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## Job insecurity spreads to banking sector, but Howe Inquiry to investigate solutions to growing trend

The exodus of banking jobs to overseas is limiting opportunities for secure jobs and careers, the Howe Inquiry into insecure work will hear when it enters its third week of hearings in Sydney tomorrow.

Three Westpac employees who will appear at the inquiry either already know they will lose their jobs, or expect to, during the bank's announced redundancy of 560 workers this year.

The workers will tell the inquiry, chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe, that they fear the bank's plans to offshore their jobs signals the end of job security in their industry and reduces their opportunity for ongoing work in the future.

The Westpac employees will be joined at the hearings by workers from a range of sectors, representative of the 40% of Australians now engaged in insecure work.

The hearing will begin with a leading Australian expert on workplace issues, Professor John Buchanan, Director of the University of Sydney's Workplace Research Centre, who will talk about solutions to the growth of insecure work.

Another academic, Chris Elenor, will give evidence of his personal battle with insecure work. Mr Eleanor, employed on a casual basis at the University of Western Sydney's School of Business, is unpaid between teaching semesters and often is unaware of how much work, if any, he will have from one semester to the next.

Mr Howe said the Sydney hearings, which would run across Monday and Tuesday, would also include a discussion about vulnerable members of the community, including migrant workers, who accepted insecure work because of a fear it was all they could get.

Mr Howe said that while the growth of insecure work mirrored global trends, the development had been more pronounced in Australia.

"Casual workers now make up almost one quarter of Australian employees, and fixed-term contracts, independent contracting, labour hire and new forms of outwork are all growing in different industries," Mr Howe said.

"Many of these jobs deny workers the reliable income, permanency, security, and conditions and entitlements that permanent jobs offer." "It is difficult for workers in insecure employment to plan their future or be confident they will even have a job into the future."

Among the issues to be considered by the panel during the inquiry are:

- The extent of insecure work and its causes and effects;
- The workers that are most at risk of insecure work and why;
- The social and economic cost of insecure work to employees, employers, government, and the Australian community; and
- The rights and entitlements that can best assist to provide security for workers.

The inquiry has been swamped with more than 500 submissions, which can be downloaded and the full hearing schedule, including tomorrow's agenda, is available at [securejobs.org.au](http://securejobs.org.au).

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