

Wednesday 17 October 2018

Change the Rules for fair pay in anti-poverty week

The peak body for working people is calling for urgent changes to workplace laws to ensure working people get pay rises that meet their costs of living.

A report from the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) finds two in five Australians that live in poverty are working. This affirms what we already know: Working people are struggling to make ends meet.

The call for fair pay rises that keep up with the cost of living, and raise living standards for workers is urgent and comes during anti-poverty week, which runs from October 14-20.

While the Morrison Government skites about Australia being the second-wealthiest country in the world, in terms of wealth per adult, it's presiding over appalling poverty rates.

The current minimum wage is not a living wage and no longer keeps people out of poverty. As a result more than 28,000 people are homeless but working full-time.

Insecure work is one of the core causes of hardship for Australian workers, with 40 percent of working people in insecure work. This includes permanent casuals, rolling short term contracts, sham contracting, insufficient work hours, and labour hire.

Wage growth is at near record lows, with four out of five people being refused the tools they need to negotiate with the real decision-makers in order to win fair pay rises and more secure jobs.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil

"The Government argues that poverty in Australia is not a problem – this report affirms what we've known for a long time that poverty and inequality are on the rise.

"It's totally unacceptable that the Morrison Government fails to recognised the level of poverty, with two out of five people in poverty in work.

"No one should ever have to live in poverty – we all deserve fair pay and secure jobs we can count on that keep up with the costs of living - housing, food, energy, and health.

"The rules are broken; this Government is stopping working people get access to the fair pay rises and job security that is so badly needed in this country.

"Right now, the very wealthy, corporations, and big business are taking more than their fair share, while working people are getting less than we need.

"We're living in a country where one minister's internet bill is more than the annual minimum wage – we need to rebalance this power and make sure working people get their fair share."

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