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First step in the right direction for young workers

The ACTU applauds a decision by the Fair Work Commission to scrap the 90 per cent pay rate for 20-year-old retail workers.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver welcomed the Fair Work Commission's order of a phasing-in of the new 100 per cent pay rate in two increments - 95 per cent from July 1 this year, then the full amount from July 1 next year.

The increased rate will only apply after they have worked for 6 months with the one employer.

"It's wrong that a 20-year-old gets paid 90 per cent of an adult wage, they should be paid as an adult," he said.

"I commend the Commission for acknowledging this fact. Unions have long argued that age discrimination should not be the decision-maker in how much someone is paid - it should be equal pay for equal work."

"An 18-year-old is recognised as an adult under the law. Many are independent and have the rent and expenses of an adult, some have families, and yet they are paid less."

"An 18 year old can go to war and fight for their country but if they enter the workforce they get 30 per cent less than their colleagues."

Mr Oliver said this is the first step and, while it's a long road ahead, unions would continue to fight for 18-year-olds to receive the adult wage.

"Unions will be looking closely at this decision by the Fair Work Commission and how it will impact future claims as we continue to campaign for fair pay at adult rates for young workers."

"We will be discussing the implications because the current system is out-of-date," Mr Oliver said.

"It's outdated policy that a young person is working side by side doing the same job in a workplace but getting paid less than the person next to them who is older."

"Young workers are important contributors to thousands of workplaces and anyone who argues that paying them a fair wage will cost them their jobs is underselling their worth."

"Employers hire younger workers for a variety of reasons and it's time they were paid a wage which reflected that."

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