than women past age 40 (Deutscher, 2019).

Analysis by the OECD on labour market institutions within the US and Europe referred to young people as 'the engine of labour market dynamism', as they found that young people exhibit much higher levels of hirings from non-employment and job switching when compared with prime-aged workers (those aged 25–54 years) (Causa, Luu and Abendschein, 2021).

Job mobility has also been identified as a mechanism through which employees can resolve mismatches between their actual and desired working hours. For example, research by Breunig, Gong and Leslie (2015) found that changing employers allows workers who have a mismatch in their working hours to resolve this mismatch at a rate that is 10–20 percentage points higher than those who don't change employers. The authors also noted that workers who were working more hours than desired was both a more common and more persistent mismatch than workers who were working less hours than desired.

2.3 Occupation and industry mobility

The ability of workers to move between occupations and industries expands the set of employment opportunities available to workers and increases their ability to obtain higher wages. If workers are able to move more easily between different occupations and industries, then the impact of employment concentration on wages and other employment outcomes (e.g. hours worked, job satisfaction etc.) may be smaller. For example, Hambur (2023), when analysing the role of labour market concentration in lowering wages growth before the COVID-19 pandemic, found some



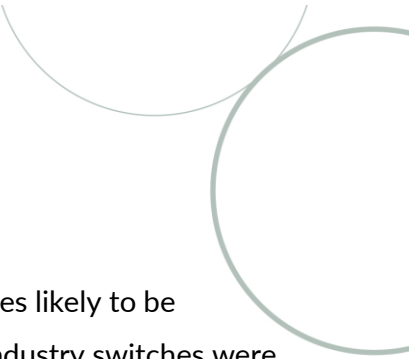
evidence that decreasing occupational and industry mobility between 2005 and 2016 may have reduced wages growth over the same period (Hambur, 2023).

In addition, the Productivity Commission (2024), using data from the Participation, Job Search and Mobility module of the Longitudinal Labour Force Survey, found that about 70 per cent of occupation transitions and 80 per cent of industry transitions resulted in ‘major changes’ over the period 2015 to 2023. A major change was defined as job switches between occupation major groups and job switches between industry divisions. The authors concluded that this may suggest that ‘labour mobility in Australia is associated with a relatively drastic career change, not adjacent professional moves’ (Productivity Commission, 2024: 8). They found that occupational changes were not primarily driven by changes into management roles and that almost half of all large changes in an occupation were accompanied by a large change in industry.

The Productivity Commission research also uncovered that both occupation and industry mobility increased slightly between 2015 and 2023, noting that this ‘likely reflects significant strengthening of the labour market in 2022 and 2023’ (Productivity Commission, 2024: 10). However, occupational mobility was also found to differ across industries and occupations. For instance, healthcare, education, financial services, and agriculture had the lowest rates of occupational mobility, while hospitality, retail, arts and recreation, and administrative services had the highest rates. Workers in occupations which typically required higher skills and greater investments into specific human capital, such as Managers, Professionals, and Technicians and trades workers, were the least likely to move to other occupations. The inverse was true for the lower-skilled occupations such as Sales workers and Labourers. The authors concluded that while this ‘conflicts with the finding that people with higher levels of education are more likely to change occupation. It could be that many people with higher levels of education move up the jobs ladder until they attain a higher-skill occupation’ (Productivity Commission, 2024: 15).

Results from a regression analysis revealed that younger cohorts, immigrants, individuals residing in particular geographic locations,⁴ those with higher levels of education, and those who switched from part-time to full-time hours and vice versa were more likely to switch occupation and industry (Productivity Commission, 2024). The analysis was repeated excluding those under 26 years who had

⁴ As noted by the authors, ‘mobility was not necessarily higher or lower in more populous jurisdictions’ (Productivity Commission, 2024: 12).



completed a qualification in the last two years and were employed in job categories likely to be transitory (e.g. hospitality), to assess the degree to which major occupation and industry switches were driven by students moving into jobs within their field of study. They found that removing this cohort produced similar results (Productivity Commission, 2024:14).

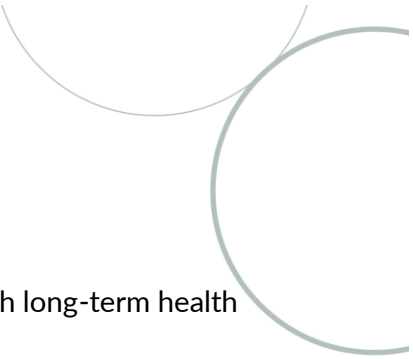
Another study by Hathorne and Breunig (2022) analysed occupational mobility from two different data sources, the HILDA survey and the Australian Longitudinal Information Files (ALife), an Australian administrative tax dataset. They found a strong downward trend in occupational mobility over time and that while men change their occupation more frequently than women according to the HILDA survey, this was not found using ALife. Occupational mobility was found to decline with age for both genders, with the decline being more pronounced for women than for men. Additionally, occupational mobility was found to decline across income quintiles for both men and women, with lower rates of occupational change among higher-income earners.

The study also identified 'substantial' differences in occupational mobility. Some workers in certain occupations (e.g. managers) changed occupations often, while others, including professionals and community and personal service workers, reported relatively lower change. The authors also found that women tend to report higher rates of occupational change when working in typically male-dominated occupations, with a similar pattern being present for men employed in typically female-dominated occupations.

Focusing on industry mobility, research into the European OECD countries found that on average, around 70 per cent of job switches occur within the same industry (Causa, Luu and Abendschein, 2021).

2.4 Job mobility of low-income workers

Wilkins and Zillio (2020) analysed the persistence of low-paid award-reliant employment in Australia across 2008–2018. They assessed the transition rates of low-paid award-reliant employees moving to higher-paid employment, finding that persistence in low-paid employment is 'quite high' for award-reliant employees, with 54.8 per cent remaining in low-paid employment one year later. Additionally, they found that the probability of moving to higher-paid employment each year, conditional on the number of years in low-paid employment until that time, decreases with time spent in low-paid employment. They also found that the probability of remaining in low-paid employment was higher for



older employees, low-educated employees, welfare recipients and employees with long-term health conditions that limit their ability to work (Wilkins and Zillio, 2020).

In research commissioned by the United Kingdom's (UK's) Low Pay Commission, Piggott et al. (2023), examined the perceived barriers and risks of job mobility and progression of low-paid workers in the UK. The report indicated that higher-paid workers were more likely to report changing jobs at some point during their working lives, either within the same organisation or by moving to another organisation, compared with low-paid workers. The report detailed multiple factors which made low-paid workers feel that changing jobs was a substantial risk, even though they were often dissatisfied with their pay and opportunities to progress within their current roles. These factors included the possibility of getting a bad manager, reduced job security, and the employer being unreliable. However, the report found that 'the dominant narrative among low-paid workers who have previously moved from one employer to another is that their level of pay improved as a result of doing so' (Piggott et al., 2023: 36).

3. Data and definitions

This chapter presents the data source used in this report, a description of how the main sample of analysis was constructed, and a definitions section for the key concepts used in the analysis.

3.1 The sample

3.1.1 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey

The data analysed are sourced from the HILDA Survey, a nationally representative panel study of individuals and households that began in 2001 that conducts interviews on a yearly basis. At the time our analysis was conducted, there were 23 years or ‘waves’ of data available, corresponding to the years between 2001 and 2023. The HILDA survey was selected as it can capture whether employees change jobs each year, the method by which their pay is set, and a range of individual and job characteristics.

The analysis uses a pooled sample of employees between 2008 and 2023, meaning individuals are observed multiple times throughout the period. These years were selected as the method of setting pay variable was first included in the survey in 2008. Over this period, economic and labour market conditions varied. Some years coincided with economic downturns, such as the global financial crisis (2008–2009), when the unemployment rate increased from 4.0 per cent to nearly 6 per cent, and the COVID-19 lockdown periods (2020–2021), when annual GDP growth fell for the first time in nearly 30 years and the unemployment rate was over 7 per cent. Other years experienced stronger conditions. For instance, annual GDP growth was over 4 per cent in 2012, while in 2022 and 2023, annual GDP growth exceeded 3.5 per cent and the unemployment rate averaged below 4.0 per cent.

3.1.2 Employee sample

The sample used for the analysis is comprised of employees who: (1) report a usual weekly gross wage or salary in their main job greater than zero,⁵ (2) report the usual weekly hours worked in their main

⁵ Not including salary sacrificed.

job as greater than zero, and (3) report the method by which their pay was set. Employees who did not know their method of setting pay are excluded.⁶

The employee sample contains 137,158 employee observations, of which 51 per cent were female. The breakdown by method of setting pay is presented in Table 1. It shows that 19.4 per cent (or 26,604) of employee observations in the pooled sample are employees who are paid an award rate (i.e. award-reliant employees)⁷. Consistent with other Commission publications, the method of setting pay for an 'Individual agreement' will be referred to as an 'Individual arrangement' throughout the report.

Table 1: How pay is currently set for employees in the sample (all employee sample)

Method of setting pay	(No.)	(%)
Collective (enterprise) agreement	53 111	38.7
Individual agreement (or contract)	56 770	41.4
Paid exactly the Award (or APCS) rate	26 604	19.4
Other*	673	0.5
Total	137 158	100.0

Note: Variable *jbm pays*. * Those who report 'Other' are not analysed individually due to the small sample size., however, they are included in analysis of all employees.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

The employment status of employees must be known across two consecutive years to determine whether they switched jobs. They also must provide a response to the question which we use to define job switching (defined more thoroughly in the next section). Therefore, employees who were not employed in consecutive years are excluded for the job switching analysis. Table 2 provides the sample size for this analysis. This sample contains 111,099 employees, 20,318 (18.3 per cent) of which are award reliant.

⁶ The variables are *wscmei*, *jbmhruc* and *jbm pays*.

⁷ For comparison, the EEH survey found that the average proportion of employees that were award-reliant across each release between the May 2008 and May 2023 releases was 19.3 per cent, with award reliance highest in 2023 (23.2 per cent) and lowest in 2010 (15.2 per cent) (ABS, various).

Table 2: How pay is currently set for employees in the sample for job switching analysis (job switching sample)

Method of setting pay	(No.)	(%)
Collective (enterprise) agreement	44 323	39.9
Individual agreement (or contract)	45 965	41.4
Paid exactly the Award (or APCS) rate	20 318	18.3
Other*	493	0.4
Total	111 099	100.0

Note: Variable *jbm Pays*. * Those who report 'Other' are not analysed individually due to the small sample size. They are included in analysis of all employees.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

In Chapter 7, students are removed from the 'all employee sample', while in Chapter 8, a balanced panel is constructed to assess the number of years individuals were paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years they were an employee. The design of these samples is outlined in more detail in the relevant chapters.

3.2 Definitions

This section outlines key variables used throughout this report.

Job switching rate

A 'job switch' is when an employee changes from one job to another. In this report, it is defined as when an employee reports changing employers between one year (period t) and the next (period $t+1$). Specifically, this is determined based on responses to either of the following questions:

- For those with one employer (variable *pjsemp*) – *When we last interviewed you on [the previous interview date], you were employed. Do you still work for the same employer/business?*
- For those with multiple employers (variable *pjmsemp*) – *Now thinking about the employer for the main job that you held on [the previous interview date]. Do you still work for that same employer/business?*

Employees in period t who became an employer, self-employed, or a contributing family member in period $t+1$ are also defined as having switched jobs. Promotions and demotions or other similar movements while working for the same employer are not considered a job switch.

A survey respondent must be employed in both years (periods t and $t+1$) to calculate the job switching rate. Therefore, employees who became unemployed or leave the labour force in the following year

are not included in the job switching rates. Periods of joblessness that occur between interviews or multiple job switches between interviews are not captured in our analysis.

The job switching rate is calculated as the number of employees who change employers between period t and period $t+1$ as a proportion of all employees.

Method of setting pay

Employees are classified as having their pay set by an award, collective agreement or individual arrangement based on self-reporting to a question on how their pay is currently set. They are provided with the following options:

- Collective (enterprise) agreement
- Individual agreement (or contract)
- Combination of collective/enterprise agreement and individual agreement
- Paid exactly the Award rate
- Other

A respondent is considered to be award reliant if they answered '*Paid exactly the Award rate*'.

Employees who answered '*Combination of collective/enterprise agreement and individual agreement*' are classified as being paid by an '*Individual agreement*'. In addition, and consistent with past research, public sector⁸ employees who reported being paid an award rate are reclassified as having their pay set by a collective agreement.⁹ Those who reported 'Other' are not analysed separately due to a small sample size, however, they are included in the analysis of all employees.

⁸ Employees are considered 'public sector' if their employer is a 'Government business enterprise or commercial statutory authority' or 'Other governmental organisation', captured by the variable *jbmmply*.

⁹ See Wilkins and Wooden (2011), Jimenez and Rozenbes (2017), Wilkins and Zilio (2020), van Netten and Lipp (2025). The share of public sector employees in the HILDA survey who report being award reliant is higher than the share among public sector employees as reported in the ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH). This suggests that many public sector employees in the HILDA survey may be incorrectly reporting that they are award reliant. The EEH collects data from employers rather than employees, so is typically considered more reliable.

Identification of an employee's method of setting pay is determined at period t^{10} (based on the variable *jbmpays*). This is also the case for all characteristics listed below, unless specified otherwise.

Occupation

Occupations are measured at the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classifications of Occupation (ANZSCO) major group or 1-digit level. Identification of an employee's occupation in the HILDA survey is determined at period t and is based on responses to the following (free text) question (variable *jbmo61*): *"What kind of work do you do in this job? That is, what is your occupation called and what are the main tasks and duties you undertake in this job? Please describe fully."*

When measuring changes in occupation, changes may occur at more detailed levels than the major group or 1-digit level. Changes in occupation are determined based on responses to the following question (variable *jbcmocc*): *"Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation"*.

Industry

Industries are measured at the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) division or 1-digit level. Identification of an employee's industry is determined at period t and based on responses to the following (free text) question (variable *jbmi61*): *"What main kind of industry, business or service was carried out by your employer at the place at which you last worked? Describe fully (e.g., dairy farming, footwear manufacturing, clothing retail store)."*

Employment type

Employees are categorised into one of three categories: (1) permanent full time—those employed on a permanent basis and are working full-time hours (35 hours or more per week); (2) permanent part time—those employed on a permanent basis and working part-time hours (less than 35 hours a week), and (3) casual—those who do not have access to paid holiday or sick leave. Employment type is measured at period t . Employment type is constructed using the variables *esdtl* and *jbcasab*.

¹⁰ For example, if a respondent reported that their pay was set by an award in 2020, then in 2021 reported that they had changed employers since their last interview, they would contribute to the job switching rate for the group of award-reliant employees.

Student

Students are defined as those who reported they were currently studying for a trade certificate, diploma, degree or other educational qualification either full time or part time, and those who reported still being at school. Students are determined using three variables: *edfts*, *hhrih*, and *edcqttyp*.

3.3 Summary statistics of award-reliant employees

To help inform our analysis, characteristics of award-reliant employees at period *t* are compared with those of all employees within our employee sample (from Table 1). Tables A1 to A4 in Appendix A shows that award-reliant employees are more likely to:

- be female
- be in the youngest age group (15 to 24 years)
- have their highest level of educational attainment below Certificate III & IV
- be dependent students¹¹ and non-dependent children¹²
- be employed on a casual basis, and work fewer hours a week on average
- be employed as Sales workers, Labourers, or Community and personal service workers
- work in Retail trade or Accommodation and food services, and less likely to be employed in Education and training, Public administration and safety, and Professional, scientific and technical services.

The analysis in Chapters 4–7 assesses the proportion of employees who switch jobs from period *t* to period *t+1* (the next period). This is done both overall and for different individual and job characteristics. These employee characteristics are taken at period *t*,¹³ unless specified otherwise.

¹¹ A dependent student is aged 15 to 24 years, studying full-time, not working full-time and lives in a household with their parent (natural, step, foster or adopted). They do not have a partner or child of their own in the household (if they did, they would be classified as a couple or lone parent themselves) (Summerfield et al. 2025:58).

¹² A non-dependent child is someone who is at least 15 years of age living in a household with their parent (natural, step, foster or adopted) who does not fall into the category of a dependent student. They do not have a partner or child of their own in the household (Summerfield et al. 2025:58).

¹³ For example, if a respondent reported that their pay was set by an award in 2020, then in 2021 reported that they had changed employers since their last interview, they would contribute to the job switching rate for the group of award-reliant employees.

4. Job mobility

This chapter compares the job switching rates of award-reliant employees with those on other methods of setting pay across the pooled years from 2008 to 2023. It presents data on job switching rates and transitions from employment to other labour market states by method of setting pay. It also presents data on job switching rates over time and by GDP growth and considers the reasons why employees left their previous job, their rates of job searching, and job tenure across different methods of setting pay.

4.1 Job switching and broader labour market transitions

Table 3 compares the broader labour market transitions and job switching rates for the pooled sample of employees by method of setting pay. The data indicate that while a majority of employees across all methods of setting pay remain employed in the following year, award-reliant employees were more likely to exit employment, with over one in 10 (11.6 per cent) award-reliant employees leaving employment (3.7 per cent to unemployment and 7.9 per cent left the labour force). Compared with employees on other methods of setting pay, award-reliant employees were 1.7 times more likely to leave employment than those on individual arrangements, and 2.2 times more likely than those on collective agreements.

Among those that remained employed, table 3 shows that award-reliant employees were more likely to switch jobs than those on other methods of setting pay. More than one in five (21.7 per cent) award-reliant employees switch jobs over the following year, compared with about one in six (17.0 per cent) employees on individual arrangements and one in 10 (9.6 per cent) employees on collective agreements. The job switching rate for the pooled sample of all employees was 15.2 per cent.

Table B1 in Appendix B compares labour market transitions between males and females. The data show that for all methods of setting pay, males were more likely to remain an employee, become an employer or self-employed, and to move to unemployment, whereas females were more likely to exit the labour force.

Table 3: Labour market transitions and job switching rates by method of setting pay

	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Labour market state in the following year* (t+1)				
Remained employee	86.8	93.9	89.8	90.7
Became an employer/self-employed	1.6	0.9	3.5	2.2
Became unemployed	3.7	1.1	2.1	2.0
Exited the labour force	7.9	4.1	4.6	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Remained employed^ (t+1)				
Switched jobs	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

Note: *Those who reported being a contributing family member in the next year were removed from the sample. ^ Remained employed refers to those who 'remained an employee' and those who 'became an employer/self-employed' in period t+1.

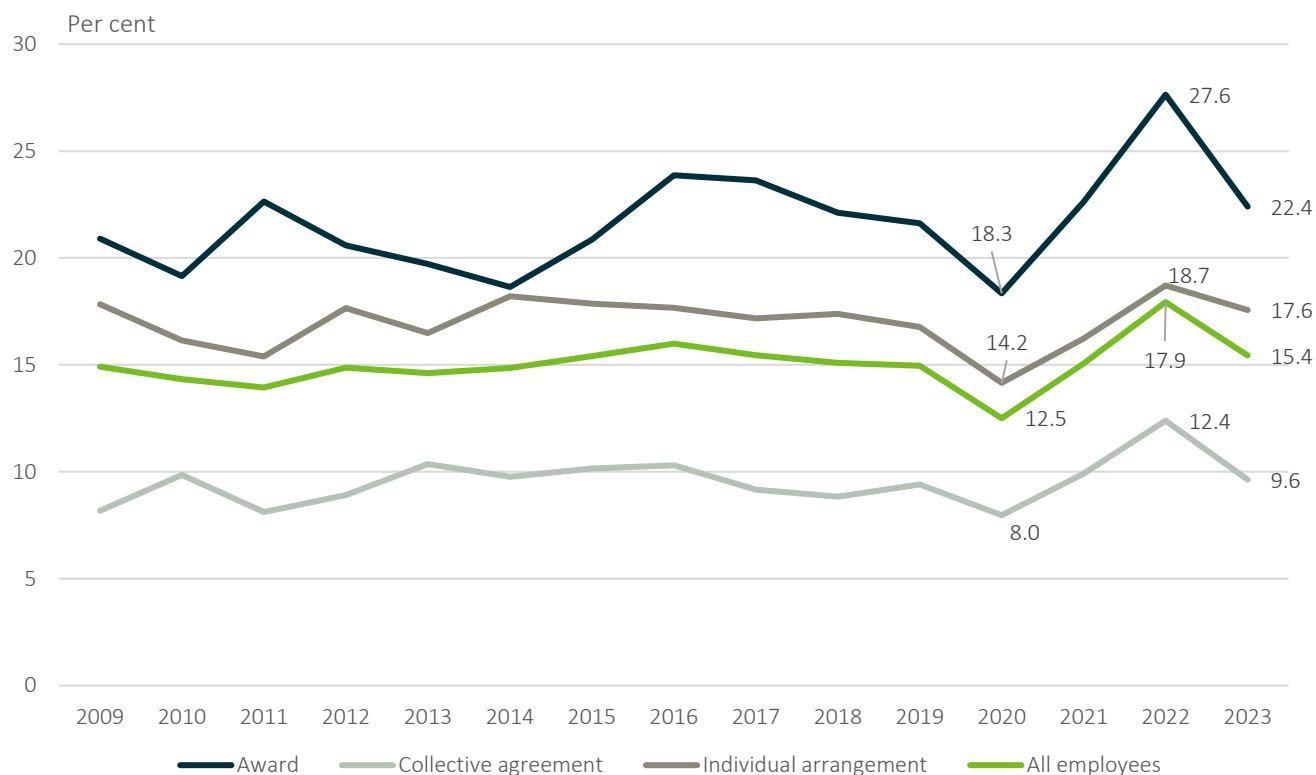
Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Award-reliant employees consistently reported the highest rates of job switching during the period of analysis, while employees on collective agreements reported the lowest.

Chart 1 shows that job switching rates were relatively constant across the 2010s for employees on collective agreements and individual arrangements, with award-reliant employees recording more year-on-year variation over the same period. Job switching rates declined in the initial year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) before recovering in 2021 and peaking in 2022, when the unemployment rate reached its lowest level since 1974, at 3.4 per cent.¹⁴ In 2023, job switching rates declined, dropping back into the higher end of the 2009–2019 range.

¹⁴ Seasonally adjusted. See ABS, [Labour Force, Australia](#), December 2025.

Chart 1: Job switching rate by method of setting pay, 2009–2023



Note: The chart shows job switching rates from 2009 as method of setting pay is only available from 2008, with the job switching rate calculated the following year.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

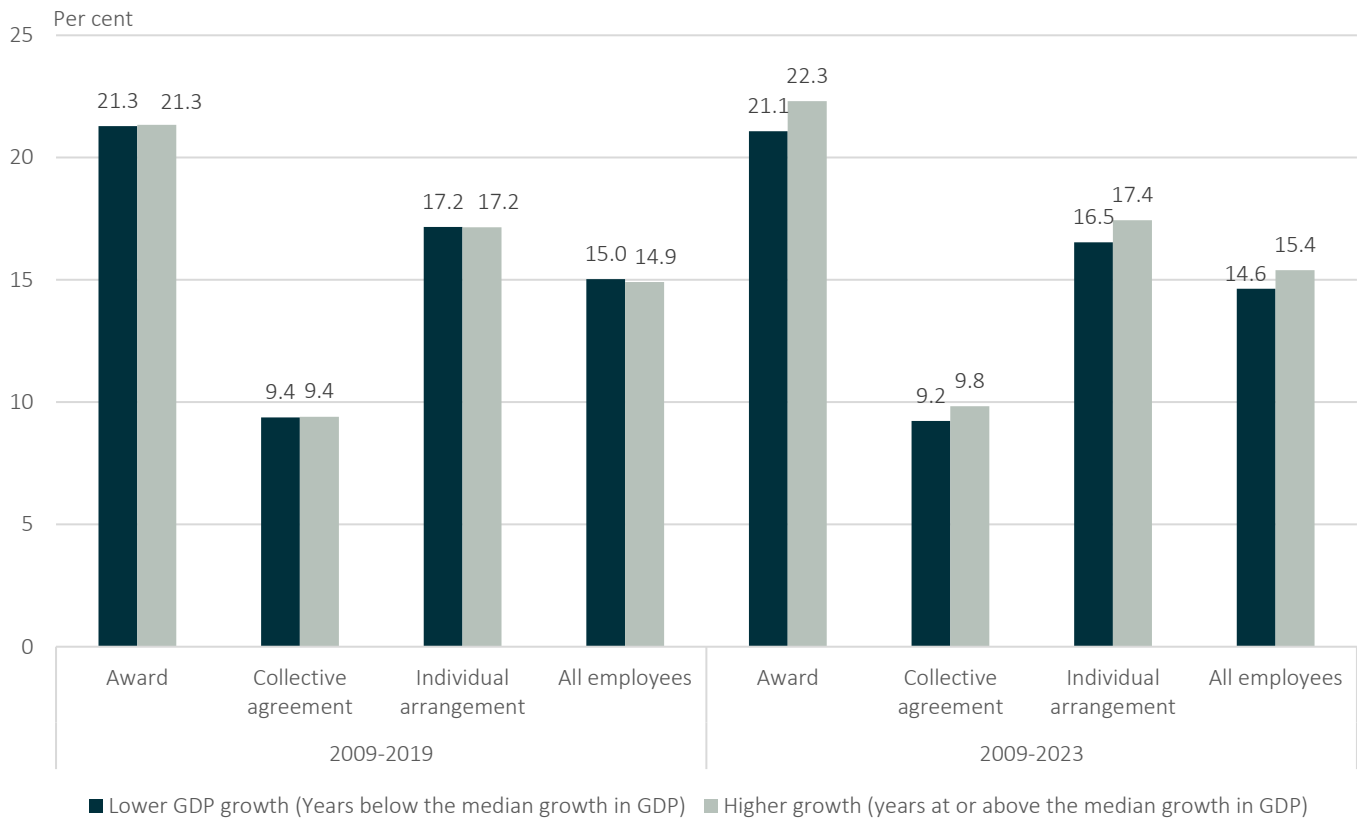
As noted in the literature review, previous research has found that job switching is typically procyclical, rising during economic booms and falling during recessions. It is therefore important to assess how the job switching rates by method of setting pay change when considering fluctuations in economic growth.

Chart 2 shows that the years that had higher rates of economic growth also had higher rates of job switching, and that this was consistent across all methods of setting pay.¹⁵ It also shows that award-reliant employees switched jobs at a higher rate compared with those on collective agreements and individual arrangements in periods of both higher and lower economic growth, consistent with the overall findings above in Table 3.

¹⁵ The analysis was performed by pooling high growth years (equal to or above the median growth rate of 2.4 per cent over the period) and low growth years (below the median growth rate over the period) and generating job switching rates by method of setting pay for both groups.

However, given these results include the years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we repeated our analysis and exclude the years from 2020 onwards to assess the extent to which these years may be impacting the results. We found that excluding these years removes the pattern that was observed between the job switching rate and economic growth, though the relationship between an employee’s method of setting pay and job switching rate remains the same. Award-reliant employees still switched jobs at the highest rate, and those on collective agreements still switched at the lowest rates, with all the results from Chart 2 providing comparable results to the overall job switching rates presented in Table 3.

Chart 2: Job switching rates by method of setting pay, by gross domestic product (GDP) growth



Note: The analysis was performed by pooling high growth years (equal to or above the median growth rate over the period) and low growth years (below the median growth rate over the period) for t+1 (the year in which job switching is observed). Median GDP growth for both periods (2009–2023 and 2009–2019) was 2.4 per cent.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23; ABS, *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product*, September 2025.

4.1.1 Why do employees switch jobs?

Employees may switch jobs because they involuntarily lost their previous job or because they found another job that is more beneficial to them. Table 4 shows the main reasons that employees reported

leaving a job for employees who switched jobs. The data reveal that the reasons award-reliant employees provided for leaving their previous job was consistent with responses from other employees, with the most common being 'to obtain a better job/just wanted a change/to start a new business', followed by not satisfied with job (e.g. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers).

Table 4: Main reason stopped working in previous job, employees who switched jobs

Main reason stopped working previous job (t+1)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
To obtain a better job/Just wanted a change/To start a new business	33.0	38.4	34.2	34.9
Not satisfied with job (e.g. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers)	31.5	27.2	29.9	29.7
Got laid off/No work available/Retrenched/ Made redundant/Employer went out of business/Dismissed	17.6	14.9	18.9	17.6
All other reasons*	17.9	19.5	17.0	17.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: * All other reasons includes 'Job was temporary or seasonal', 'Returned to study/Started study/Needed more time to study' and 'Too much travel time/Too far from public transport'. Each of these responses accounted for 4 per cent or less of award-reliant employees. Variable *pjljrea*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

4.1.2 Why do employees transition to out of employment?

Table 5 shows the main reasons why employees transitioned from employment to non-employment. The most common reason reported across all methods of setting pay was that they were either laid off, had no work available, or their employer went out of business. Over one in five (21.3 per cent) award-reliant employees selected this reason, which was similar to employees on other methods of setting pay.

Compared with employees on other methods of setting pay, award-reliant employees were more likely to move to non-employment because they were unsatisfied with the job or to concentrate on study, while they were less likely to select retirement or not wanting to work anymore.

Table 5: Main reason stopped working for those who transitioned from employee to either 'unemployed' or 'not in the labour force'

Main reason stopped working previous job (t+1)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Got laid off/No work available/Retrenched/ Made redundant/Employer went out of business/Dismissed	21.3	18.2	23.7	21.3
Not satisfied with job (eg. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers)	15.2	7.5	12.0	11.8
Own sickness, disability or injury	12.1	13.5	10.0	11.7
Returned to study/Started study/Needed more time to study	10.7	6.8	7.4	8.3
Pregnancy/To have children	9.0	12.1	11.3	10.7
Job was temporary or seasonal	6.1	6.4	8.5	7.2
To stay at home to look after children/house/ someone else	4.9	4.0	4.6	4.6
Retired/Did not want to work any longer	4.7	17.8	8.2	9.7
Other	4.4	3.5	3.4	3.8
All other reasons*	11.6	10.2	10.9	10.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: *All other reasons includes 'Travel/Have a holiday', 'Spouse/partner transferred', 'Too much travel time/Too far from public transport', 'Migrated to a new country', 'Change of lifestyle', 'Holiday job', 'Own sickness, disability or injury' and 'NEI to classify'. Variable *pjljr*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

4.1.3 Job searching

One aspect of job switching that is not observed in the job switching rate is the proportion of employees who initially searched for a job. To assess the level of active job searching an employee was engaged in prior to their survey interview, analysis is undertaken on a variable in the HILDA survey that asks employees 'At any time in the last 4 weeks, have you actually looked for a new job'.

Table 6 shows that award-reliant employees reported higher rates of job searching than employees on other methods of setting pay. For those who had searched, award-reliant employees also reported higher rates of job switching (43.8 per cent) than those on an individual arrangement (39.4 per cent), and employees on collective agreements (25.6 per cent).

The decision of workers to search for a new job may be influenced by their perception of how successful they would be in finding a job at least as good as their current job. The data also show that

the perceived chance of finding a job just as good as their current job are similar between award-reliant employees and those on individual arrangements who, on average, report about a two in three chance they will find and accept a job just as good as their current job in the next 12 months. This was higher than those on collective agreements who, on average, report a 61.5 per cent chance.

Table 6: Job searching, by those who switched jobs and method of setting pay

	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Actually looked for a new job in the last 4 weeks [^] (t)	18.1	15.0	16.8	16.4
Switched jobs (t+1)	43.8	25.6	39.4	35.5
Did not switch jobs (t+1)	56.2	74.4	60.6	64.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average chance will find and accept a job at least as good as current job* (t)	68.1	61.5	66.6	65.0

Note: [^]The question asked was 'At any time in the last 4 weeks have you actually looked for a new job?' Variable *jbnewjs* *The question asked was 'If you were to lose your job during the next 12 months, what is the per cent chance that the job you eventually find and accept would be at least as good as your current job, in terms of wages and benefits?' Variable *jbmpgj*

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

4.2 Job tenure

An analysis of job tenure is presented to assess the amount of time award-reliant employees have worked for an employer compared with other employees.

In line with a higher job switching rate, award-reliant employees were more likely than other employees to have shorter job tenure, with almost one in three (31.6 per cent) award-reliant employees reporting being with their employer for less than one year (Table 7). Overall, award-reliant employees reported shorter average job tenures (3.8 years), at less than half the job tenure of employees on collective agreements (8.8 years), and about 30 per cent lower than employees on individual arrangements (5.4 years).

Just over one in five award-reliant employees (20.5 per cent) held the same job for longer than five years. This is less than those paid by an individual arrangement (32.3 per cent) and those on collective agreements (50.0 per cent).

Table 7: Job tenure by method of setting pay

Job tenure at period t	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Less than 1 year	31.6	13.4	21.8	20.6
1 year	13.5	7.4	10.4	9.9
2 to 5 years	34.4	29.3	35.5	32.9
6 to 10 years	11.6	19.6	17.0	16.9
11 to 20 years	6.8	18.6	11.2	13.1
More than 20 years	2.1	11.8	4.1	6.6
Total	100	100	100	100
Average job tenure (no. years)	3.8	8.8	5.4	6.4

Note: The question asked was 'how long have you worked for your current employer?' Variable *jbempt*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5. Job mobility by individual and job characteristics

This chapter compares job mobility rates by different individual and job characteristics across methods of setting pay. The examined characteristics are chosen based on their potential relationship with job mobility (as identified in the literature review), their prevalence among award-reliant employees, or their relevance to the minimum wages and modern awards objectives.

5.1 Individual characteristics

5.1.1 Age

Our sample finds that younger employees are more likely to be award reliant than older employees (Table A1 and Chart A1), which is consistent with other data (Fair Work Commission, 2025).¹⁶

The literature review discussed research that found that job switching rates were associated with age, where younger employees had higher rates of job switching than older employees. Table 8 shows that younger employees also have higher rates of job mobility across all methods of setting pay. Award-reliant employees still had higher rates of job mobility across each age group when compared with employees on other methods of setting pay, particularly employees on collective agreements. The job switching rates were similar between award-reliant employees and employees on individual arrangements in some age groups (15 to 24 years, 45 to 54 years and 55 to 64 years).

¹⁶ See Table 7.6 of the [Statistical report— Annual Wage Review 2025: Version 5](#).

Table 8: Job switching rates, by method of setting pay and age group

Age (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
15 to 24 years	30.4	23.0	29.0	28.0
25 to 34 years	25.7	13.8	20.2	18.8
35 to 44 years	17.1	7.6	15.8	12.7
45 to 54 years	11.5	5.6	11.9	9.0
55 to 64 years	7.7	3.9	7.5	5.9
65 years and over	2.8*	2.9	4.3	3.4
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

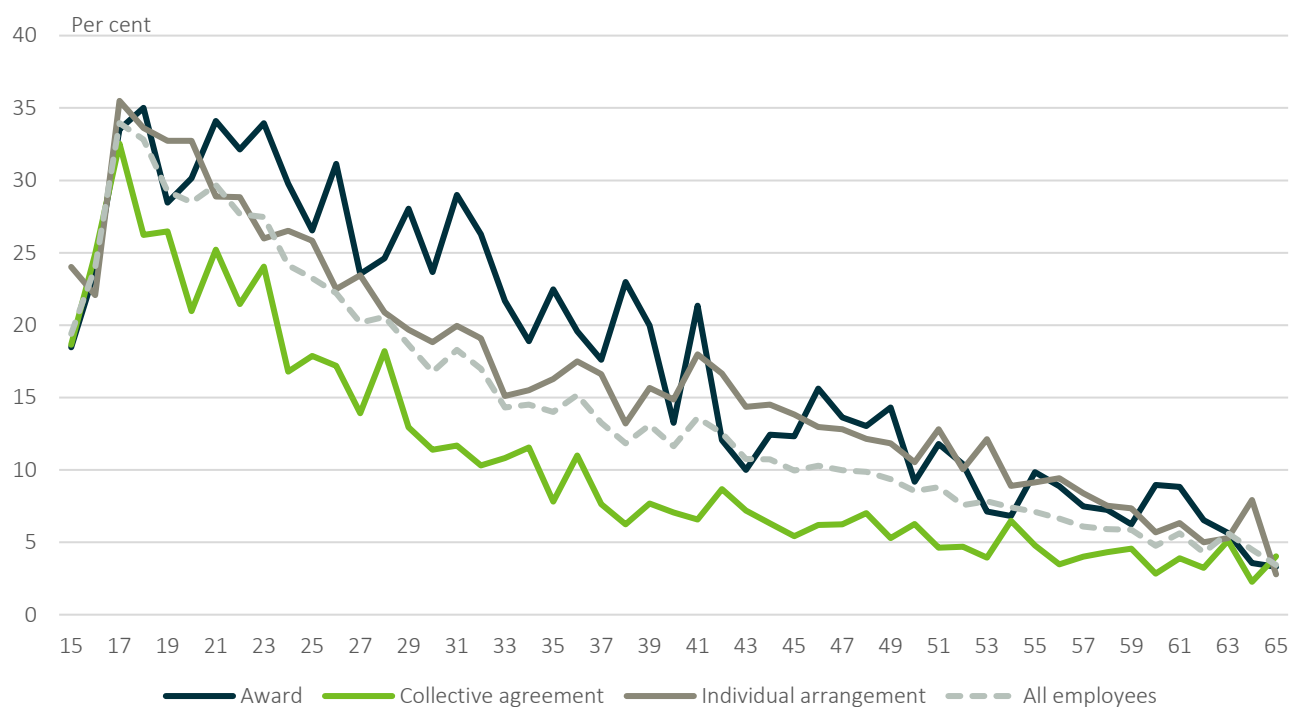
Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. Variable *hgage*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Chart 3 presents the job switching rates across each individual age by method of setting pay. Job switching rates among award-reliant employees were highest across each individual age from 21 years to 39 years. The greatest difference is observed between 25 and 34 years, aligning with results in Table 8. From 40 years onwards, job switching rates converge up to 65 years.

These results are consistent with other research using Australian administrative data (Deutscher, 2019) which show that job switching rates are highest for those aged 15–24 years and decline with age.

Chart 3: Job switching rates, by method of setting pay and age



Note: Variable *hgage*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.1.2 Sex

Job switching rates are higher for both female and male award-reliant employees than those on other methods of setting pay (Table 9). Males have higher job switching rates among award-reliant employees and those on collective agreements. For employees on individual arrangements, females are more likely to switch jobs than males on average.

Table 9: Job switching rates, by method of setting pay and sex

Sex (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Female	21.0	9.2	17.4	14.7
Male	22.7	10.0	16.7	15.3
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

Note: Variable *hgsex*.

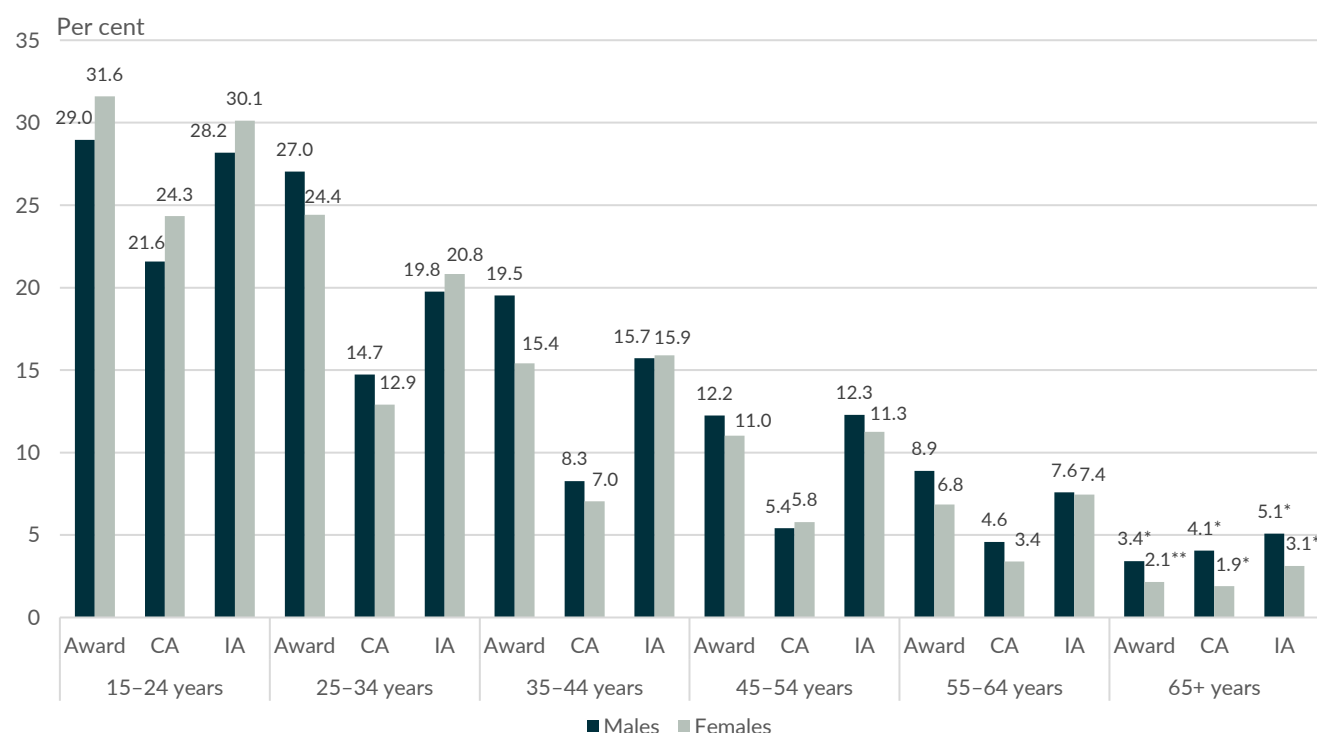
Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Chart 4 shows that, for all methods of setting pay, job switching rates decline with age for both males and females. Overall, the differences between male and female job switching rates varied across age groups and across methods of setting pay.

Females have higher job switching rates than males among award-reliant employees in the youngest age group (15 to 24 years), by about 2.6 percentage points, a pattern present across all other methods of setting pay. For all other age groups, male award-reliant employees had higher job switching rates than females. Employees on collective agreements displayed the same differences between males and females across each age group as award-reliant employees, with the exception of those aged 45–54 years, where females switched jobs at a higher rate than males.

Females on individual arrangements had a higher job switching rate than males partly due to the job switching rate of female employees in the younger age groups 25–34 years and 35–44 years, who were found to switch jobs more often than males. This pattern was not observed in award-reliant employees or those on a collective agreement.

Chart 4: Job switching rates, by sex, age group and method of setting pay



Note: CA = Collective agreement, IA = Individual arrangement. * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. ** Estimate has a relative standard error above 50 per cent and is considered too unreliable for general use. Variables *hgage* and *hgsex*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.1.3 Education

Analysis by highest level of educational attainment shows that award-reliant employees switched jobs at higher rates than those on other methods of setting pay across all categories of educational attainment (Table 10). Again, those on collective agreements reported the lowest rates of job switching across all categories. The data also suggest that job switching rates were similar across education levels, and this was consistent for employees across all methods of setting pay.

For example, around one in five award-reliant employees across most education levels switched jobs in a given year. The only exception was those who reported Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, who had the highest job switching rates across all methods of setting pay. This may be driven by younger employees who have not had time to attain higher educational qualifications, or they may be currently studying for tertiary qualifications. Analysis of job switching rates excluding students is provided in Chapter 7.

The lowest rates of job switching were among employees who completed a graduate diploma or graduate certificate as their highest level of education.

Table 10: Job switching rate, by method of setting pay and highest education level attained

Highest education level achieved (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Postgrad - masters or doctorate	20.2	9.7	17.8	14.1
Graduate diploma, grad certificate	18.6	6.6	13.9	10.3
Bachelor or honours	18.7	8.8	16.1	13.2
Advanced diploma, diploma	20.3	7.5	15.0	12.8
Certificate III & IV	19.9	9.2	17.1	14.6
Year 12	26.0	14.0	20.1	19.7
Year 11 and below	21.2	9.8	17.0	16.5
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

Note: Variable *edhigh1*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.1.4 Relationship in household

The summary statistics in Table A1 show that award-reliant employees were more likely to be in particular household relationships than employees on other methods of setting pay, such as dependent

students and non-dependent children. Employees in both of these groups have higher rates of job switching than other groups (Table 11). This is not surprising as students and non-dependent children tend to be younger and younger people are associated with higher rates of job switching.

The data in Table 11 indicate that job switching rates among award-reliant employees were higher than employees on collective agreements in all eight relationship types identified in the HILDA survey, and in six of eight relationship types when compared to those on individual arrangements.

Those on collective agreements had the lowest job switching rates across all household relationships.

Table 11: Job switching rate, by method of setting pay and relationship in household

Relationship in household (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Couple with dependents	16.6	7.3	14.3	11.7
Couple with no dependents	17.4	8.5	15.3	12.8
Dependent student	29.0	28.6	32.5	29.7
Lone parent with dependents	18.1	8.6	17.6	13.9
Lone parent with no dependents	9.7	3.6*	10.9	7.1
Lone person	21.6	10.0	18.9	15.7
Non-dependent child	26.1	14.7	22.2	20.9
Other	27.0	12.4	22.7	20.3
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. Variable *hhrih*

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.2 Job characteristics

5.2.1 Employment type

Job switching rates for casual and permanent employees are presented in Table 12. The table shows that job switching rates differed by employment type, with casuals exhibiting higher rates than both types of permanent employees. This was the case for each method of setting pay.

As shown in Table A2 in Appendix A, award-reliant employees were more likely to be casual employees than employees on other methods of setting pay. However, award-reliant employees still reported higher rates of job switching across each employment type, particularly compared with those on collective agreements, with rates more similar to those on individual arrangements.

Table 12: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and employment type

Employment type (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Permanent, full-time	17.2	7.9	15.0	12.3
Permanent, part-time	14.3	7.3	12.7	10.4
Casual	27.8	22.2	26.7	26.2
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

Note: Casual workers are defined as employees who do not have paid holiday leave or sick leave Variable *jbcasab*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 13 compares job switching rates by employment type for males and females. For award-reliant employees, job switching rates were similar for those employed on a permanent full-time basis. For award-reliant permanent part-time employees, males were about 1.75 times more likely to switch jobs than females. This trend in permanent part-time employees was similar for males and females on collective agreements, while for those on individual arrangements, the female job switching rates were closer to, though still below, the job switching rates of males.

The table also shows that males employed on a casual basis had higher job switching rates than females employed on a casual basis across all methods of setting pay.

Table 13: Rates of job switching by employment type and sex for award-reliant employees and all those on other methods of setting pay

Employment type (t)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Permanent, full-time	17.4	17.1	8.0	7.9	16.7	14.1
Permanent, part-time	12.0	21.0	6.5	11.8	12.2	14.8
Casual	27.0	29.1	21.0	23.6	23.7	29.5
Total	21.0	22.7	9.2	10.0	17.4	16.7

Note: Casual workers are defined as having no paid holiday leave or sick leave. Variable *jbcasab*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.2.2 Hours worked

The number of hours worked are measured by the number of hours *usually* worked by employees in their *main job* per week. Table 14 shows that job switching rates were higher for those working fewer

hours per week in their main job. This may reflect, in part, that employees working fewer hours are more likely to be in the youngest age group (Table A5). The table also indicates that award-reliant employees had higher job switching rates than those on collective agreements and individual arrangements across all hours worked categories. As with most other characteristics examined so far, job switching rates for those on collective agreements were the lowest.

As discussed in the literature review, job switching is one mechanism through which employees resolve a mismatch in their actual and preferred hours worked. This may be a factor contributing to the higher job switching rate for those working the fewest number of hours, as they may choose to switch jobs to increase their number of hours worked and their earnings.

Table 14: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and the number of hours usually worked per week in main job

Number of hours usually worked (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Less than 10	26.3	20.1	23.7	23.9
10 to less than 20	23.7	15.6	20.6	20.2
20 to less than 30	23.2	10.2	18.5	16.7
30 to less than 35	18.0	7.8	17.0	13.0
35 to less than 40	18.9	8.3	16.6	13.3
40 to less than 50	21.9	8.5	16.7	14.1
50 or more	18.8	9.8	15.2	13.8
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	15.2

Note: Variable *jbmhruc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.2.3 Occupation

Award-reliant employees were more likely to be employed in certain occupations when compared with all employees (see Table A3). These were Sales workers, Labourers, and Community and personal service workers.

Table 15 shows that job switching rates for these occupations were among the highest across each method of setting pay, and were highest among award-reliant employees. Along with Technicians and trades workers, these occupations had higher job switching rates than the average for all award-reliant employees.

The table also shows that award-reliant employees were more likely than those on individual arrangements to switch jobs across all occupations, except for Machinery operators and drivers and Professionals. Job switching rates for those on collective agreements was the lowest across all occupations.

Table 15: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and occupation

Occupation (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	Proportion of award-reliant employees within occupation	Proportion of award-reliant employees across occupations
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Sales workers	22.7	17.5	18.4	45.2	20.7
Labourers	24.5	12.1	22.7	41.8	18.3
Community and personal service workers	23.5	9.7	21.4	31.9	19.9
Machinery operators and drivers	18.6	9.5	18.9	26.9	8.8
Technicians and trades workers	22.3	12.8	18.4	20.3	12.1
Clerical and administrative workers	18.5	8.3	14.2	13.8	9.9
Managers	18.5	8.8	14.5	6.2	3.7
Professionals	16.1	7.5	16.8	5.1	6.5
Total	21.7	9.6	17.0	19.4	100.0

Note: Column on proportion of award-reliant employees across occupations sums to 100. The two columns relating to proportions on the far right are based on data from the whole period, 2008 to 2023. Variable *jbmo61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 16 presents the job switching rates by occupation and sex. For award-reliant employees, differences in job switching rates between males and females varied by occupation. For instance, males employed as Labourers, Community and personal service workers, Machinery operators and drivers and Managers reported higher job switching rates than females, while females employed as Technicians and trades workers and Professionals reported higher job switching rates than males. Similar job switching rates were found between males and females for Sales workers and Clerical and administrative workers.

For employees on collective agreements and individual arrangements, differences in the job switching rates between males and females were not always consistent with those observed for award-reliant employees. For example, compared with award-reliant employees, females employed as Machinery operators and drivers and Managers had higher job switching rates than males. Males who were on either an individual arrangement or collective agreement and employed as Technicians and trades

workers switched jobs at a greater rate than their female counterparts, which was not found for award-reliant employees.

Table 16: Rates of job switching by sex and occupation for award-reliant employees and other employees

Occupation (t)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Sales workers	22.7	22.7	17.5	17.4	19.7	17.2
Labourers	20.2	27.0	11.2	12.5	21.8	23.0
Community and personal service workers	21.8	29.0	10.7	8.1	20.5	23.5
Machinery operators and drivers	17.1*	18.9	12.7	9.3	22.7	18.6
Technicians and trades workers	28.4	20.6	8.6	13.6	16.6	18.6
Clerical and administrative workers	18.6	18.0	8.7	7.7	15.0	12.2
Managers	16.4	21.0	9.5	8.0	17.5	13.3
Professionals	16.5	15.0	7.3	8.0	17.4	16.4
Total	21.0	22.7	9.2	10.0	17.4	16.7

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. Variable *jbmo61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

5.2.4 Industry

Award-reliant employees were also more likely to be employed in certain industries when compared with all employees (Table A4), particularly in Retail trade and Accommodation and food services.

Table 17 reports the job switching rates of employees across nine industries which accounted for more than 3 per cent of all award-reliant employees (job switching rates for all 19 industries are shown in Table B4).

The three industries with the highest job switching rates among award-reliant employees were Accommodation and food services, Administrative and support services, and Construction—where more than one in four employees switched jobs in a given year. These three industries also reported the highest rates of job switching for those on individual arrangements and collective agreements, with only employees in Accommodation and food services recording similar job switching rates to award-reliant employees. This was also the only industry where those on collective agreements recorded higher job switching rates than those on individual arrangements.

In seven of the nine industries, award-reliant employees had higher rates of job switching than employees on collective agreements and individual arrangements. The two exceptions were Health care and social assistance and Education and training.

Table 17: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and industry[#]

Industry (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	Proportion of award-reliant employees within industry	Proportion of award-reliant employees between industries*
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Accommodation and food services	32.5	31.8	29.7	55.2	18.4
Retail trade	20.0	15.2	16.9	40.8	20.7
Administrative and support services	30.7	18.6	23.1	27.6	3.5
Other services	20.3	11.2	18.5	25.2	4.0
Transport, postal and warehousing	17.7	7.1	16.9	21.5	5.0
Manufacturing	19.2	9.8	15.6	20.7	8.4
Health care and social assistance	14.9	7.5	15.4	19.7	16.0
Construction	26.8	18.2	19.9	17.5	5.8
Education and training	9.4	6.4	13.5	7.0	3.8
Total[^]	21.7	9.6	17.0	19.4	-

Note: # Only industries which accounted for more than 3 per cent of award-reliant employees were included; See Table B4 for full list of industries. ^ Total refers to all employees in all industries, not just the industries included in the table. Variable *jbmi61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 18 compares the job switching rates for males and females by method of setting pay for the same nine industries.

Job switching rates for award-reliant employees were similar for males and females in the two most award-reliant industries, Accommodation and food services and Retail trade, as well as Health care and social assistance. Similar patterns were observed for those on individual arrangements and collective agreements in Health care and social assistance, though females (males) were more likely to switch jobs for those on collective agreements (individual arrangements).

For other industries, the difference between the job switching rate of males and females varied. In Other services, the jobs switching rate of female award-reliant employees was 1.75 times that of male award-reliant employees (26.3 per cent and 14.9 per cent, respectively), while male award-reliant employees in Administrative and support services and Construction reported higher job switching rates than females.

Table 18: Rates of job switching by sex and industry for award-reliant employees and other employees

Industry (t)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Accommodation and food services	33.3	31.3	31.9	31.5	31.4	28.1
Retail trade	20.2	19.6	15.2	15.2	17.9	16.1
Administrative and support services	23.7	36.4	17.8	19.2*	23.3	22.9
Other services	26.3	14.9	7.7	13.2	23.2	15.9
Transport, postal and warehousing	20.4	16.9	8.2	6.8	14.8	17.6
Manufacturing	20.3	18.7	11.7	9.5	17.8	15.0
Health care and social assistance	15.1	14.3	7.9	6.4	15.0	16.6
Construction	21.6	27.3	21.0*	18.0	21.6	19.7
Education and training	8.9	11.5*	6.0	7.6	12.2	15.7
Total[^]	21.0	22.7	9.2	10.0	17.4	16.7

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. # Only industries which accounted for more than 3 per cent of award-reliant employees were included; See Table B5 for full list of industries. ^ Total refers to all award-reliant employees in all industries, not just the industries included in the table. Variable *jbm161*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

6. Employment outcomes from job switching

This chapter analyses the employment outcomes of award-reliant employees who switched jobs and compares them with those who did not. These outcomes include objective measures such as earnings, and hours worked, as well as a subjective measure, job satisfaction. However, we are not able to observe the extent to which any outcome reflects changes driven by employee preferences. For example, employees may have chosen to switch to part time as they prefer to work fewer hours, or they may have switched to part time for economic reasons (e.g. being laid off or because their employer was going out of business) and were unable to find another job with full-time hours.

6.1 Outcomes from job switching for all employees

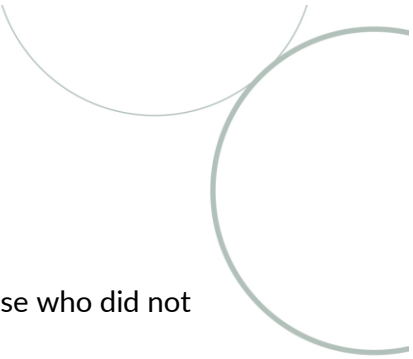
To assess changes in earnings we construct a measure of *hourly earnings in main job* by dividing a respondent's usual weekly wage earnings from their main job by their number of hours per week usually worked in their main job. We cap the number of hours worked per week at 60 to ensure hourly earnings are not influenced by employees reporting abnormally long hours worked.¹⁷

Table 19 presents the median growth rate in hourly earnings for those who switched jobs and those who did not, for both award-reliant employees and those on other methods of setting pay.¹⁸ The data in the table show that employees who switched jobs are more likely to report a higher increase in their hourly earnings than those who did not. The median growth in hourly earnings was almost twice as high for award-reliant employees who switched jobs (10.7 per cent) than those who did not (5.5 per cent). A similar pattern was observed for those on other methods of setting pay.

The table also shows that those who switched jobs were more likely to change their number of hours worked per week. For full-time award-reliant employees, those who switched jobs moved to part-time hours at twice the rate of those who did not (20.2 per cent compared with 10.0 per cent, respectively). Likewise, more than one in three (38.4 per cent) part-time award-reliant employees changed to full-

¹⁷ van Netten J and Lipp J (2025).

¹⁸ Median growth is calculated by first deriving hourly earnings for each employee observation, then calculating a growth rate in hourly earnings for employees from one year to the next, then taking the median of these growth rates.



time hours when they switched jobs, which is more than 2.5 times the rate of those who did not switch jobs (15.0 per cent).

For those on other methods of setting pay, similar patterns were observed, as those who switched jobs reported changing their working hours from either full time to part time, or part time to full time, at over twice the rate as those who did not. The table shows that those on other methods of setting pay changed from part-time hours to full-time hours at a higher rate than award-reliant employees, while award-reliant employees changed from full-time to part-time hours at a higher rate.

If an employee is flexible or has adaptive skills and can work in other occupations, this may raise the number of potential job opportunities available to them. An increased number of job opportunities may improve their ability to increase their earnings or find a role that better suits their preferences (e.g. working hours, type of work, or level of work enjoyment). Table 19 shows the proportion of those who reported that they changed occupation since the last interview, for those who switched jobs and those who did not.

Changes in occupation are measured by responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation'.

A change in occupation does not necessarily involve a change at the major group/1-digit ANZSCO level (e.g. Sales workers changing to Professionals). As we only capture occupation at the highest ANZSCO level (major group), an individual may report changing occupations but remain within the same major group occupation, as their reported occupational change may have occurred at a lower level.

More than two in three (68.2 per cent) award-reliant employees who switched jobs changed occupations, compared with less than one in 10 (8.6 per cent) who did not switch jobs. A similar trend was observed for those on other methods of setting pay. However, award-reliant employees who switched jobs were more likely to change occupation than employees on other methods of setting pay who also switched jobs.

Table 19: Changes in employment characteristics by method of setting pay and job switching

	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Median growth in hourly earnings of main job (t to t+1)	10.7	5.5	7.3	4.1	9.3	4.2
Full-time employees^ (t)						
Changed to part-time hours (t+1)	20.2	10.0	15.2	5.7	12.2	4.6
Remained full-time (t+1)	79.8	90.0	84.8	94.3	87.8	95.4
Part-time employees^ (t)						
Changed to full-time hours (t+1)	38.4	15.0	41.9	16.5	43.9	17.7
Remained part-time (t+1)	61.6	85.0	58.1	83.5	56.1	82.3
Proportion that changed occupation* (t+1)						
Changed occupation (t+1)	68.2	8.6	60.4	7.1	59.4	7.6
Did not change occupation (t+1)	31.8	91.4	39.6	92.9	40.6	92.4

Note: Full-time is defined as working 35 hours or more a week in all jobs, part-time is defined as less than 35 hours. ^Full-time and part-time employees include both those employed on a permanent and casual basis. *The occupational change results are based on responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation'. Variable *jbcmocc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

6.2 Outcomes from job switching for males and females

Table 20 presents the same outcomes disaggregated by sex. For award-reliant employees, the difference in median growth in hourly earnings between those who switched jobs and those who did not is larger for females (6.1 percentage points) than for males (3.8 percentage points). That is, the additional increase in hourly earnings for those who switched jobs compared with those who did not is greater for female award-reliant employees than male award-reliant employees. This was also the case for employees on collective agreements, though it is not observed for those on individual arrangements.

For both award-reliant employees and those on other methods of setting pay, females who worked full-time hours changed to part-time hours at about twice the rate or more compared with male full-time employees, a pattern consistent across those who switched jobs and those who did not. The inverse is observed for those who worked part-time hours, as males switched to full-time hours at higher rates than females. Although a higher proportion of females changed occupations than males,

whether they switched jobs or not, there was little difference between the two groups. A higher proportion of both female and male award-reliant employees changed occupations when they switched jobs compared with employees on other methods of setting pay.

Table 20: Changes in employment characteristics by sex for award-reliant employees and employees on other methods of setting pay

	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Median growth in hourly earnings of main job (t to t+1)						
Females	11.1	5.0	8.3	4.1	9.3	4.3
Males	9.8	6.0	5.8	4.1	9.3	4.2
Full-time employees^ (t)						
Females						
Changed to part-time hours (t+1)	28.4	15.1	20.3	9.5	18.6	8.7
Remained full-time (t+1)	71.6	84.9	79.7	90.5	81.4	91.3
Males						
Changed to part-time hours (t+1)	14.4	6.2	11.3	2.8	8.7	2.7
Remained full-time (t+1)	85.6	93.8	88.7	97.2	91.3	97.3
Part-time employees^ (t)						
Females						
Changed to full-time hours (t+1)	35.3	13.2	39.8	14.5	38.7	15.3
Remained part-time (t+1)	64.7	86.8	60.2	85.5	61.3	84.7
Males						
Changed to full-time hours (t+1)	43.7	19.0	45.8	24.3	53.0	23.7
Remained part-time (t+1)	56.3	81.0	54.2	75.7	47.0	76.3
Proportion that changed occupation* (t+1)						
Females	68.9	8.8	60.7	7.3	61.0	8.1
Males	67.3	8.4	60.2	6.9	58.2	7.3

Note: Full-time employees worked 35 hours or more per week in all jobs and part-time employees worked less than 35 hours. ^Full-time and part-time employees include both those employed on a permanent and casual basis. *The occupation results are based on responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation'. Variable *jbcmocc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

6.3 Other outcomes from job switching for all employees

6.3.1 Switching both jobs and occupation

Table 21 examines only the cohort of employees who reported both switching jobs *and* changing occupations between period t and period $t+1$. The table presents the distribution of occupations for these employees both before and after they switched jobs and occupations.

The table shows that 25.2 per cent of award-reliant employees who switched jobs and changed occupations in period $t+1$ worked as Sales workers in period t . This compares with only 14.5 per cent who worked as Sales workers in period $t+1$ after changing jobs and occupation. The latter group includes not only those who may have remained employed in the Sales workers occupation, but also those who moved from another occupation to Sales workers. Therefore, the movement from Sales workers in period t to another occupation in $t+1$ may be higher than indicated by the change in proportions.

For award-reliant employees, the largest decline between periods t and $t+1$ was in Sales workers, followed by Labourers, which fell from 21.9 per cent to 14.9 per cent. Only these two occupations recorded a fall between the two periods. The largest increase was in Professionals, rising from 3.8 per cent to 10.4 per cent.

Changes in the occupational distribution between periods are heterogeneous across methods of setting pay. The magnitude of the change in the proportion of employees working across the different occupations tended to be smaller for those on collective agreements and individual arrangements than for award-reliant employees. For example, while the proportion of employees working as Sales workers after switching jobs fell for all three methods of setting pay, the change for award-reliant employees (–10.7 percentage points) was larger than the change for those on collective agreements (–6.3 percentage points) and individual arrangements (–1.3 percentage points).

Table 21: Proportion of employees across occupations, before and after job switch, by method of setting pay, of those who switched jobs and changed occupations

Occupation (t)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Before switch (t)	After switch (t+1)	Before switch (t)	After switch (t+1)	Before switch (t)	After switch (t+1)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Managers	3.2	4.5	8.0	8.2	18.0	15.4
Professionals	3.8	10.4	20.3	26.5	22.0	24.8
Technicians and trades workers	8.6	11.7	10.1	9.2	11.9	11.0
Community and personal service workers	19.5	20.5	16.2	13.7	8.6	8.7
Clerical and administrative workers	9.8	14.8	15.8	17.2	15.8	16.9
Sales workers	25.2	14.5	13.4	7.1	9.2	7.9
Machinery operators and drivers	8.0	8.9	6.4	8.3	5.8	7.0
Labourers	21.9	14.9	9.7	9.6	8.7	8.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: *The occupational change results are based on responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation'. Variable *jbcmocc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

6.3.2 Job satisfaction

Higher earnings may not be the only incentive for an employee to switch jobs. Employees may choose to switch jobs to match other employment preferences such as work hours or type of work. To assess if employees move to jobs which better suit their preferences, Table 22 reports on the change in overall job satisfaction by method of setting pay.

In the HILDA survey, employed respondents are asked to rate their overall job satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being totally dissatisfied with the job and 10 being totally satisfied. To assess changes in job satisfaction, we compare the responses between period *t* and period *t+1*.¹⁹

About half (48.5 per cent) of award-reliant employees who switched jobs recorded an improvement in job satisfaction, compared with less than three in 10 (28.8 per cent) who did not. Employees on other methods of setting pay had comparable results.

¹⁹ Respondents in the HILDA survey do not directly report if their job satisfaction improved, declined or remained the same between surveys.

The proportion of employees who recorded a decline in job satisfaction was lower for those who switched jobs than for those who did not, with this finding present for both award-reliant employees and employees on other methods of setting pay.

Table 22: Changes in job satisfaction, by method of setting pay and job switching

Changes in job satisfaction (t to t+1)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch
Increase in job satisfaction	48.5	28.8	47.9	27.2	49.1	26.0
No change in satisfaction	22.5	35.9	24.6	41.7	24.9	41.2
Decline in job satisfaction	29.0	35.3	27.5	31.1	26.0	32.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Variable *jbmsall*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

6.3.3 Moving house

Part of the decision for employees to switch jobs may involve the ability to move where they live in order to expand employment opportunities. Table 23 shows that 3.2 per cent of award-reliant employees who switched jobs also reported that they moved address to start a new job with a new employer. This rate is the same as those on individual arrangements but lower than those on collective agreements (5.8 per cent).

For employees who switched jobs and reported moving address for their new job, award-reliant employees moved smaller distances on average (765 kilometres) than employees on collective agreements (1070 kilometres) and individual arrangements (847 kilometres).

Table 23: Employees who switched jobs and moved house for the new job

	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)
Moved house for new job* (%) (t+1)	3.2	5.8	3.2
Average distance moved for new job^ (kilometres) (t+1)	765	1070	847

Note: * Variable *mhreanj*. ^ Variable *hhmovek*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

6.4 Job security

Under the modern awards objective, the Commission must consider ‘the need to improve access to secure work across the economy’.²⁰ Switching jobs may be one mechanism through which employees can gain access to more secure work. This section analyses the rate at which award-reliant employees employed on a casual basis switch jobs and whether those who do switch jobs move to permanent employment.

The data in Table 24 show that over one quarter (27.8 per cent) of award-reliant employees employed on a casual basis switched jobs after one year. Compared with those who did not switch jobs, casual employees who switched jobs were around three times more likely to move to permanent full-time employment and less likely to remain employed on a casual basis. A similar trend is evident for casual employees on other methods of setting pay, though they moved to permanent full-time employment at higher rates than award-reliant employees. However, the majority of casual employees who switched jobs remained employed on a casual basis after doing so, with this being true for both award-reliant employees and those on other methods of setting pay.

In addition, award-reliant employees employed on a casual basis who switched jobs reported a higher median growth rate in hourly earnings in their main job (8.1 per cent) compared with those who did not (6.7 per cent). This was also true for casual employees on individual arrangements, where the median growth rate in hourly earnings was more than twice as high for those who switched jobs (6.8 per cent) than for those who did not (2.6 per cent). In contrast, those on collective agreements who switched jobs reported lower earnings growth than those who did not.

²⁰ Section 134(1)(aa), *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

Table 24: Employment outcomes for award-reliant employees employed on a casual basis

	Award-reliant (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch	Switched	Did not switch
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Casual employees (t)	27.8	72.2	22.2	77.8	26.7	73.3
Median growth rate in hourly earnings of main job (t to t+1)	8.1	6.7	1.7	3.3	6.8	2.6
Employment type (t+1)						
Moved to permanent, full time	30.0	9.9	37.4	15.5	36.7	13.2
Moved to permanent, part time	9.5	8.4	10.5	11.2	8.6	6.0
Remained casual	60.6	81.7	52.1	73.3	54.7	80.8

Note: These outcomes are based on employees who reported being employed on a casual basis in period t. Casual employees are defined as those who do not have paid holiday leave or sick leave. Variable *jbcasab*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

7. Employees who are not students

Earlier analysis showed that job switching rates were higher among younger employees, particularly among teenagers and those in their early 20s. Many of these employees reported they were currently studying (e.g. were dependent students). Students may have higher priorities other than work (e.g. study) and they may intend to be in their current job only temporarily until they finish studying and find work in that field. To examine how students effect the overall job switching rate, this chapter performs the same analysis as presented earlier, however, it excludes students. Students are defined as those who reported to be currently studying for a trade certificate, diploma, degree or other educational qualification either full-time or part-time, and those who reported still being at school.

7.1 Sample of non-student employees

Table 25 shows the proportion of employee observations who are students by method of setting pay at period t for the pooled years from 2008 to 2023. Around one in six employees overall reported they were studying and are removed from the analysis in this chapter.

This proportion was higher among award-reliant employees (31.0 per cent) who were more than twice as likely to be students than those on collective agreements or individual arrangements. Therefore, almost one-third of award-reliant employees are removed from the sample.

Table 25: Proportion of employees who reported to be students

Studying (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Proportion currently studying	31.0	14.2	13.6	17.3
Proportion not currently studying	69.0	85.8	86.4	82.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: These proportions are calculated from unweighted data.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

7.2 Job mobility of employees who are not students

Table 26 shows that removing students made little difference to the results on labour market transitions, with rates of transition to unemployment and to outside the labour force being about the

same as in Table 3 across all methods of setting pay. Removing students lowers the job switching rates across all methods of setting pay, with award-reliant employees still recording the highest rate.

Table 26: Job switching rates and labour market transitions by method of setting pay, non-students

	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Labour market state the following year* (t+1)				
Remained employee	86.6	94.1	90.1	91.0
Became an employer/self-employed	2.0	0.9	3.6	2.3
Became unemployed	3.7	1.0	1.9	1.9
Exited the labour force	7.7	4.0	4.4	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Remained employed^ (t+1)				
Switched jobs (t+1)	18.9	8.2	15.6	13.2

Note: *Those who reported to be a contributing family member after one year were removed from the sample. ^ Remained employed refers to those who 'remained an employee' and those who 'became an employer/self-employed' in period t+1.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

In line with reduced rates of job switching, removing students increases the average job tenure across each method of setting pay (Table 27). Award-reliant employees still reported the lowest job tenure on average and the highest proportion of employees with a job tenure of one year or less.

Table 27: Job tenure by method of setting pay, non-students

Job tenure (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Less than 1 year	27.3	11.6	20.2	18.0
1 year	11.3	6.4	9.6	8.7
2 to 5 years	33.6	27.8	34.8	31.9
6 to 10 years	15.2	20.6	18.2	18.6
11 to 20 years	9.6	20.4	12.5	15.1
More than 20 years	3.0	13.2	4.6	7.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average job tenure (no. years)	4.8	9.5	5.8	7.1

Note: The question asked was 'how long have you worked for your current employer?' Variable *jbempt*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 28 shows that removing students had little effect on the rates of job switching across age groups, with the largest changes occurring for those aged 15 to 24 years—the group most likely to have students. The job switching rate for award-reliant employees actually increased by 2.5 percentage points for this age group while the rate for those on collective agreements decreased by 2.7 percentage points (compared with the results in Table 8). The job switching rates for most other age groups decreased slightly after removing students, with this trend observed across each method of setting pay.

Removing students tended to reduce the rates of job switching for females more than for males, a trend observed across all methods of setting pay. For award-reliant employees, removing students reduced job switching rates by 4.0 percentage points for females and 1.6 percentage points for males, when compared with Table 9.

Table 28: Job switching rates by method of setting pay and selected individual characteristics, non-students

	Award-reliant employees (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	All employees (t)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Age (t)				
15-24	32.9	20.3	28.5	27.6
25-34	25.4	13.1	19.1	18.0
35-44	15.8	7.4	15.3	12.3
45-54	11.3	5.2	11.6	8.7
55-64	7.4	3.9	7.4	5.7
65 and over	2.9*	2.8	4.2	3.4
Sex (t)				
Female	17.0	7.7	15.4	12.3
Male	21.1	8.7	15.8	14.0
Total	18.9	8.2	15.6	13.2

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. Variables *hage* and *hgsex*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Removing students also generally reduced job switching rates across all occupations for all methods of setting pay. The reductions tend to be larger for the occupations with a higher proportion of award-reliant employees (compared with Table 15). For example, the job switching rate for Community and personal service workers drops by 5.0 percentage points and for Labourers by 2.9 percentage points.

Table 29: Job switching rates by method of setting pay and occupation, non-students

Occupation (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	Proportion of award-reliant employees within occupation	Proportion of award-reliant employees between occupations
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Labourers	21.6	9.8	20.0	38.8	19.7
Sales workers	20.3	13.3	15.4	35.7	14.7
Community and personal service workers	18.5	7.4	17.8	28.3	18.6
Machinery operators and drivers	16.7	9.1	17.7	26.3	11.6
Technicians and trades workers	21.4	11.8	17.8	16.3	11.5
Clerical and administrative workers	15.9	6.9	12.7	12.9	11.8
Managers	16.6	8.2	13.9	6.0	4.7
Professionals	15.9	6.9	15.9	4.6	7.5
Total	18.9	8.2	15.6	16.5	100.0

Note: Variable *jbmo61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Removing students reduced job switching rates for both males and females across most occupations, though the reduction for females is again greater than for males (Table 30). This was especially the case for award-reliant Sales workers, where the job switching rate of males was 4.0 percentage points higher than females (rather than being equal), and award-reliant Clerical and administrative workers, where the job switching rate of males was higher than females (rather than lower).

Table 30: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay, occupation and sex, non-students

Occupation (t)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Labourers	16.1	25.3	9.1	10.2	16.3	21.1
Sales workers	19.3	23.3	13.4	13.1	15.9	15.0
Community and personal service workers	16.5	25.6	8.0	6.4	17.5	18.7
Machinery operators and drivers	15.9*	16.8	12.1	8.9	18.7	17.7
Technicians and trades workers	25.4	20.2	6.7	12.8	14.0	18.3
Clerical and administrative workers	15.2	18.1	7.3	6.1	13.1	11.7
Managers	13.8	20.0	8.7	7.6	16.2	13.0
Professionals	16.0	15.6	6.8	7.1	16.4	15.6
Total	17.0	21.1	7.7	8.7	15.4	15.8

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. Variables: *jbmo61* and *hgsex*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Similar to the analysis on occupations, removing students generally reduced job switching rates across all industries for each method of setting pay (Table 31 compared with Table 17). The largest reduction for award-reliant employees was in Administrative and support services (from 30.7 per cent to 26.3 per cent), followed by Health care and social assistance (14.9 per cent to 12.2 per cent). The only exception was Construction, where removing students increased the job switching rates of award-reliant employees, as well as those on collective agreements.

Table 31: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay and industry[#], non-students

Industry (t)	Award (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	Proportion of award-reliant employees within industry	Proportion of award-reliant employees between industries
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Accommodation and food services	30.7	27.6	25.9	46.6	12.5
Retail trade	17.9	11.6	15.4	34.6	17.8
Administrative and support services	26.3	15.2	20.7	26.7	4.2
Other services	18.5	8.3	16.7	22.0	4.2
Transport, postal and warehousing	16.6	6.5	15.6	20.9	6.5
Manufacturing	17.9	9.4	14.6	19.3	10.2
Health care and social assistance	12.2	6.6	14.1	18.6	18.4
Wholesale trade	13.3	7.7	11.3	16.8	3.6
Construction	28.6	18.4	19.6	13.7	5.4
Education and training	7.7	5.3	10.5	6.2	4.2
Total	18.9	8.2	15.6	16.5	–

Note: # Only industries which accounted for more than 3 per cent of award-reliant employees were included. Variable *jbmi61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

As with occupations, removing students tended to reduce the job switching rates across industries for females more than for males (Table 32). This was especially the case for Construction, with the job switching rates for males being almost twice that of females after students were removed. Likewise, removing students from Accommodation and food services, where females initially had a higher rate of job switching than males, resulted instead in the male job switching rate being 3.4 percentage points higher than for females.

Table 32: Rates of job switching by method of setting pay, industry and sex, non-students

Industry (t)	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Accommodation and food services	29.4	32.8	27.2	28.2	26.1	25.6
Retail trade	17.4	18.9	11.3	11.9	16.2	14.8
Administrative and support services	22.2	29.9	16.8	14.0	20.5	20.9
Other services	22.3	14.9	4.7*	10.4*	20.7	14.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	17.5*	16.4	6.7	6.5	12.6	16.6
Manufacturing	17.5	18.0	11.1	9.0	15.7	14.3
Health care and social assistance	12.3	11.6*	6.8	5.7	13.8	15.1
Wholesale trade	11.9	14.1	9.8*	6.9*	12.5	10.8
Construction	15.4*	30.2	23.4*	18.1	18.8	19.7
Education and training	6.8	10.9*	5.1	5.9	10.3	10.8
Total	17.0	21.1	7.7	8.7	15.4	15.8

Note: # Only industries which accounted for more than 3 per cent of award-reliant employees were included. * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. Variables *jbmi61* and *hgsex*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Removing students also effected the employment outcomes from job switching. Table 33 shows that removing students reduced the median growth rate in hourly earnings for award-reliant employees who switched jobs by 2.5 percentage points (compared with Table 19). This resulted in the median growth rate in hourly earnings to be below that of employees on individual arrangements who switched jobs (which only dropped by 0.7 percentage points). A similar trend in the median growth rate in hourly earnings occurred for employees who did not switch. This suggests that students tend to receive higher growth in earnings when they switch jobs..

Removing students increased the proportion of employees who switched from part-time to full-time hours after switching jobs for both award-reliant employees and those on individual arrangements. For award-reliant employees, this proportion increased from 38.4 per cent in Table 19 to 44.6 per cent.

Table 33: Changes in employment characteristics by method of setting pay and job switching, non-students

	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Switched (t+1)	Did not switch (t+1)	Switched (t+1)	Did not switch (t+1)	Switched (t+1)	Did not switch (t+1)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Median growth in hourly earnings of main job (t to t+1)	8.2	3.8	6.5	3.8	8.6	4.1
Full-time employees^ (t)						
Changed to part-time hours (t+1)	21.3	9.6	15.1	5.6	11.6	4.4
Remained full-time (t+1)	78.7	90.4	84.9	94.4	88.4	95.6
Part-time employees^ (t)						
Changed to full-time hours (t+1)	44.6	16.7	40.9	16.1	48.4	17.6
Remained part-time (t+1)	55.4	83.3	59.1	83.9	51.6	82.4
Proportion that changed occupation* (t+1)						
Changed occupation (t+1)	65.1	7.4	56.5	6.4	57.5	7.2
Did not change occupation (t+1)	34.9	92.6	43.5	93.6	42.5	92.8

Note: Full-time employees worked 35 hours or more per week in all jobs. Part-time employees worked less than 35 hours. ^Full-time and part-time employees include those employed on a permanent and casual basis. *The occupational change results are based on responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation'. Variable *jbcmocc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Removing students does not alter the result that female award-reliant employees who switched jobs tended to have higher growth in hourly earnings (Table 34). The median growth rate in hourly earnings was a little over 3 percentage points higher for female award-reliant employees who switched jobs compared with their male counterparts.

Also, similar to results derived from the sample for all employees, female full-time employees changed to part-time hours at about twice the rate or more when compared with male full-time employees. This pattern was consistent across all methods of setting pay, as well as for those who switched jobs and those who did not.

Table 34: Changes in employment characteristics by method of setting pay, job switching and sex, non-students

	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Switched (t+1)	Did not switch (t+1)	Switched (t+1)	Did not switch (t+1)	Switched (t+1)	Did not switch (t+1)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Median growth in hourly earnings of main job (t to t+1)						
Females	9.6	3.8	7.4	3.9	8.3	4.2
Males	6.5	3.8	5.1	3.7	8.7	4.1
Full-time employees^ (t)						
Females						
Changed to part-time hours (t+1)	30.6	14.6	20.6	9.4	18.2	8.4
Remained full-time (t+1)	69.4	85.4	79.4	90.6	81.8	91.6
Males						
Changed to part-time hours (t+1)	15.3	5.8	11.1	2.8	8.4	2.6
Remained full-time (t+1)	84.7	94.2	88.9	97.2	91.6	97.4
Part-time employees^						
Females						
Changed to full-time hours (t+1)	39.8	13.9	36.0	14.2	41.6	14.6
Remained part-time (t+1)	60.2	86.1	64.0	85.8	58.4	85.4
Males						
Changed to full-time hours (t+1)	53.5	24.8	53.5	25.3	62.1	26.6
Remained part-time (t+1)	46.5	75.2	46.5	74.7	37.9	73.4
Proportion that changed occupation* (t+1)						
Females	66.5	7.11	56.3	6.5	57.7	7.5
Males	63.7	7.68	56.7	6.4	57.4	7.0

Note: Full-time is defined as working 35 hours or more a week in all jobs, part-time is defined as less than 35 hours. ^Full-time and part-time employees include both those employed on a permanent and casual basis. *The occupational change results are based on responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation'. Variable: *jbcmoocc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 35 shows the distribution of non-student employees across occupations who switched jobs *and* changed occupations, both before and after the switch.

The table shows that removing students altered the distribution of occupations across award-reliant employees (compared with the initial sample in chapter 6), both before and after they switched. However, the largest and only reductions for award-reliant employees following a job switch still

occurred in Sales workers and Labourers, with increases spread across all other occupations, as was the case in Table 21.

Table 35: Proportions of occupation by method of setting pay of those who switched jobs and changed occupations, non-students

	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Before switch (t)	After switch (t+1)	Before switch (t)	After switch (t+1)	Before switch (t)	After switch (t+1)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Managers	4.3	5.8	9.5	9.6	20.1	16.3
Professionals	4.7	7.5	22.2	23.0	23.1	25.1
Technicians and trades workers	9.2	11.8	11.2	10.0	12.8	12.0
Community and personal service workers	16.5	18.3	13.1	12.5	6.3	6.4
Clerical and administrative workers	11.9	15.8	16.3	18.2	15.7	17.0
Sales workers	18.7	10.7	9.3	5.5	7.5	6.6
Machinery operators and drivers	10.4	13.1	8.5	10.3	6.3	7.5
Labourers	24.3	17.0	9.9	10.9	8.4	9.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: *The occupational change results are based on responses to the question 'Has your occupation changed since [the previous interview date]? Note that a promotion or a change in employer does not necessarily mean a change in occupation' Variable *jbc_mocc*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Overall, the analysis presented in Chapter 7 showed that the removal of students reduced the rates of job switching across all methods of setting pay. However, award-reliant employees still recorded the highest rate of job switching at more than double that of employees on collective agreements. Removing students reduced the rates of job switching for females more than for males, a trend observed across all methods of setting pay, and reduced the median growth rate in hourly earnings for award-reliant employees, so that it was below that of employees on individual arrangements who switched jobs.

8. Award reliance across a 10-year period

Up until this point, the analysis has been on employees who switched jobs from one year to the next. This chapter follows individuals over a 10-year period to better understand how long they are paid award rates, measured as a proportion of the years they were an employee.

An analysis on the duration of low-paid award-reliant employment was undertaken in Wilkins and Zilio (2020) who focused on assessing how long low-paid award-reliant employees remain low-paid and award reliant over time and how this varied with individual and household characteristics. They estimated the probability of a low-paid award-reliant employee having not exited to higher-paid employment by a given point in time, and the likelihood of a low-paid award-reliant employee moving to higher-paid employment at a given point in time, if they had remained in low-paid employment until that time.

Our report differs to Wilkins and Zilio (2020), as we assess the number of years that individuals reported being paid award rates, not just those who are also low paid, as a proportion of the number of years they were an employee. We then categorise individuals based on these proportions and report a range of individual and job characteristics, along with rates of job switching for each of the categories.

8.1 Sample

To examine the number of years across the period that employees were paid award rates, this analysis takes advantage of the longitudinal nature of the HILDA survey by following the same group of individuals over a 10-year period. We create a balanced panel for the period 2014–2023, meaning the sample includes only individuals who participated in the survey for every year of the period.²¹

When creating a balanced panel, the time period chosen will determine the number of individuals in the sample, as respondents who have not participated in each survey year or who had not yet entered into the survey will be removed. Therefore, there is a trade-off between the length of time we can analyse the same group of individuals and the number of individuals we can track over time. We

²¹ For example, anyone who joined the survey or was first interviewed after 2014 was dropped from the sample. Likewise, if someone was not surveyed for a year within the period, they were also dropped from the sample.

choose 10 years as this provides a sizeable length of time (10 observations per respondent) while also maintaining a sufficient sample size to examine. We choose 2014–2023 as these were the most recent years at the time of writing.

Additionally, given the focus of this chapter is on assessing the number of years employees were paid an award rate, we restrict the sample to include only those who reported being an employee for at least five of the 10 years. These five years do not need to be consecutive. This restriction may remove individuals with weak attachment to the labour force and those who were just starting out in the labour market.²²

The final sample contains 6145 individuals (53 per cent females and 47 per cent males, unweighted). Later in this chapter we remove students from the sample (as in Chapter 7) and repeat some of our analysis to assess how sensitive the results are to the inclusion of students.

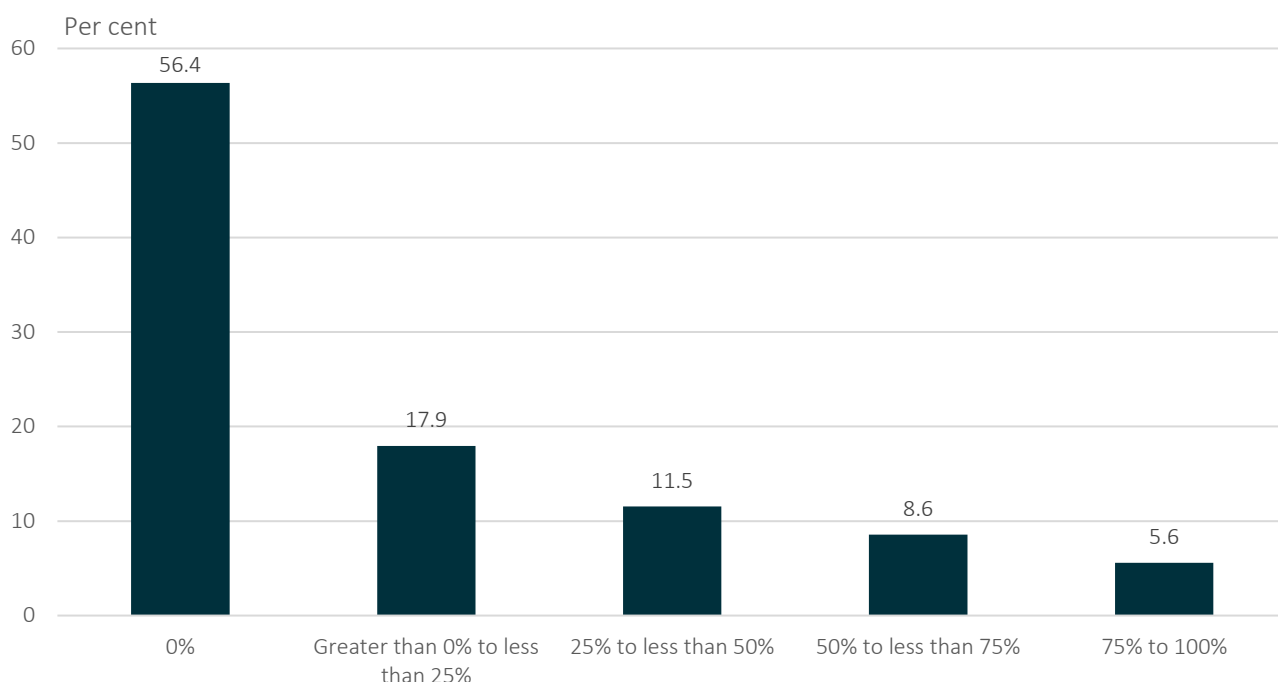
8.2 Number of years paid an award rate

The first step of the analysis is to calculate the number of years an individual was paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years they were an employee. Employees are then categorised into one of five groups.

Chart 5 shows the number of years an employee was paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years they were an employee over the 10-year period from 2014 to 2023. The chart indicates that over half (56.4 per cent) of individuals who were employees for at least five years during the period did not report being paid an award rate for any year. A further one in six reported being paid an award rate for less than 25 per cent of the years they were an employee. Around one in 20 (5.6 per cent) indicated being paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee.

²² This is because if individuals who, for example, were employees for only one of the 10 years were included, those who were paid an award rate for that year would be considered as being paid an award rate for 100 per cent of the period.

Chart 5: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years, 2014–2023



Note: Years of being paid an award rate are not necessarily consecutive. An employee may have been paid by other methods of setting pay and returned to being paid an award rate in future years.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.

Chart C1 in Appendix C compares the results for females and males. The chart shows that males were more likely to have not been paid an award rate during the 10 years (59.0 per cent) compared with females (53.8 per cent). Females were more than twice as likely than males to be paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the period they were an employee (7.9 per cent compared with 3.2 per cent).

Chart C2 in Appendix C compares the results for different age groups. The chart shows that the youngest age group (15–24 years), measured in 2014, compared with all other age groups, had the highest proportion of its employees being paid an award rate at least once during the 10-years. The age group with the highest proportion paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the period was those aged 65 years and above (15.3 per cent²³).

²³ This estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

Removing individuals who reported being students for any portion of the period 2014–2023 did not greatly alter these results (see Chart C3–Chart C5 in Appendix C). The largest change is observed in the youngest age group (15–24 years), with an increased proportion with no years paid an award rate.

Table 36 presents analysis by age and sex separately, taking the age of individuals at the beginning of the period (2014), for each of the categories in Chart 5.

For those who were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee, the distribution across the age groups is relatively even, compared with other categories. Those in the categories covering 25 per cent to less than 75 per cent were more likely to be in the youngest age group. More than half of those with no years paid an award rate were in the age groups between 25 and 44 years.

The two categories with the lowest proportions were more likely to comprise males than females, while individuals in the remaining three categories were more likely to be female than male. The largest gap between females and males was in the category with the highest proportion of years paid an award rate (75–100 per cent).

Table 36: Individual characteristics of employees by proportion of years spent as award-reliant, 2014–2023

	0%	Greater than 0% to less than 25%	25% to less than 50%	50% to less than 75%	75% to 100%
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Age in 2014					
15 to 24 years	12.4	37.7	39.2	40.1	24.6
25 to 34 years	27.8	20.6	18.0	17.9	22.9
35 to 44 years	27.0	19.6	19.3	17.7	19.2
45 to 54 years	22.1	15.5	15.6	14.3	19.9
55 to 64 years	9.6	6.3	7.6	9.1	10.6
65 and over years	1.2	0.4*	0.3**	0.9**	2.7*
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Sex					
Female	48.3	46.9	55.4	53.1	71.9
Male	51.7	53.1	44.6	46.9	28.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. ** Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50 per cent and is considered too unreliable for general use. Sample used in table contains only individuals who were employees for five or more years between 2014 and 2023. Variables *hgage* and *hgsex*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.

Table 37 shows the job switching rates for each of the categories by sex. The lowest job switching rate for both females and males was for employees who were not paid an award rate during the period (10.6 per cent), while the job switching rates for the two categories paid an award rate for up to 50 per cent of the period, was almost twice this, the highest of all categories. The rate then falls for the two categories of employees paid an award rate for 50 per cent or more of the years they were an employee.

The three categories which reported the highest rates of job switching were the same three categories with the highest share of employees aged 15–24 years (those with greater than 0 per cent but less than 75 per cent), reinforcing the association between age and job switching found throughout this paper.

There was generally little difference in the job switching rates between males and females across each of the categories.

Table 37: Job switching rates of employees by proportion of years paid an award rate, by sex, 2014–2023

	0%	Greater than 0% to less than 25%	25% to less than 50%	50% to less than 75%	75% to 100%
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Female	10.3	18.5	19.8	16.7	15.7
Male	10.9	19.3	18.3	18.2	15.7
Total	10.6	19.0	19.1	17.4	15.7

Note: Sample used in table contains only individuals who were employees for 5 or more years between 2014 and 2023. Variable *hgsex*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 38 reports the occupational distribution for each category. Occupations are observed across each year between 2014 and 2023, meaning that an individual may contribute observations to multiple occupations (across different years) if they changed occupation within the period.

The table shows that 29.5 per cent of all responses from those who were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee listed Community and personal service workers as their occupation. Together with Labourers and Sales workers, these were the most common occupations among employees who were paid an award rate for 50 per cent to 100 per cent of the years they were an employee. Professionals was the most common occupation among employees who were not paid an award rate or those paid an award rate for less than 25 per cent of the years they were an employee.

Table 38: Occupations of employees by proportion of years paid an award rate, 2014–2023

	0%	Greater than 0% to less than 25%	25% to less than 50%	50% to less than 75%	75% to 100%
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Community and personal service workers	7.5	13.7	23.3	20.6	29.5
Labourers	3.6	8.0	14.0	16.1	20.7
Sales workers	3.4	8.0	11.0	17.5	14.7
Machinery operators and drivers	4.6	9.0	8.3	9.4	9.3
Technicians and trades workers	10.4	12.6	12.5	10.9	7.9
Clerical and administrative workers	15.0	17.6	12.6	11.4	7.7
Professionals	37.6	21.0	12.8	8.4	6.1
Managers	17.7	10.2	5.4	5.8	4.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Table ordered by occupational proportions for '75% to 100%' group. Sample used in table contains only individuals who were employees for 5 or more years between 2014 and 2023. Variable *jbmo61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table 39 presents the industry distributions for each category, again with each individual contributing an observation for each year they provided an industry of employment. This means that a single individual may contribute observations to multiple industries if they changed industry within the period of analysis.

The most common industry for employees who were paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the period was Health care and social assistance, accounting for almost one in three employee responses (29.4 per cent). The two other most common industries for this category were Accommodation and food services and Retail trade (16.4 per cent and 15.8 per cent, respectively).

Table 39: Industries of employees by proportion of years spent paid an award rate, 2014–2023

	0%	Greater than 0% to less than 25%	25% to less than 50%	50% to less than 75%	75% to 100%
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Health care and social assistance	17.1	16.8	26.1	19.5	29.4
Accommodation and food services	1.2	6.3	9.3	9.6	16.4
Retail trade	4.4	9.4	14.8	21.2	15.8
Transport, postal and warehousing	4.2	5.6	5.5	4.7	6.3*
Manufacturing	7.5	9.7	6.9	9.5	5.9
Other services	2.5	3.3	3.9	3.8	4.8*
Administrative and support services	2.1	1.9	2.6	4.6	4.5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.6	1.2*	1.4*	1.7*	3.8*
Education and training	14.2	11.0	7.4	4.5	2.9*
Wholesale trade	3.0	4.4	2.3	2.6	2.1
Construction	6.0	7.2	6.4	5.8	1.9*
Arts and recreation services	1.7	2.0	2.2	1.5*	1.5*
Professional, scientific and technical services	10.3	6.7	3.0	2.9	1.5*
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1.4	1.3	1.1*	1.8*	1.0*
Public administration and safety	11.2	4.4	2.5*	2.5	0.8**
Information media and telecommunications	2.0	0.8	0.8*	0.6*	0.4**
Financial and insurance services	6.1	4.9	2.1*	1.9*	0.4**
Mining	2.9	2.7	0.8*	0.5*	0.4**
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1.7	0.4*	1.0*	0.7*	0.1**

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. ** Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use. Sample used in table contains only individuals who were employees for 5 or more years between 2014 and 2023. Table ordered by industry proportions based on the category '75% to 100%'. Columns sum to 100. Variable: *jbmi61*.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Overall, the information presented in this chapter suggests that, for individuals who were employees for at least five years between 2014 and 2023, around one in 20 (5.6 per cent) indicated being paid an award rate for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee. Individuals in this category were also 2.5 times more likely to be female than male.



Further, individuals in this category were spread across age groups. They had a lower job switching rate than employees who were paid an award rate for a smaller proportion of the years they were an employee, but at a higher rate than those who were not paid an award rate. They also tended to work as Community and personal service workers, Labourers, or Sales workers, and in Health care and social assistance, Accommodation and food services, or Retail trade.

9. Conclusion

The descriptive analysis presented throughout this paper indicates that, between 2008 and 2023, award-reliant employees switched jobs at a higher rate than employees on other methods of setting pay, especially those on collective agreements. The rates at which award-reliant employees transitioned from employment to non-employment were also higher for award-reliant employees than for those on other methods of setting pay. However, the reasons award-reliant employees provide for leaving their previous job is consistent with other employees—the most common being ‘To obtain a better job/Just wanted a change/To start a new business’.

The analysis found that younger employees across all methods of setting pay switched jobs at a higher rate than older employees. Similarly, dependent students and non-dependent children also had higher rates of job switching. Several job characteristics also showed some association with higher rates of job switching, such as casual employment, working as Sales workers and Labourers, and working in Accommodation and food services. These characteristics were also associated with a higher likelihood of being paid an award rate.

Award-reliant employees who switched jobs were also more likely to change occupation, transition from full-time to part-time hours, and receive a higher increase in hourly earnings, when compared with employees on other methods of setting pay who switched jobs. However, compared with employees on other methods of setting pay, award-reliant employees who switched jobs were less likely to move house for the new job, and for those who did move, award-reliant employees tended to move smaller distances.

Removing students from the sample reduced the rate of job switching for award-reliant employees, though they still maintained the highest rate compared with those on other methods of setting pay. It also reduced the median growth rate in hourly earnings, both for those who switched jobs and those who did not, finding that wage growth was similar to those on other methods of setting pay.

Finally, analysis over a 10-year period between 2014 and 2023 found that, although the group is small, individuals can spend several years paid an award rate. The data indicate that those who were award reliant for 75–100 per cent of the years they were an employee were 2.5 times more likely to be female than male and were spread across different age groups. The data also showed that this group switched jobs at a lower rate than employees who were paid an award rate for a smaller proportion of



the years they were an employee but at a higher rate than those who were not paid an award rate. They were also more likely to work as Community and personal service workers, Labourers, or Sales workers, and in Health care and social assistance, Accommodation and food services, or Retail trade.

Reference list

Andrews D & Hansell D (2019), *Productivity-Enhancing Labour Reallocation in Australia*, Australian Government, Treasury Working Paper 2019-06, June.

Andrews D, Deutscher N, Hambur J & Hansell D (2019), *Wage Growth in Australia: Lessons from Longitudinal Microdata*, Australian Government, Treasury Working Paper 2019-04, July.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2024), *Employee Earnings and Hours, May 2023, Australia*.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), *Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2010*, Catalogue No. 6306.0.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009), *Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, Aug 2008*, Catalogue No. 6306.0.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025), *Job mobility*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2025>.

Azzopardi D, Fareed F, Hermansen M, Lenain P & Sutherland D (2020), *The decline in labour mobility in the United States: Insights from new administrative data*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), OECD Economics Department Working Papers No. 1644, December.

Breunig R, Gong X & Leslie G (2015), *The dynamics of satisfaction with working hours in Australia: the usefulness of panel data in evaluating the case for policy intervention*, Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 130–154.

Causa O, Luu N & Abendschein M (2021), *Labour market transitions across OECD countries: stylised facts*, OECD, OECD Economics Department Working Papers No. 1692, December.

Deutscher N (2019), *Job-to-job transitions and the wages of Australian workers*, Australian Government, Treasury Working Paper 2019-07, July.

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).

Fair Work Commission (2025), *Statistical report—Annual Wage Review 2025*, Version 5, 16 May.

Hambur J (2023), *Did Labour Market Concentration Lower Wages Growth Pre-COVID?*, Reserve Bank of Australia, Research Discussion Paper RDP 2023-02, March.

Hathorne C & Breunig R (2022), 'Occupational mobility in the ALife data: how reliable are occupational patterns from administrative Australian tax records?', *Economic Papers: A journal of applied economics and policy*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 297–324.

Jimenez C & Rozenbes D (2017), [Award-reliant workers in the household income distribution](#), Fair Work Commission Research Report 1/2017, February.

Laß I, Botha F, Peyton K & Wilkins R (2025), [The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 23](#), The 20th Annual Statistical Report of the HILDA Survey, Melbourne Institute, Melbourne.

Piggott L, Webb S, Gray H, Latter J & Bondareva E (2023), [Low Pay Commission: Perceived barriers and risks of job mobility and progression of low-paid workers](#), YouGov, London.

Productivity Commission (2024), [Talent in transit: Occupation and industry mobility in Australia](#), Conference paper, ABS-RBA Conference, 11–12 June, Sydney.

Sila U (2019), [Job displacement in Australia: Evidence from the HILDA survey](#), OECD, OECD Economics Department Working Papers No. 1540, February.

van Netten J & Lipp J (2025), [Award-reliant employees in the household income distribution of employees: an update](#), Fair Work Commission Research Report 2/2025, February.

Summerfield, M., Garrard, B., Kamath, R., Nesa, M.K., Macalalad, N., Watson, N., and Wilkins, R. (2025). [HILDA User Manual – Release 24](#). Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Wilkins R & Wooden M (2011), [Measuring Minimum Award Wage Reliance in Australia: The HILDA Survey Experience](#), Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 11/11, May.

Wilkins R & Zilio F (2020), [Prevalence and persistence of low-paid award-reliant employment](#), Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Fair Work Commission Research Report 1/2020, February.

Yuen K & Cumming P (2021), [Labour market transitions of workers during COVID-19](#), Fair Work Commission Research Report 2/2021, February.

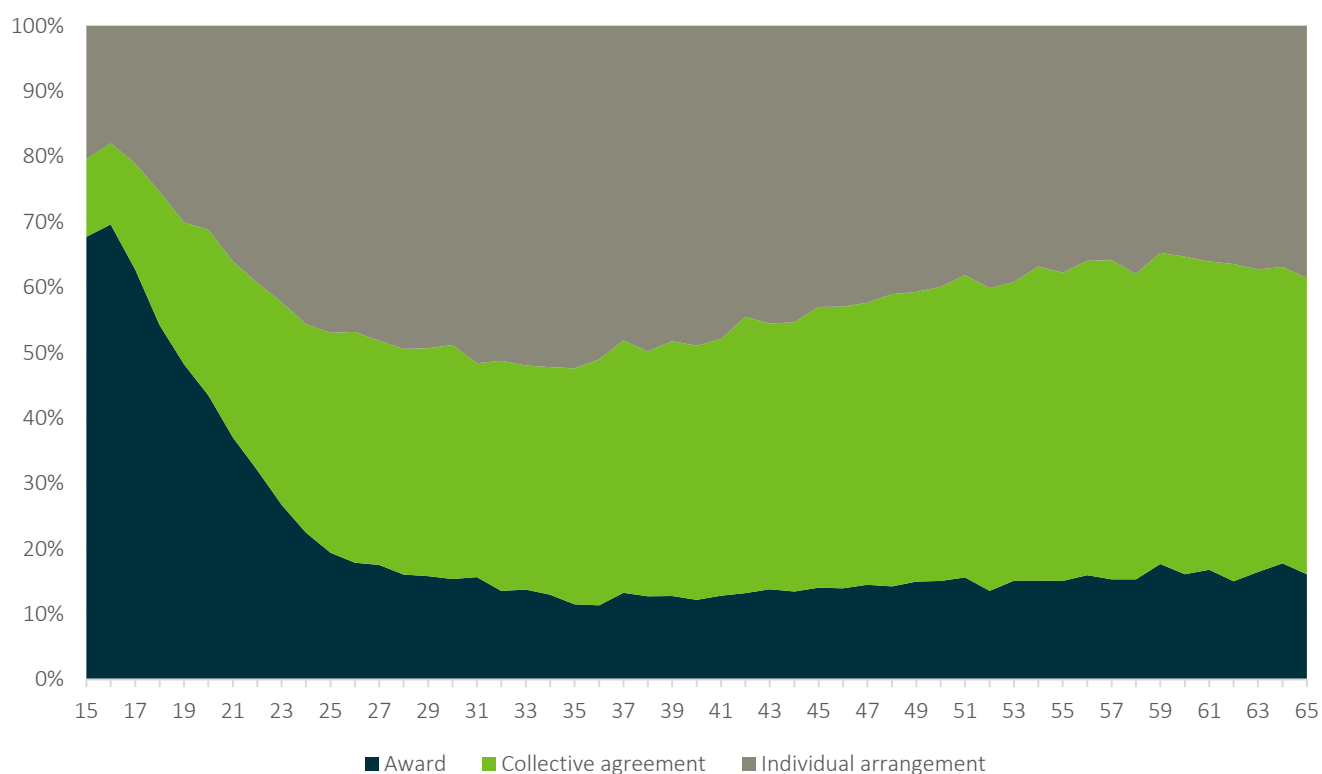
Appendix A

Table A1: Individual characteristics of award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008-2023

	Award-reliant employees	All employees
	(%)	(%)
Sex		
Female	55.7	48.8
Male	44.3	51.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Age group		
15 to 24 years	39.0	18.3
25 to 34 years	19.4	24.1
35 to 44 years	14.3	22.3
45 to 54 years	14.9	20.2
55 to 64 years	10.3	12.7
65 years and over	2.1	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Highest educational attainment		
Postgrad - masters or doctorate	2.4	7.9
Graduate diploma, grad certificate	1.9	6.5
Bachelor or honours	9.5	19.8
Advanced diploma, diploma	7.7	9.8
Certificate III & IV	21.9	21.7
Year 12	25.3	18.0
Year 11 and below	31.3	16.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Urban and regional share		
Major cities	63.6	70.9
Regional	36.4	29.1
Total	100.0	100.0
Relationship in household		
Couple with dependents	21.0	33.1
Couple with no dependents	21.1	27.6
Dependent student	18.6	6.6
Lone parent with dependents	4.7	3.7
Lone parent with no dependents	1.6	1.6
Lone person	8.9	10.6
Non-dependent child	18.3	12.2
Other	5.8	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Chart A1: Proportion of employees by method of setting pay and age



Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table A2: Employment type of award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023

	Award-reliant employees	All employees
	(%)	(%)
Permanent, full-time	34.8	61.5
Permanent, part-time	15.7	15.0
Casual	49.5	23.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: Casual workers are defined as having no paid holiday leave or sick leave (*jbcasab*).

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table A3: Occupation of award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023

	Award-reliant employees	All employees
	(%)	(%)
Managers	3.7	11.7
Professionals	6.5	25.5
Technicians and trades workers	12.1	11.9
Community and personal service workers	19.9	12.4
Clerical and administrative workers	9.9	14.3
Sales workers	20.7	9.1
Machinery operators and drivers	8.8	6.5
Labourers	18.3	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table A4: Industry of main job for award-reliant employees and all employees, 2008–2023

	Award-reliant employees	All employees
	(%)	(%)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2.0	1.2
Mining	0.6	2.2
Manufacturing	8.4	8.1
Electricity, gas, water and waste Services	0.5	1.2
Construction	5.8	6.6
Wholesale trade	2.7	3.1
Retail trade	20.7	10.1
Accommodation and food services	18.4	6.6
Transport, postal and warehousing	5.0	4.6
Information media and telecommunications	0.7	1.8
Financial and insurance services	1.4	4.3
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1.1	1.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	2.5	7.3
Administrative and support services	3.5	2.5
Public administration and safety	1.0	7.0
Education and training	3.8	10.9
Health care and social assistance	16.0	16.2
Arts and recreation services	2.0	1.8
Other services	4.0	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table A5: Hours usually worked per week in main job by age cohort, 2008–2023

	15–24 years	25–34 years	35–44 years	45–54 years	55–64 years	65+ years	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Less than 10 hours	58.9	9.8	8.7	6.6	8.1	7.9	100.0
10 to less than 20 hours	41.1	14.8	16.3	12.0	11.4	4.4	100.0
20 to less than 30 hours	22.3	20.0	20.8	19.7	13.6	3.6	100.0
30 to less than 35 hours	16.1	19.6	23.2	21.8	16.4	2.8	100.0
35 to less than 40 hours	13.6	27.4	21.5	22.1	14.0	1.5	100.0
40 to less than 50 hours	12.0	28.7	25.2	21.3	11.8	1.1	100.0
50 hours or more	7.2	26.0	27.7	24.7	12.8	1.5	100.0

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Appendix B

Table B1: Labour market transitions of males and females by method of setting pay

Labour market state in the following year* (<i>t</i> +1)	Award (<i>t</i>)	Collective agreement (<i>t</i>)	Individual arrangement (<i>t</i>)	All employees (<i>t</i>)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Females				
Remained employee	86.4	93.6	88.9	90.2
Became an employer/self-employed	1.3	0.7	2.7	1.6
Became unemployed	2.9	0.9	2.0	1.8
Exited the labour force	9.4	4.8	6.4	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Males				
Remained employee	87.3	94.1	90.5	91.1
Became an employer/self-employed	2.0	1.1	4.1	2.7
Became unemployed	4.7	1.4	2.1	2.3
Exited the labour force	6.0	3.4	3.3	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: *Those who reported to be a contributing family member in *t*+1 were removed from the sample.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table B2: Main reason stopped working in previous job for employees who switched jobs by sex

	Award (£) (%)	Collective agreement (£) (%)	Individual arrangement (£) (%)	All employees (£) (%)
Females				
To obtain a better job/Just wanted a change/To start a new business	33.0	37.0	32.3	33.7
Not satisfied with job (e.g. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers)	33.1	29.4	32.8	32.0
Got laid off/No work available/Retrenched/Made redundant/Employer went out of business/Dismissed	14.1	10.5	15.3	13.6
All other reasons	19.9	23.1	19.6	20.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100
Males				
To obtain a better job/Just wanted a change/To start a new business	33.0	39.9	35.6	35.9
Not satisfied with job (e.g. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers)	29.6	24.9	27.8	27.6
Got laid off/No work available/Retrenched/Made redundant/Employer went out of business/Dismissed	21.7	19.4	21.4	21.1
All other reasons	15.6	15.8	15.2	15.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Note: All other reasons includes 'Job was temporary or seasonal', 'Returned to study/Started study/Needed more time to study' and 'Too much travel time/Too far from public transport', each of these responses accounted for 4 per cent or less of award-reliant employees.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table B3: Main reason stopped working for those who transitioned from employee to either 'Unemployed' or 'Not in the labour force' by sex

	Award (£) (%)	Collective agreement (£) (%)	Individual arrangement (£) (%)	All employees (£) (%)
Females				
Got laid off/No work available/Retrenched/Made redundant/Employer went out of business/Dismissed	18.7	12.1	17.6	17.6
Not satisfied with job (eg. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers)	14.0	6.7	10.4	10.4
Own sickness, disability or injury	12.2	12.2	8.3	8.3
Returned to study/Started study/Needed more time to study	9.9	6.8	8.6	8.6
Pregnancy/To have children	15.2	21.0	21.5	21.5
Job was temporary or seasonal	4.7	6.2	6.5	6.5
To stay at home to look after children/house/someone else	6.8	5.7	7.5	7.5
Retired/Did not want to work any longer	5.3	16.4	6.0	6.0
Other	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2
All other reasons*	10.0	9.6	10.5	10.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Males				
Got laid off/No work available/Retrenched/Made redundant/Employer went out of business/Dismissed	25.0	26.6	30.3	27.6
Not satisfied with job (eg. unhappy with hours, pay, working conditions, boss, other workers)	17.0	8.6	13.8	13.4
Own sickness, disability or injury	11.9	15.2	11.8	12.9
Returned to study/Started study/Needed more time to study	11.9	6.9	6.2	8.0
Pregnancy/To have children^	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1
Job was temporary or seasonal	8.0	6.7	10.7	8.9
To stay at home to look after children/house/someone else	2.2	1.7	1.4	1.8
Retired/Did not want to work any longer	4.0	19.5	10.7	11.0
Other	5.9	3.9	3.7	4.4
All other reasons*	14.1	10.7	11.1	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: *All other responses includes Travel/Have a holiday, Spouse/partner transferred, Too much travel time/Too far from public transport, Migrated to a new country, Change of lifestyle, Holiday job, Own sickness, disability or injury and NEI to classify.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table B4: Job switching rates by method of setting pay and industry

	Award-reliant employees (t)	Collective agreement (t)	Individual arrangement (t)	Award-reliant proportion of industry	Proportion of award-reliant employees between industries
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Accommodation and food services	32.5	31.8	29.7	55.2	18.4
Retail trade	20.0	15.2	16.9	40.8	20.7
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	23.5	20.6	18.1	34.5	2.0
Administrative and support services	30.7	18.6	23.1	27.6	3.5
Other services	20.3	11.2	18.5	25.2	4.0
Arts and recreation services	22.1	15.2	16.2	21.5	2.0
Transport, postal and warehousing	17.7	7.1	16.9	21.5	5.0
Manufacturing	19.2	9.8	15.6	20.7	8.4
Health care and social assistance	14.9	7.5	15.4	19.7	16.0
Construction	26.8	18.2	19.9	17.5	5.8
Rental, hiring and real estate services	24.8	12.6	19.7	17.3	1.1
Wholesale trade	18.6	8.7	12.0	17.1	2.7
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	17.1*	6.5	15.1	8.2	0.5
Information media and telecommunications	28.9	11.6	17.3	8.0	0.7
Education and training	9.4	6.4	13.5	7.0	3.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	20.7	15.3	17.6	6.9	2.5
Financial and insurance services	11.7	8.0	12.9	6.2	1.4
Mining	25.6	11.9	14.6	5.1	0.6
Public administration and safety	31.3	6.9	14.4	3.0	1.0

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Table B5: Job switching rates by method of setting pay, sex and industry

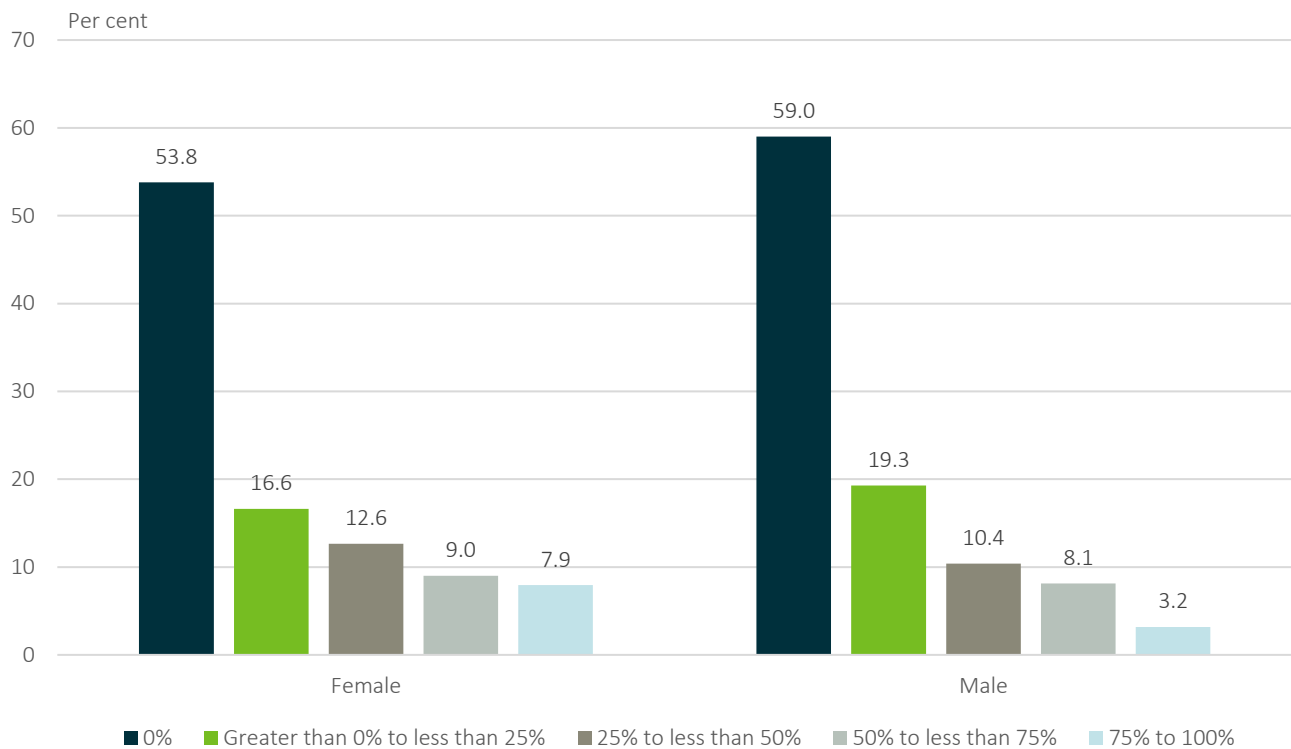
	Award (t)		Collective agreement (t)		Individual arrangement (t)	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	18.5*	25.9	22.0*	20.3	16.9	18.4
Mining	21.8*	26.9	11.4*	12.0	15.5*	14.4
Manufacturing	20.3	18.7	11.7	9.5	17.8	15.0
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	18.0*	17.0*	14.5*	5.2*	17.9	14.2
Construction	21.6	27.3	21.0*	18.0	21.6	19.7
Wholesale trade	17.5*	19.1	9.1*	8.6*	13.7	11.4
Retail trade	20.2	19.6	15.2	15.2	17.9	16.1
Accommodation and food services	33.3	31.3	31.9	31.5	31.4	28.1
Transport, postal and warehousing	20.4*	16.9	8.2	6.8	14.8	17.6
Information media and telecommunications	22.2	36.7	10.9*	12.3	22.6	13.5
Financial and insurance services	11.0	12.8*	9.2	6.6	13.3	12.5
Rental, hiring and real estate services	20.8	30.7	16.2*	8.8*	19.8	19.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	20.4	21.5	15.4	15.1	17.2	17.9
Administrative and support services	23.7	36.4	17.8	19.2*	23.3	22.9
Public administration and safety	17.5*	35.9	8.1	6.1	14.6	14.3
Education and training	8.9	11.5*	6.0	7.6	12.2	15.7
Health care and social assistance	15.1	14.3	7.9	6.4	15.0	16.6
Arts and recreation services	25.4	18.5	21.5	11.6	15.8	16.4
Other services	26.3	14.9	7.7	13.2	23.2	15.9

Note: * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 8–23.

Appendix C

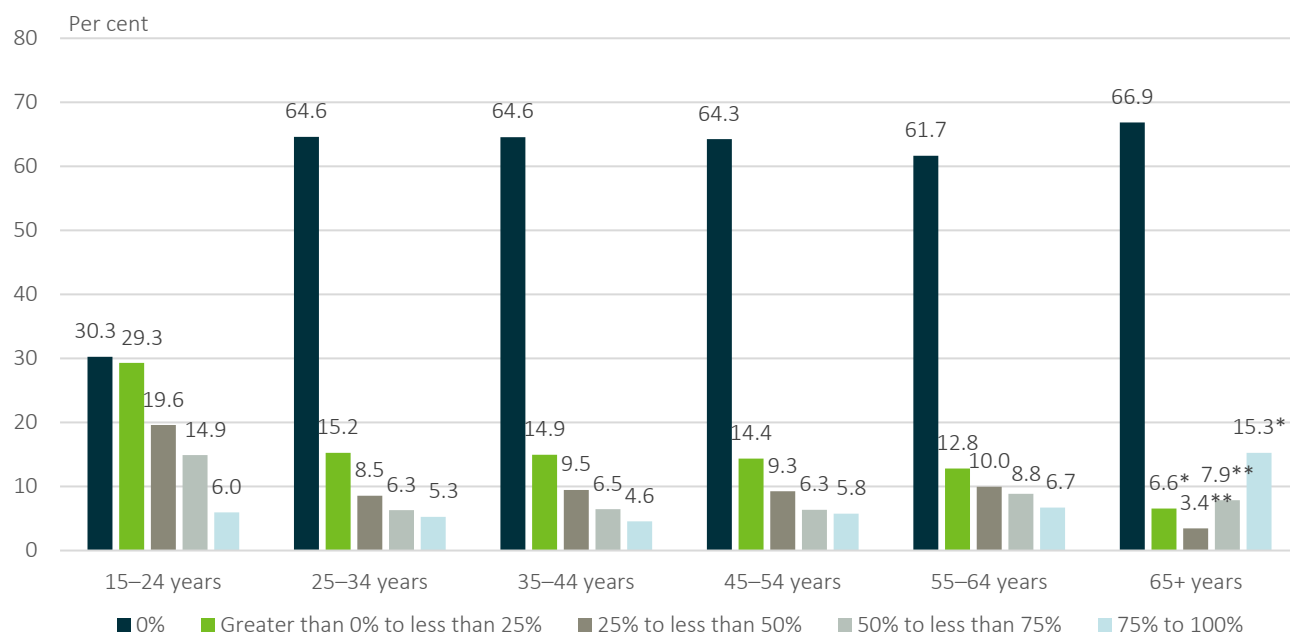
Chart C1: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years, 2014–2023, by sex



Note: Years paid an award rate are not necessarily consecutive.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.

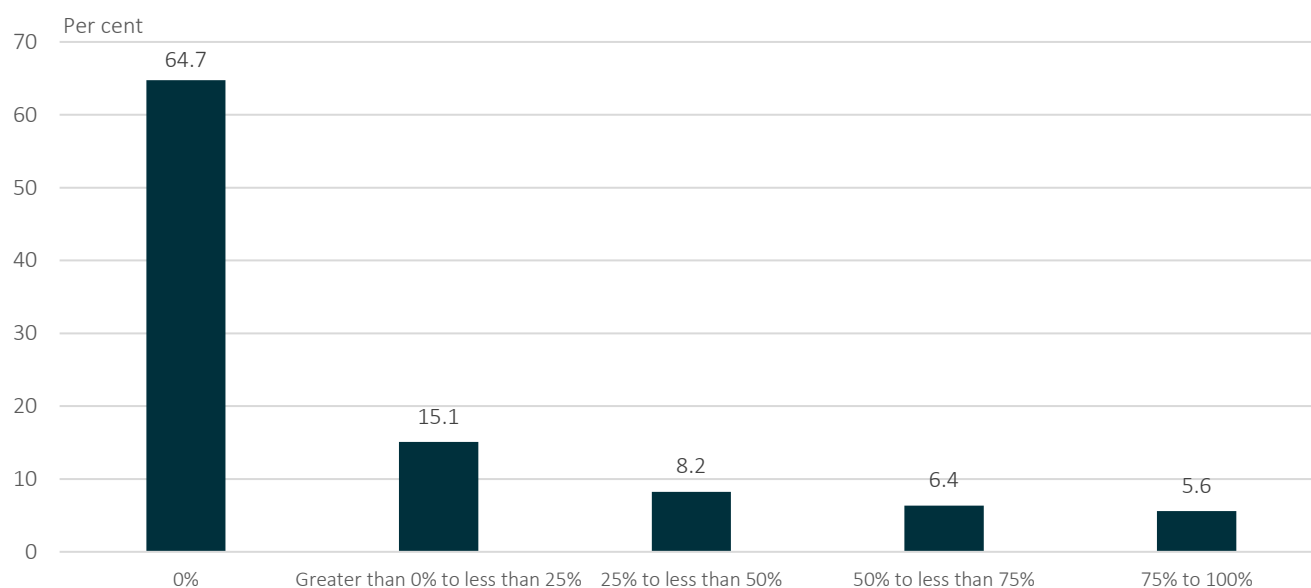
Chart C2: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years, 2014–2023, by age group



Note: Years paid an award rate are not necessarily consecutive. Age taken in 2014. * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. ** Estimate has a relative standard error above 50 per cent and is considered too unreliable for general use.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.

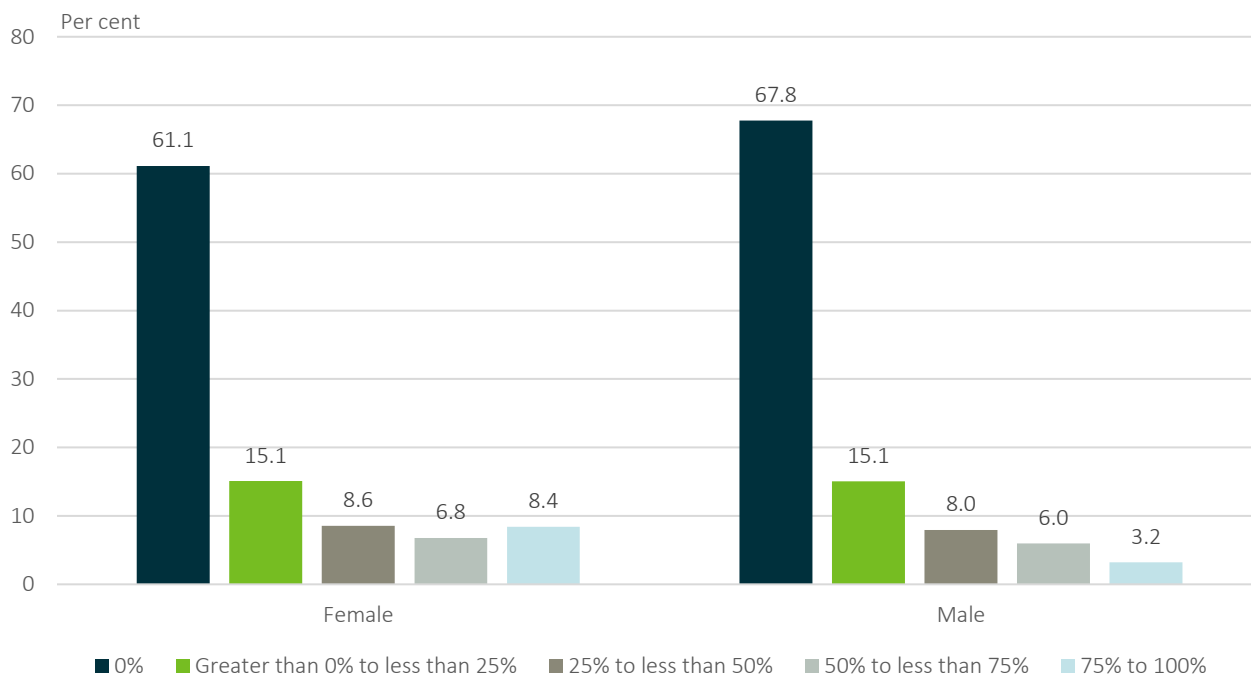
Chart C3: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years and not students, 2014–2023



Note: Years paid an award rate are not necessarily consecutive.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.

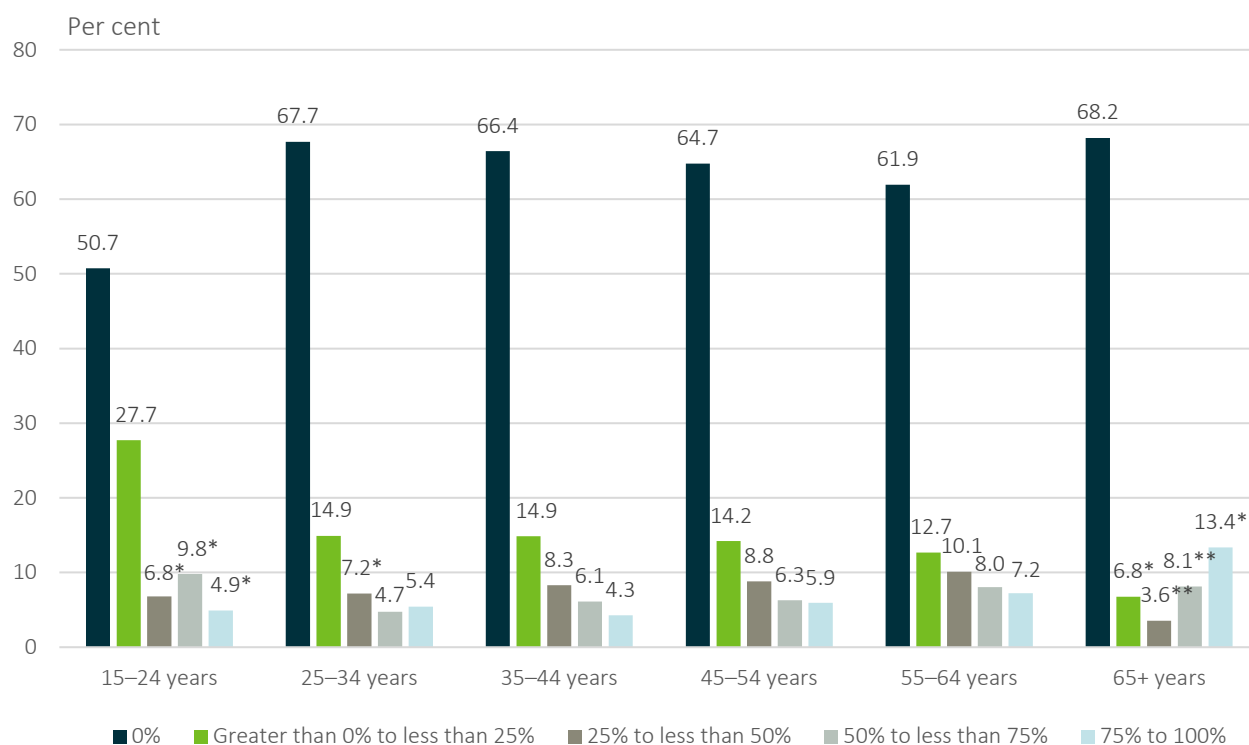
Chart C4: Number of years paid an award rate as proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years and not students, 2014–2023, by sex



Note: Years of award reliance are not necessarily consecutive. An employee may have left award reliance and returned in future years.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.

Chart C5: Number of years paid an award rate as a proportion of the number of years as an employee, individuals who were employees for 5 or more years and not students, 2014–2023, by age group



Note: Years of award reliance are not necessarily consecutive. Age was taken in 2014. * Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. ** Estimate has a relative standard error above 50 per cent and is considered too unreliable for general use.

Source: HILDA Survey, Waves 14–23.