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Senate inquiry exposes damning reality of insecure work

The Senate Select Committee on Job Security has heard appalling evidence in Newcastle this week detailing the extent of the insecure work crisis in this country.

Almost three quarters (72%) of NSW TAFE teachers are hired on a casual basis, and not one of those casual teachers received an offer for a permanent role under the Morrison Government's ineffectual casual conversion law.

Out of the more that 2300 eligible casual workers at the University of Newcastle, only a handful were offered conversion to permanency.

Data collected from 19 universities has shown that out of all the casually hired academics, only 2% were deemed eligible for a permanent role.

The inquiry also heard that the largest employer in the mining sector is now a labour hire company – Workpac – and that labour hire workers are paid 40% less than directly employees.

Coal giant Glencore admitted that the disparity in pay between their labour hire or contract workers and their direct employees was as high as $30,000 per year (approximately 30%).

Mining company BHP have also revealed that less than a third (29%) of their employees are directly employed.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"The evidence that has piled up in this inquiry is just driving home the point that we already knew – we need to do something about the scourge of insecure work in this country.

"Labour hire firms like Workpac make it too easy for big business to avoid their obligations like giving workers paid leave entitlements and a clear pathway to permanent work.

"The Morrison Government's casual conversion law gives too much discretion to the employer to deem a worker 'not eligible' for a permanent role.

"Working people have fronted up at this inquiry and given first-hand accounts of the realities of insecure work. They deserve a government which will act to fix the problem, not legislate to entrench the crisis."

Media contact: Kleo Cruse ACTU 0433 021 999