

Forum : Citizen's forum of Labour

2026

Theme : Empowering the youth to drive/ thrive/ embrace and match the requirements of the future labour market

Name of the citizen : Sarah Klantschnig

Family situation ○ Married / dating ● Single ○ With kids, if so how many :	Education level ○ Primary ● Secondary ○ University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

I am Sarah Klantschnig, a 32 year old specialist in wild coastal exploration in New South Wales, Australia. I work flexibly in various guide centres around the coast, usually depending on what activities are most popular at the time. From bushwalking in national parks to leading kayaking expeditions, my profession involves much time working outside with customers. Skills like first aid, navigation, teamwork and communication are part of the core practical knowledge required in my field, which make it difficult to be replaced by AI. However, AI in navigation and other tools is becoming ever more common, although it is not always reliable when used in emergencies. I do not believe these can replace the practical knowledge I have from experience, as well as the inter-personal skills in this job.

After high school, I left Sydney where I grew up, to pursue my passion of working with nature and animals. Although I would love to work with conservation organisations full time, the tourism industry makes it much easier for me to support my cost of living. The flexibility of my profession, especially as I need to move seasonally to different areas, is enabled due to temporary job contracts, which fit my restless nature. Although I only receive a little more than minimum wage, accommodation is often included in my contract, which allows me to stay in lodges near the guide center I am working at. Nevertheless, it is difficult for me to settle down. Due to the nature of my work, I am entitled to a government pension and have a superannuation pension fund collected through obligatory contributions from my employers, which gives me much security about the future. However I know that in other countries people with similar jobs like mine work with much less security provided by the government. To me, this shows the underappreciation for many unique service based jobs.

As well as being able to share my passion with others, my job is special as it does not confine me to an office space. Working outside provides alternatives for young people to increasingly digital and office-based jobs, who like me valued practical skills. My workload and hours depend on the influx of tourists, which varies every week. Therefore, although I need to adapt my workdays on short notice, I rarely have to work the whole week. This makes my job far

from traditional. My lifestyle is supported by this unique flexibility and freedom, which is what many young people today find important.

2. What do you suggest on your scale ?

I believe that the future labour market should provide young people with the opportunity to choose their own path. They should have access to both higher education and practical training, to be able to make a living by doing what they love. Schools, local businesses and organisations should work together to provide internships, apprenticeships and hands-on experiences that can provide access from young people into green jobs like conservation.

I also believe that the informal sector should be better recognised and supported. Formalising informal work should not mean removing the flexibility that makes these jobs attractive. Instead, it should be the informal firms that employ workers who have to carry the responsibility of protection. Schemes such as superannuation in Australia provide a blueprint, where the employer is required to channel a percentage of worker's income to their pension. In addition, minimum wage is a core policy that provides the basic protection from exploitation that a worker needs. Better enforcement by governments through cooperation with firms needs to be established, to ensure that young people do not need to sacrifice dream careers because of costs of living.

Regarding AI, young people should be taught how to use it responsibly rather than depending on it completely. Practical experience and human judgement remain essential skills that need to be valued. For example vital safety mechanisms require human observation, as technology is often faulty and cannot be fully trusted in emergencies. Education should therefore combine digital skills with communication, problem-solving and practical training.

Finally I am a firm believer in human wellbeing and happiness over economic profit. The goal of governments should not be primarily to increase economic growth, but to create a better life for citizens. No matter if this means that economies profit less, it is the individuals who need to have priority. Young people should be allowed to break free from rigid traditional labour models and create jobs that mold around their personality and dreams. The government should support this transition, adapting change to requirements and demands in specific industries. I believe this could be done through working with workers' unions, to implement gradual change.

In total young people of tomorrow should be able to have increasingly more flexibility in their jobs, with opportunities in all kinds of sectors. It is time to rid ourselves of the strict confinements of the past, to create a labour market that is up to date and evolving with the times. Workers' welfare needs to be prioritised by governments, first of all by implementing basic protection of human rights when formalising the informal sector. Individuals should not suffer whilst firms are making millions, therefore cooperation with these is imperative. AI needs to be limited, while providing young people the opportunity to develop practical skills as well.