

Wednesday 25 January, 2017

Australian workers need a pay rise, not a pay cut

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) today welcomes Labor Leader Bill Shorten's firm commitment to protecting the wages of millions of workers who sacrifice their weekends for the benefit of our economy.

Employer groups have been on a relentless attack of weekend penalty rates, all in a bid to increase profits at the expense of workers' take home pay.

Mr Shorten has today put people's wages above corporate greed, recognising that many Australian families rely on weekend penalty rates to survive.

At a time when wages are stagnating, employers are trying everything to cut wages even further. Cutting penalty rates, the termination of enterprise agreements, insecure contracts, erosion of working conditions and increased job insecurity are all making life harder and harder for working Australians.

The announcement today that Labor will move to change the laws to protect workers' pay is an important step in the right direction.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"The ACTU welcomes Labor's recognition of the importance of weekend penalty rates through its commitment to protecting working people's take home pay."

"Australian workers need a pay rise, not a pay cut, and regardless of how employers or the Turnbull government might try to spin it, reducing penalty rates is a pay cut."

"There are more than 800,000 people working across the retail and hospitality sector, most of whom rely on award wages and conditions. If Sunday penalty rates are cut, Australian workers already struggling will have their living standards further eroded."

"The attack on Sunday penalty rates in the retail and hospitality sector will be the first domino to fall if the Fair Work Commission decides that Sunday rates can be cut. We expect similar attacks on all sectors would soon follow."

"Mr Shorten's commitment to changing the rules to stop the FWC commission from being able to decide to cut take home pay means that extra money from working weekends is protected."

"The conversation needs to be changed; workers' wages need to be grown and protected, not attacked and cut at any opportunity."

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