

Thursday 30 May 2019

Win for workers but long road left to Living Wage

The three per cent increase in the minimum wage announced this morning is a step in the right direction for the millions of workers who rely on it and the awards system, but still falls far short of re-establishing the living wage and ensuring that no worker lives in poverty.

An extra \$21.60 per week is welcome but clearly not enough to establish a living wage and falls well short of the union submission for \$43.

The Fair Work Commission has again roughly split the submissions made by unions and the most extreme anti-worker employer lobbies, which argued for a freeze on the minimum wage.

This increase will leave the minimum wage more than seven percent short of the living wage target – 60 per cent of the median full-time wage.

While overall wage growth has been at near record lows for more than six years, wage growth for union members is consistently higher than average. Union members know that standing together is the only way to reform our laws and win better outcomes.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien:

“This is a welcome pay rise for millions of low paid workers, especially in the face of further penalty rate cuts in a few weeks.

“We have a long way to go to ensure that the minimum wage is enough for workers to live on and support their families.

“No one in Australia should be living in poverty while working full time, but we know that thousands of people are facing this reality.

“The union movement continues to win big increases in the minimum wage despite the opposition of the Morrison Government and its big business lobbyist mates and their attempts to suppress wages.

“If you want better wages and conditions, you should join your union.”

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