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Abstract

An emerging trend in the Australian labour market is the increasing polarisation of the workforce. This is evident in the fact that a growing number of adults are working in jobless households in Australia which has led to a widening of the income gap towards filling this gap. Specifically, data from the first wave of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey in Australia (HILDA) Survey are used to: (i) quantify the incidence of jobless households in Australia; (ii) identify the characteristics of individuals that are associated with membership of a jobless household; and (iii) examine some of the financial consequences of living in a jobless household. The analysis finds that household joblessness in 2001 remains pervasive with strong associations with factors generally thought to influence individual joblessness such as age, education, ethnicity, illness and family background. It is also found that poverty and financial stress are more a function of household joblessness than of individual joblessness.

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