

Working people would be \$4700 worse off if Dutton was PM

The average Australian worker would be \$4,700 worse off if annual wage growth had continued at the same low rate as under the last Coalition government, according to ACTU analysis of today's Wage Price Index data.

With today's Wage Price Index showing that wage growth averaged 4.1 per cent for the year to June 2024, average wage growth under the Albanese Government is now at 3.8 per cent.

This is in stark contrast to the average annual wage growth of just 2.1 per cent under nearly a decade of Coalition Governments from 2014 to 2022.

Today's steady increase matched the 4.1 per cent achieved in the year to March 2024. Wages also increased in real terms, growing by 0.2 per cent for the year to June 2024. Wages for workers on enterprise agreements rose 4.3 per cent over the year to June 2024, the fourth quarter in a row of wage growth of at least 4 per cent.

This result comes after a range of reforms to get wages moving by the Albanese Government including equal pay, multi-employer bargaining and closing labour-hire loopholes – along with their support for lifting minimum and award wages over the past three years and aged care workers' wages.

Wage growth will continue to be positive with the 3.75 per cent pay rise for award-reliant workers only coming into effect on 1 July and therefore not yet picked up in these figures. The Government's 15 per cent pay increase for childcare workers in two stages from next year will also assist with lifting wage growth.

Liberal Party frontbenchers including Shadow Treasurer Angus Taylor and Shadow Minister for Workplace Relations Michaelia Cash have pledged to “reform industrial relations” and take a “targeted package of repeals” on industrial relations to the next election. Opposition Leader Peter Dutton has committed to eliminating new rights for casual workers and repealing the new right to disconnect laws.

The Liberal Party has a long track record of supporting and presiding over low wage growth. Shadow Finance Minister Jane Hume recently remarked that real wage growth “would be the worst thing for Australians.”

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell:

“Working people's real wages have now gone up more in one year under this Labor Government than under nearly ten years of the Coalition Government.

“Australians can't afford their wages to be \$4,700 lower under Peter Dutton when they're already facing cost-of-living pressures. The last thing workers need is a Liberal government backing their big business donors to keep our wages low and prices high.

“Under Peter Dutton's Liberals, big business gain while workers feel the pain.

“Experts including the Treasury Secretary have defended higher wages for working people, stating there is ‘no evidence of a change in inflation expectations.’

“From backing historic minimum wage increases to strengthening workers’ rights and supporting pay rises for aged care workers and early childhood educators, the Albanese Government has shown they are on the side of working people.

“The last time the Liberals were in power, they slashed our penalty rates and kept our wages down. Now Peter Dutton wants to double down by taking away our rights at work that have boosted our wages.

“Peter Dutton’s politics can be summed up in three words: profits before people.”

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The ACTU calculation is based on a worker’s average weekly earnings of \$1,837.80 in May 2022 (ABS Average Weekly Earnings – May 2022). The Albanese Government was elected on 23 May 2022.

If those wages had grown by just 2.1 per cent per year instead of the actual growth rate of 3.8 per cent, then that worker would have earned \$4,700 less.

Government	Average annual wage growth (nominal)
Labor (2007 to 2014)	3.6 per cent
Liberal National Party (2014 to 2022)	2.1 per cent
Labor (2022-2024)	3.8 per cent

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