Workers' wages are going backwards



Workers’ wages in Australia are more than remaining dismally stagnant – they are in fact going backwards in real terms.

The latest Wage Price Index data released today shows that real wages have fallen by 2.1% over the last 12 months. In this quarter, wages growth has been only 0.4%, while inflation in Australia has increased to 3.8%.

In addition to those shocking figures, the public sector recorded wages growth of only 1.3% this year - its lowest annual rate of wages growth since the ABS started tracking this in 1997.

The past 18 months have been extremely difficult for working Australians, as the pandemic persists and lockdowns continue. Workers should be secure in knowing that they will be able to afford necessities like food and housing.

The current COVID disaster payment does not offer workers the security of a connection to their place of employment, meaning workers can be easily stood down by their employers. It is also only available to those living and working in a hotspot, so those whose jobs and industries have been negatively impacted throughout the rest of the country miss out completely.

“Australians deserve the security of knowing that they won’t be priced out of the most basic essentials like housing and food, because they’re watching prices go up while their wages decrease in real terms," said ACTU President Michele O’Neil.

“We’re seeing low job security, an increasingly casualised workforce, and falling real wages. These figures show that at the very time when workers need security and confidence, they have a government with no plan to provide either.

“The combined impact of workers with less money to spend, insecure jobs and lockdowns has a devastating effect on the whole community and economy.

“The Morrison Government is divorced from reality. They need to address job security, wage increases and the need for spending to stimulate our economic recovery."

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