

My name is Maxine Mullen. I work at Westpac at Levin, and I am proud to be one of over 10,000 New Zealanders who signed the petition sent to the government today asking them to step in and protect our jobs.

Our survey of Finsec members at the beginning of this year found that job security is the number one issue for bank staff.

We know that it's a huge issue for hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders who worry about whether they'll still have a job to go to next week or next month and how they will be able to support their families.

Finsec members have been out in communities over the past few weeks talking to the public about protecting jobs in the banks.

We have seen great support from the public for our cause.

Like the 461 people who signed at the Frankton Markets in Hamilton last Saturday morning. Or one of our union leaders whose wife and daughters collected 90 signatures – including the 10 year olds school principal and the 15 year olds high school teacher. Or the dozens of people I spoke to out on the streets in my home town of Levin.

Nearly everyone we asked supported our campaign. This is backed up by the results of the UMR public opinion poll of 750 New Zealanders last week.

A solid majority of respondents believe the Government should require banks to maintain staff levels in exchange for the guarantee on customer deposits and bank borrowing.

Around 4 in 5 – or 79% support this, while only 14% were opposed and 7% were unsure.

Our union members are proud to have such great support out there. The public recognises that banks are still making big profits and should be loyal to their New Zealand staff. We are determined to convince the government that they should be on our side and should do all they can to keep Kiwis in work.

And I say to this Bill English.

Before the government rules out putting job protection conditions on banks he needs to listen to the 10,500 people who signed this petition and the 79% of New Zealanders who think it is fair to place job protection conditions on the schemes.

Bill English needs to stop siding with bank CEOs and do more to protect local jobs.

He needs to meet with us and look at options for protecting jobs rather than say he won't meet with us.

We expect the government to meet with us, to look at and discuss options for keeping local bank workers in work.