

Monday 13 May 2019

## **Michele O’Neil first ACTU President since Hawke to address minimum wage case**

ACTU President Michele O’Neil will present the union movement’s case to a hearing to determine the annual minimum wage case this week as the country faces a clear choice on the future of the minimum wage.

The ACTU has been campaigning to restore the minimum wage to a living wage. Australia was the first country in the world to establish a living wage – which could not only support a worker but also their dependents and provide a comfortable life.

Over time this has been eroded by conservative governments and their backers in the business lobby. The current minimum wage leaves some workers who receive it in poverty. 30,000 people in Australia work full time but are homeless.

This election presents a clear choice between the Morrison Government which has voted for cuts to penalty rates and has never supported a significant increase to the minimum wage, and the ALP, with their plan to reverse the cuts to penalty rates and support a significant increase to the minimum wage.

Michele O’Neil will argue on Wednesday that the minimum wage should be increased by 6 per cent this year, taking another step toward the full restoration of a living wage.

**Who:** ACTU President Michele O’Neil

**What:** Address to the annual minimum wage case

**When:** 10am Wednesday 15 May 2019

**Where:** 80 William Street Sydney

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:**

“No one who works full time should be living in poverty. This is completely unacceptable and avoidable. The Morrison Government has made the decision to abandon these workers.

“Australia should be proud to have been the first nation to establish a living wage, but we need to act now to renew that promise for every worker.

“The minimum wage should not just be enough to stop you starving, it should be enough to provide for a decent life for all full-time workers.

We will argue for a 6 per cent increase this year but we know the real solution is to change the rules that determine how the minimum wage is set.

“The Morrison Government has attacked workers and done nothing to lift their wages for six years. We need to change the government to change the rules for low income workers.

“We can’t allow conservative government to continue to tear down what generations of workers have built. We need to restore a living wage.”

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