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Retail and fast food workers take another blow after modern award wage increase falls short

Just one day after a timetable was set to slash the take home pay of over 700,000 workers earning weekend penalty rates, retail and fast food workers have received a 3.3% increase which is set to be eaten away by those cuts to penalty rates.

SDA National Secretary Gerard Dwyer said, "Today's decision to grant an increase to the modern award wage of 3.3% falls well short of what is needed to lift the take home pay of retail and fast food workers who are about to see their penalty rates cut as they face massive cost of living pressures."

"Low income workers are already struggling with high rents, electricity and petrol prices."

"Yesterday they were given the timetable for cutting penalty rates which will cut their take home pay. Today's increase must be seen in the context of the decision to cut Sunday penalties by 50% by 2020."

"This means less money for bills, less money for groceries, more pressure on families and more pressure on young people struggling to put themselves through school, TAFE and university."

Mr Dwyer said it was disappointing that despite the cost of living pressures faced by retail and fast food workers, retail lobby groups such as the Australian Retailers Association had called for a below inflation wage increase in addition to penalty rate cuts already locked in.

"It is simply astounding that the Australian Retailers Association can propose a mere 1.2% increase to the modern award wage, which is below inflation and amounts to a pay cut for low income workers, on top of the penalty rates cuts already in place."

"Even more disappointing is that the Turnbull Government had sided with retailer lobby groups and their unreasonable demands against the interests of over 700,000 hard working Australians by publicly supporting the slashing of their take home pay."

Mr Dwyer said that the modern award wage was vitally important as it provided the basis of wages and conditions upon which all enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) were negotiated.

"An insufficient increase in take home pay under awards will make it more difficult to bargain for stronger wages and conditions in EBAs."

Media contact: Darren Rodrigo 0414783405