

## SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON JOB SECURITY

### AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY GROUP

#### ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

At the hearing on 21 April 2021, the following question was asked which Ai Group's took on notice:

#### **Question:**

**Mr Smith:** Just on a different point, Senator, in relation to the issue that you raised, I think that that TWU survey is the same survey that was provided to the New South Wales inquiry. One result of that TWU survey that flies in the face of a lot of other evidence is the fact that it found that the majority of people are relying on the platform for their main source of income, or a significant proportion. All of the other survey data is saying that's not the case. We did have some criticisms of the national survey that was used with the Victorian inquiry, in that the figure of more than seven per cent that came out of that was a self-selecting sample about the proportion of gig workers in the economy. But one thing we do think is very useful about that survey is about this issue of how many of the gig workers are relying on their income from these platforms as the majority income that they receive, and it is nowhere near a majority. So we think that's a much better thing to rely on than the TWU survey.

**CHAIR:** What percentage would you suggest, Mr Smith, is the appropriate figure?

**Mr Smith:** We are happy to take that on notice. It's quite a small minority. I can provide the data from that Victorian survey that we've got no reason to believe is not correct.

#### **Answer:**

The Victorian Government's Inquiry into Victorian On Demand Workers commissioned and relied on a National Survey of digital platform work in Australia, prepared by various academics associated with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), University of Adelaide and the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The National Survey reported that:

- Roughly 80% of participants indicated that the income earned from working through platforms was non-essential.
- Only 2.6% of respondents reported working more than 35 hours per week on digital platforms.

- Only 2.7% of respondents derived 100% of their total annual income from platform work.
- Four in five current platform workers (80.7%), reported that digital platform work made up less than half of their total annual income.
- Engagement with digital platforms varied between a few times per week (27.5% of current platform workers) and less than once per month (28.3%).
- Only a very small percentage of people in Australia were spending a large number of hours undertaking digital platform work. Almost half (47.2%) of current platform workers report spending less than 5 hours per week working or offering services through all digital platforms with which they engage, whereas only 5.4% of current platform workers reported spending 26+ hours per week.
- Only 19.2% of current platform workers derived half or more of their income from platform work.

In its [submission](#) to the Australian Senate Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers, Airtasker stated that on average workers complete less than five tasks a month, with the average task price at January 2018 being \$140. The Victorian On-Demand Inquiry Report noted that this suggested that the average Airtasker worker is not using the platform for full-time work, but mostly to supplement other income (Victorian On-Demand Report, p. 63).

A recent [AlphaBeta report](#), (p.6) also found that, based on an assessment of average hours online, most Uber drivers drive to earn a supplementary income, with nearly half of all drivers spending less than 10 hours per week on the app.