

Friday 1 June, 2018

Minimum wage increase another hard-won step towards fairness

The announcement today of an increase to the minimum wage of 3.5% or \$24.32 per week, is a step in the right direction but will still leave some full-time workers struggling.

The restoration of a living wage – one of the proudest achievements of the early Australian union movement – remains the goal of our ongoing campaign.

The minimum wage should not leave people in poverty, it should provide a comfortable life for low-paid workers and underpin our labour market.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“This increase is a step in the right direction, and takes us closer to our goal of 60% of the median wage.

“The minimum wage should be pegged at 60% of the median wage. This is the level set by the OECD – that is what’s required to ensure that every full-time worker in Australia can survive on their wage.

“All Australian workers need a pay rise, but none more so than the 2.3 million people who are now award reliant. This 3.5% increase that equates to \$26.71 per week for a hospitality worker or \$24.33 for a horticulture worker will be a welcome reprieve for them but we will continue to fight for the restoration of a living wage that underpins a much fairer collective bargaining system.

“We have to change the rules on the minimum wage. People who have been forced into poverty by the inadequacy of this wage should not have to wait every year to see if they will be saved by the Fair Work Commission. The minimum wage should be set to keep pace with wages.”

“Moving towards a Living Wage would help mitigate widening income inequality. Rising income and wealth inequality is the challenge of our time. Tackling inequality will help resolve many of the fundamental economic and social problems we currently confront

“It is time to live up to the promises of the Harvester judgment and restore a minimum wage that is “fair and reasonable” and sufficient to provide a standard of living that is suitable for a contemporary “human being living in a civilized community”

ENDS

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