In April 2012 the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) commissioned research into the nature, prevalence and regulation of unpaid work experience, internships and trial periods in Australia. The research was completed in January 2013 by Adelaide University Law School Professors, Andrew Stewart and Rosemary Owens. Findings will inform FWO education and enforcement activities in the area of unpaid work.

Unpaid internships are prevalent in most professional industries.
Unpaid work arrangements are often considered a prelude to paid work. 
Belief that unpaid internships are mutually beneficial and should not be discouraged.

Significant number of people, especially youth and migrants who may be unaware of their workplace rights, are being asked to undertake unpaid trials and internships.

Instigate legal action before relevant courts where appropriate.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

International students and temporary visa holders are especially vulnerable to unpaid work as they seek to secure access to permanent residency.
Organisations exist whose business is the promotion and facilitation of unpaid work opportunities.

WHAT?

Unpaid work and internships are prevalent in most professional industries.
Unpaid work arrangements are often considered a prelude to paid work.
Belief that unpaid internships are mutually beneficial and should not be discouraged.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Run free and voluntary educative program for the higher education sector.
Initiate engagement with key stakeholders representing employers and employees, with an emphasis on vulnerable workers.
Improve liaison with relevant government agencies.
Engage with DIAC, ACCC and APSC to alert agencies to potential illegality of unpaid work arrangements and to encourage information sharing.

WHAT?

Growing number of businesses are using unpaid work schemes as an alternative to hiring paid staff – if this trend is left unchecked it’s likely to gather pace as employers try to maintain competitive advantage.

WHAT?

Determine if a person is entitled to minimum wage and other employee entitlements requires consideration of each case’s own particular facts.

WHAT?

Genuine lack of understanding and clarity about the legality and legitimacy of unpaid work.
Common misconception that work integrated learning can be unpaid.
Legitimate vocational placements play an important and beneficial role in the pathway from education to work.

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?

WHAT?