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WPI figures show growth in awards is not enough

Despite significant pay rises for minimum wage and award-dependent workers being included in today's WPI data – released this morning by the ABS – average wages are still going backwards by 4.2 per cent due to high inflation and ongoing anemic wage growth across the rest of the economy. This breaks the previous record for all-time real wage cuts, set by the last set of wage growth numbers.

These figures demonstrate the urgent need for the changes to our bargaining system contained in the Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill, which will enable millions of workers across the economy to secure their first pay rises in a decade.

Modelling released by the Centre for Future Work earlier this week estimated that the average wage rise per worker if the Bill raises bargaining coverage to the OECD average for mixed enterprise and multi-employer bargaining would be almost \$1,500 in the first year after the Bill becomes law.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien:

“These numbers show the limits of what can be done with a broken system. Even with historic wage rises flowing through this quarter to minimum and award-dependent workers, everyone is still going backwards, at an average of 4.2 per cent.

“To get pay rises across the economy we need to make bargaining more accessible, in more workplaces. The Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill is a critical step towards achieving that goal, and the faster it becomes law the faster Australian workers will see the benefits.

“Big businesses are campaigning against the Bill because they will never support wage rises for working people. They are fighting to protect this system, which sees massive pay cuts for working people, while profits and executive pay continue to set new records.”

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