

Media Release

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Fair Pay Commission should look to the Tasmanian system to get minimum wage setting right

Tasmania's minimum wage and award workers are doing better than their counterparts in the federal system under the Australian Fair Pay Commission.

The Fair Pay Commission has delivered rises that do not even keep up with inflation and have pushed workers further behind in the market.

In that time the Tasmanian workers who still fall under the state system have benefited from two decisions of the Tasmanian Industrial Commission that have maintained their relative financial position.

Unions Tasmania Secretary Simon Cocker was commenting on the Fair Pay Commission's report showing that wages of low paid workers in the federal system were lagging.

Mr Cocker said

"The Tasmanian Commission has accepted the Unions Tasmania submission that the Wage Price Index is the appropriate starting measure for adjusting wages and accordingly, minimum and award wage movements reflect the movement of wages in general."

"This policy decision of the Tasmanian Commission has seen low paid Tasmanian workers receive nearly five dollars a week more than those under the federal system."

'Removing the narrow economic prescription given to the Fair Pay Commission and returning to Australia's century old tradition of wage fixing will be a good thing for working people.'

"It is also misleading of the Fair Pay Commission to include the value of the Federal Government's tax cuts in its modelling of the incomes of working families.

"It is simply not appropriate for the Fair Pay Commission to try to hand-ball responsibility for maintaining the living standards of low paid workers to the Government and its tax and social security programs.

"It is essential that workers receive a decent wage they can live on and they do not have to rely on social security to top their wages up above the poverty line.

"Unions will be seeking a decent pay rise for low paid workers from the Fair Pay Commission, one that takes into account sharp increases in the prices of petrol, housing and food that are putting low paid workers and their families under great financial pressure", said Mr Cocker.

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