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Big business attack on penalty rates based on lies

Business leader Kate Carnell has been caught out blatantly misleading the community on the critical issue of penalty rates today.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said claims by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) CEO that there is a direct link between penalty rates and jobs is misleading.

“The Fair Work Commission said Sunday penalty rates do not have a significant effect on Sunday employment,” said Mr Oliver.

“It also said the employers’ evidence did not reliably show that existing Sunday penalty rates negatively impact employment or that removing them would provide any significant benefit to business or job seekers.

“Ms Carnell would know that employment in the restaurant industry has grown above the national average since 2000.”

Mr Oliver said employers have been unable to present any evidence to back up their claims that cutting penalty rates is linked to higher employment.

“The Fair Work Commission highlighted that employers couldn’t provide a shred of evidence that more people were employed when penalty rates were removed or reduced in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia in the past.

“If Ms Carnell is genuinely interested in jobs growth and addressing youth unemployment, why isn’t she calling on the Government to reverse its decision to cut more than one billion dollars out of skills and training in the budget?

“Why isn’t she calling on the Government to invest in apprenticeships and traineeships instead of cutting them?

“Why isn’t she calling on the Government to outline a jobs plan for the nation at a time when we are seeing huge numbers of jobs, across a range of sectors, go offshore?

“The answer to all of this is that Ms Carnell is only genuinely interested in one thing – cutting penalty rates and cutting the pay packets of millions of Australians to boost employer profits,” said Mr Oliver.

Key facts and findings of the Fair Work Commission

- Sunday penalty rates in the Restaurant Award are neutral in respect of productivity and the regulatory burden because they do not significantly affect business turnover
- Employment costs associated with Sunday penalty rates do not have a significant effect on employment on Sundays
- The Sunday penalty rates provisions are not considered to have economy-wide effects
- There is a need to provide additional remuneration for people working unsociable hours
- The Restaurant Award currently provides additional remuneration for working on Sundays and should continue to do so

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