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## **Minimum wage must be increased by \$45 a week to avoid American-style working poor**

Australian Council of Trade Union secretary Sally McManus today announced the union movement's call for a \$45 a week increase to the minimum wage. A real increase to the minimum wage will address rising cost of living, inflation and boost the economy.

In her speech to the National Press Club today, Sally McManus said the ACTU's submission that we should increase the minimum wage by \$45 a week would not only boost family budgets, it would flow on to a substantial pick-up across the whole economy.

Ms McManus urged the Turnbull Government to urge the Fair Work Commission to award the ACTU's claim to protect the living standards of almost two million Australians.

### **Key facts on minimum wage earners:**

- There are 2.3 million Australians who earn the minimum wage - that's nearly one in four workers, an increase of more than 400, 000 from two years ago.
- Minimum wage workers are more likely to work part time or be casual.
- More than 1.2 minimum wage and award reliant workers come from just three occupations: community/personal service workers, sales workers and labourers.
- A large and rapidly increasing number of professionals are now reliant on awards, (325,000).
- More than half of all hospitality workers, cleaners and laundry workers are reliant on the minimum wage.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU secretary Sally McManus:**

"We are living through a time when corporations and the very rich have become far too powerful and this has happened so quickly that our laws and rights – and the things that keep things in balance – have not kept up."

"Wages are a symptom of that. Just a generation ago a young person could finish school and have a good chance of getting a good, steady job when they wanted one which would provide enough for them to buy a house, start a family."

"Today Australians are less secure in their work, living costs are rising, and wages have not kept up. At 1.9% wage growth is pathetic and barely keeping up with inflation. There are 2.3 million Australians who earn the minimum wage - that's nearly one in four workers. When wages stagnate, people do not have enough money to put back into the economy."

"Australian Unions have won that fight before. We won changes that improved our living standards like bringing in the minimum wage in the first place, not to mention paid leave, the weekend and whole range of other improvements."

"The ACTU, on my watch, will lead a movement to rewrite the rules and reinstate equality for working people and their families."

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