

Monday, 2 April 2012

Save the date:**Brian Howe at National Press Club on 18 April**

The chair of the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia, Brian Howe AO, will address the National Press Club in Canberra on 18 April.

Mr Howe heads a panel that has been commissioned by the ACTU to investigate the extent of the insecure work and its impact on workers, their families and the community, and to provide recommendations on measures that can be taken to address any problems that are identified.

Drawing on almost half a century of involvement in politics and economic and social policy – including more than a decade in Federal Cabinet, culminating as Deputy Prime Minister to Bob Hawke and then Paul Keating - Brian Howe will tell the National Press Club what the inquiry has learnt about work in Australia in the 21st century, what it means for the type of country we are becoming, and what should be done about it.

He has spent the past six months heading the inquiry into insecure work, including hearing from dozens of witnesses during 25 days of hearings in every state and territory.

The inquiry has received more than 500 written submissions, including hundreds from individual workers, along with community organisations, academics and unions. In the course of his inquiry, Mr Howe has also had consultations with government agencies and a range of business groups.

“The inquiry process has given us a clear picture of work in Australia today, and how much it has changed over the past two decades,” Mr Howe said.

“What we have learnt is extremely disturbing. Millions of Australians have little or no job security and few of the entitlements or protections of permanent workers.

“This has implications for their careers and rights at work, but just as seriously, it has an impact on their lives outside of work, because without that security, they cannot plan and have difficulty doing things such as getting a car or home loan. It truly is a precarious existence.”

Brian Howe will be handing his report to the ACTU on 18 April – the day he is scheduled to address the National Press Club - for consideration at the ACTU Congress in mid-May. The report will contain a range of recommendations about the future of work in Australia.

The inquiry is an unprecedented undertaking by Australian unions, who last year launched the national Secure Jobs. Better Future campaign to fight for better rights and job security for the 40% of the workforce who are in casual, contract, labour hire and other forms of insecure work. More information is available at www.securejobs.org.au

Mr Howe was Deputy Prime Minister for the Labor Government between 1991 and 1995. He was a Member of Parliament for the seat of Batman from 1977 to 1996, and a Minister between 1983 and 1996. His portfolios included Social Security, Health, Housing and Community Services. He is a Professorial Associate at the Centre for Public Policy at Melbourne University, and author of Weighing Up Australian Values: Balancing transitions and risks to work & family in modern Australia (UNSW Press, 2007).

Media contact:

Rebecca Tucker (03) 9664 7359 or 0408 031 269; rtucker@actu.org.au