

Thursday 7 June, 2018

Women lead the charge to change the rules

Decades of failed trickle-down economics have left Australia with a crisis of insecure work and stagnant wage growth. But for women, the situation is even worse.

Because of our broken rules, women get paid less, are disproportionately affected by insecure work and underemployment, have lower super balances and are therefore more likely to retire in poverty. Caring responsibilities which our society traditionally expects women to shoulder are almost universally unpaid.

But as women are hit hardest by our broken rules, they stand to gain the most from changing them. Women are the majority in groups which will benefit from the restoration of a living wage and penalty rates, a fairer and more independent workplace umpire, more equitable working arrangements for the 85% of Australians who have caring responsibilities, changes to the superannuation system to ensure that no one retires in poverty, and securing 10 days paid Family and Domestic Violence leave for all Australian workers.

Women know this, and polling conducted for the ACTU by Cadreon shows that women are ready to change the rules.

The polling found:

- 66% of women think that business have too much power, compared to 54% of men.
- 63% of women oppose cuts to penalty rates, compared to 50% of men.
- 54% of women think the results of cutting penalty rates will result in businesses making more profits, not employing more people or delivering wage rises, compared to 47% of men.
- 67% of women say they have not had a pay rise in the last twelve months, compared to 61% of men.
- Only 31% of women have had a wage rise in the last twelve months, compared to 39% of men.
- 52% of women think that it is harder to get a wage rise that covers the cost of living compared to 45% of men.
- Both men and women have similar levels of concern around the levels of insecurity they feel in their work.

The polling indicates that the ACTU's Change the Rules campaign is resonating strongly with female voters, which could exacerbate the Turnbull Government's problems winning over women.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"Women are ready to change the rules because they are being hit harder by our broken workplace rights.

"We need action on the gender pay gap, penalty rates, secure jobs and flexible work arrangements.

"We need to change the rules for women in work and I encourage every Australian woman to join your union, and join a movement for change."

Video about Lorraine, a support teacher who spent 18 years in insecure work:

<https://youtu.be/tL50t0XT540>

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