

Monday 20 March, 2017

Penalty rates cuts devastating for Coalition in WA: new poll shows

Penalty rates were a key factor for voters in the recent Western Australian state election, a new exit poll commissioned by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) shows.

More than half (52.2%) of voters considered the penalty rates decision either somewhat important or very important to how they cast their vote.

The ACTU polled more than 1,400 WA voters on penalty rates two days after the election and found more than three quarters (75.9%) of people who voted for the ALP said that the decision was important to their vote.

Of all voters, 61.6% said that the federal government should legislate to protect penalty rates, including 86.7% of ALP voters and 74.4% of Greens voters.

A staggering 71% of all voters disagreed with One Nation leader Pauline Hanson's support for the penalty rate cuts.

Among the rusted on coalition supporters who stuck with the party through the disastrous election outcome, more than 30% said the federal government should protect penalty rates.

Also of serious concern to voters was the worry that the cuts would spread further than retail, pharmacy and hospitality, with 68.1% of voters saying penalty rate cuts will spread to other industries.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"The recent decision to cut penalty rates was a devastating blow to the former West Australian Liberal Government, which was slaughtered at the polls earlier this month."

"Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull must act now and stop these harsh cuts for the 700,000 workers who will be impacted come July 1."

"The ACTU is in Canberra this week with affected workers so they can tell their stories to our politicians. We urge the Prime Minister and Employment Minister Michaelia Cash to support working people and step into to reverse this decision."

"One can only imagine what a federal election would look like if the Turnbull Government refuses to protect penalty rates. Can the federal coalition really afford to go against the wishes of two thirds of the population who want them to act?"

ENDS

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200 or ACTU Media 03 9664 7315

<http://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/media-releases>