



## **Abstract:**

### ***The Changing Nature of Work: Strengths and Shortcomings of New Zealand's Benefits and Protections for Workers in Non-Standard Employment***

**By Laura Berntsen**

New Zealand, along with countries across the globe, is grappling with the immense forces of technological change and globalization. These disruptive forces, coupled with weakened labour institutions and changes in government regulations, have profoundly affected the nature of work and the way income is distributed globally and locally. In some cases, this has led to a breakdown of the traditional employer-employee model and increased utilization of “non-standard forms of employment”.

In many ways, New Zealand's system of protections and benefits is well-suited for managing some of the biggest challenges countries are confronting as they adjust to and plan for changes in the nature of work. Crucial benefits like health coverage, superannuation, parental leave, unemployment assistance, and financial assistance for raising children and paying for childcare do not require a worker to have – or have lost – traditional, full-time employment.

Despite the system's strengths, those in non-standard employment often face substantial obstacles in achieving social and economic well-being and the data available may mask even more significant issues. The challenge facing New Zealand lawmakers is the need to develop and implement policies that address existing problems and buffer the workforce against future challenges without jeopardizing areas in which New Zealand is performing well. This report explores non-standard employment in New Zealand and makes recommendations on how to promote a labour market ecosystem that allows all workers to get ahead.

Laura is being hosted on her Axford Fellowship by Treasury.