

May 15, 2019

Minimum wage workers robbed in Morrison's Australia

Full-time workers should not live in poverty in modern Australia. That is the basic proposition the ACTU will put to the Fair Work Commission today on behalf of Australian workers.

People who rely on the minimum wage are in desperate need of a pay rise. They are more likely to be in part time or casual jobs, with 20% of casual and part time employees currently experiencing food insecurity (having insufficient money for food within the past year), according to Foodbank.

The minimum wage still leaves some in full-time work well below the OECD definition of relative poverty. One in six people who are homeless in Australia work full time according to ACOSS.

In this context, the ACTU's proposal for a 6% increase in the minimum wage is a pragmatic and modest proposal.

The fact it has stirred opposition from many in the Coalition and the business lobby shows exactly how low Australia has sunk under the Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Government.

The low road proposed by Scott Morrison's backers in the business lobby of near-zero real wage increases is a recipe for an entrenched working poor, inequality, social divisiveness and lower economic growth.

According to the Commission's own statistical report, low wages growth and consequent low household consumption is slowing the economy.

Wage growth since the Coalition came to office in 2013 has averaged barely 2% per year – the slowest wage growth in the entire postwar era.

Real wage increases have been non-existent, despite continued productivity improvements and record company profits.

For working people, the result is that it is getting harder and harder to make ends meet, with reliance on credit increasing and the idea of saving money for a house or holiday an illusion.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil

“The safety net to protect workers from falling into poverty has failed with workers left to walk the hire wire unprotected – trying to balance a budget with higher living costs and lower wages.

“Many are so desperate that taking on three, four or even five jobs has become common and secondary jobs now make up around 7.3 per cent of all jobs in the economy.

“This particularly affects women, with the RBA highlighting last week that most of the people taking up secondary jobs to make ends meet are women.

media release



“The Morrison Government has betrayed everything that previous generations of Australians worked to create for us and our families – a decent society where everyone gets a fair go.

“Today we will argue strongly for a 6% pay increase.

“What we know is that we need to change the rules so that our minimum wage is one that people can live on – this is the basis of the fair go.

Media contact: Tim O’Halloran 0409 059 617; tim@theshapeagency.com.au;