

Wednesday 25 January 2023

## Cost of living crisis continues for workers

Inflation for the year to December 2022 was 7.8 per cent according to data released this morning by the ABS, the highest rate since 1990. Driven by non-discretionary items like food and beverages (9.2 per cent), fuel (13.2 per cent), electricity (8.6 per cent) and housing (10.7 per cent, and higher for renters).

This data shows that Australian workers are still deep in a cost of living crisis with inflation outpacing wage growth by more than double on the most recent available figures.

Relief for workers must come in the form of increased wage growth, the reforms included in the Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill will support this but more action is needed. The Albanese Government's commitment to act on wage theft and ending exploitation of casual and labour hire workers must be a priority.

The RBA's myopic approach to inflation control has placed the burden of controlling the recent spike on workers, while ignoring the underlying price gouging which has driven CPI growth. This must end, the RBA must consider a broader range of objectives including full employment.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"These figures show the cost of living crisis is far from over for Australian workers. Wage growth is less than half the rate of inflation and essential items continue to lead price increases.

"Action to get wages moving is years overdue, and after a decade of wage suppression under the previous Government cannot come soon enough.

"The changes to bargaining passed last year will make a difference for millions of workers when they come into effect in June. The Albanese Government's commitments to act on wage theft and the long-standing rorting of casual and labour hire arrangements need to be implemented as a priority, as this has become a business model for employers across the economy.

"The RBA seems set to increase rates again next month, heaping more financial stress on working people who have waited more than a decade for a wage rise which keeps them in front of the cost of living. We have to stop punishing the people who are already struggling to put food on the table."

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