

Monday 16 October, 2017

Statement from ACTU President Ged Kearney on Anti-Poverty Week

This week is anti-poverty week, a reminder that three million working Australians are living in poverty.

The current minimum wage is not enough to lift all Australians above the poverty, according to the Fair Work Commission Expert Panel. Roughly three million Australians are currently living in poverty line.

Cuts to penalty rates will only make life harder for 700,000 low-paid workers.

The Turnbull Government has created an environment where working people are having their wages cut at one end and their bills increased at the other, while big business gets a tax cut.

Inequality in Australia is at a 70 year high.

Addressing poverty means improving the wages and conditions for working people.

The Turnbull Government is consistently attacking working people, cutting wages and doing nothing to address insecure work and casualisation.

Things are even worse in remote communities where the Turnbull Government is pushing families into poverty and destroying real jobs through the Community Development Programme. Under this programme jobseekers work 25 hours a week with no workplace protections and receive no wages.

The increase in costs of housing and energy are growing far faster than wages, and working people are struggling to keep their head above water.

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Key Stats:

Wage growth is now at a record low and wage inequality is at a 70 year high.

The top 20% of workers earn 49% of all wages, while the bottom 20% of workers earns just 4% of wages.

In 2014 2.99 million people, 13.3% of the population, were living below the internationally recognised poverty line in 2014, an increase of 1.5% from 2004 (11.8%).

The number of children living in poverty increased from 14.8% in 2003-04 to 17.4% in 2013-14.

For details of events happening nationwide for Anti-Poverty Week visit www.antipovertyweek.org.au

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