

Tassie Liberal candidate says older Australians are ‘happy’ to work for \$10 an hour – while disclosing the Coalition’s plan to cut wages

Monday, 28 April 2025

Australian Unions warn comments by a Tasmanian Liberal candidate reveal the full extent of a Dutton-led Government’s broad ambition to cut minimum wage rates for Australian workers.

Liberal candidate for Braddon, Mal Hingston told a local forum the Dutton approach to workplace relations would be to “rewind stuff the Albanese Government has done and put things back to the way they were.”

Mal Hingston said the Albanese Government reforms had brought unintended consequences, such as stopping older “grey nomad” workers from coming to Tasmania to pick fruit, stating they used to “come down here to Tassie, and just plod along, and they were happy with \$10 an hour, or whatever it was.”

The Liberal candidate told local Braddon businesspeople that older workers “didn’t care about the low hourly rate” they were paid for picking fruit “because it was a social outing for them.”

Older workers were happy with earning piece rates of \$10 an hour – or about half the minimum wage rate – he claimed, adding that “now they don’t want to get employed for fruit picking because they don’t want to work that hard to justify minimum wages.”

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus:

“The Coalition say they won’t release a workplace relations policy this election. Now at least one Tasmanian Liberal has been honest enough to say that a Dutton government would rewind Labor’s workplace reforms.

“The Liberals’ Mal Hingston sees nothing wrong in expecting older workers to work for piece rates of \$10 an hour. He’d like low wages to come back and confirmed that’s what a Dutton Government would try to do if elected.

“At least we know, thanks to the Liberals’ Mal Hingston, the Coalition government would ‘rewind’ Labor’s reforms to ‘put things back to the way they were.’

“What that would mean, is an expectation that older Australians should be prepared to work for as little as \$10 an hour, and to be grateful for the social outing it gives them.

“It means a total lack of government support for minimum wage increases in the upcoming annual wage review, which sets the floor under the wages of all award-reliant workers.

“Wages would also be cut because all of the employers’ wage-cutting schemes would be back again alongside the boom in wage theft we saw under the last Coalition Government.

“The Coalition will say one thing in a boardroom or in private, they will flip-flop when under pressure in a campaign, but in the end, they are on the side of big business and big business wants to unwind workers’ rights.”

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