New data: working West Australians need pay rise

UnionsWA has commented on new data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which shows that earnings growth for full-time working West Australians has been around half that of the rest of Australia.

Meredith Hammat, Secretary, UnionsWA said:

“This new data from the ABS shows that average hourly total cash earnings for WA’s full-time non-managerial workers rose only 3.2% between 2016 and 2018, while nationally it increased 6%.

“Pay is not keeping pace with the cost of living here in WA, as the costs of essentials such as electricity and transport have risen well in excess of earnings.

“Despite this, employer groups keep calling for national and WA industrial commissions to approve wage increases that are less than inflation.

“The WA state government’s wages policy has also resulted in working West Australians falling further behind.

“Over the past year, we have seen aggressive action by employers to cancel collective agreements and force employees onto awards.

“The impact can be seen between 2016 and 2018, as the number of employees on collective agreements fell by 5.2%, and their average weekly cash earnings decreased by around 2%.

“This is a further indication that the collective bargaining system in both WA and Australia is broken, and why unions are campaigning to change the rules to fix it.

“This is also why public sector unions want the state government to agree to fair pay outcomes for public sector workers.

Unless collective bargaining is fixed, workers will increasingly be reliant on either awards, or insecure individual work arrangements, both of which have overall lower pay outcomes than collective agreements.

“It’s difficult to see how WA will have a strong economic recovery unless working people receive fair pay rises.”

Further information

Source from the ABS 6306.0 - Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 using data for non-managerial employees. Available here:

http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6306.0May%202018?OpenDocument

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