

Friday, 23 January 2015

Is this the last Australia Day workers will be paid penalty rates?

The Productivity Commission inquiry into workplace laws is another example of the Abbott government trying to cut wages and rights at work.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Tim Lyons said the timing alone shows just how out of touch the Abbott Government is with the Australian community.

“As we head into the Australia Day long weekend, millions of Australians will give up this time with family and friends to work and they rely on the penalty rates they will be paid to pay their bills,” said Mr Lyons.

“Yet today, what is front page news? The Abbott government’s agenda to cut penalty rates, cut the minimum wage and take away people’s rights at work.

“It just shows how out of touch Tony Abbott and his government are with the cost of living pressures so many Australians face.

“It’s another example of the Abbott government trying to lower the living standards of Australians – they’ve gone after Medicare, they’ve tried to hike up university fees and now they want to cut people’s wages and rights at work.

Mr Lyons said the Productivity Commission is working to the terms of reference that were set by the Abbott Government.

“It’s under those terms of reference that all of our workplace laws and rights and protections are on the table – that includes the minimum wage, penalty rates and our rights at work

“Make no mistake - the Productivity Commission inquiry has been brought on by employers and the Abbott Government to cut people’s wages and make it harder for them to bargain for a fair deal at work.

“This is Tony Abbott looking after his business mates instead of Australian people.”

Mr Lyons said Australian Unions will use the inquiry to advocate for improvements to minimum and award wages, and to reduce poverty and inequality.

Media contact: Kara Douglas, 0418 793 885