

Thursday 14th April 2022

Unemployment figures will not address rampant insecure work, real wage cuts

Unemployment remains at 4 per cent according to ABS labour force statistics released this morning. This is cold comfort to working people who have struggled through nearly a decade of record-low wage growth, and are facing another real wages cut in the first six months of this year.

The Prime Minister promised wage growth when the unemployment rate hit 5 per cent, then 4 per cent, and now says that the decade of low wage growth will be over when unemployment dips below 4 per cent.

Every rosy projection he has made on wages has been wrong.

The reality is that the Morrison Government has done nothing to generate wage growth, and has in fact made it easier for employers to keep working people in insecure, low-paid jobs.

The headline unemployment rate hides the reality that millions of Australians are in insecure work, working multiple jobs at the highest rate on record and struggling to find the hours that they need to support themselves and their families.

This crisis in insecure work has broken the long-established connection between low unemployment and wage growth as workers simply do not have security they need to push for pay rises.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“The Morrison Government promised wages growth when unemployment hit 5 per cent, and 4 per cent, now working people are told the pay rises are coming, we just need unemployment in the 3 per cent range.

“The headline unemployment number hides the fact that millions of Australians are looking for more hours, working multiple jobs or have given up looking for work all together. Insecure work is the biggest barrier working people face in the fight for wage growth.

“The Prime Minister knows it will take action from the Federal Government to create wage growth, but like so many other issues, he has gone missing on wages when working people needed him most.

“For almost a decade, the Federal Government has been promising wage growth. The truth is Scott Morrison and his Government will never deliver pay rises for working people because they do not accept that low wages and insecure work are a problem. Australian workers deserve better.”

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