TRAINING: Many casual workers are unskilled and would benefit greatly from part-time training. Ideally training sessions would need to be flexible to suit the work times and broken shifts of casual workers. This could prove to be a cheaper alternative and provide more long-term employment opportunities for Australian residents than the proposed scheme to import skilled foreign workers who would be offered free travel and settlement funding.

TRANSPORT: Unemployed and low-paid workers are experiencing hardship in this area. Concession fares would be of benefit, particularly the unemployed who need to fill Centrelink requirements fortnightly, i.e. to apply for a certain number of jobs (10 I believe), to be listed on form required by Centrelink before each fortnightly payment is approved. Refusing jobs on any grounds could preclude them from receiving benefits from Centrelink. Casual workers such as those in the Hospitality industry, who work broken shifts for short periods such as 2 hours morning and 2 hours evening are finding escalating transport costs twice daily more than they can afford.

SUPPORT: Low paid workers, full-time or casual, also find that membership of unions is beyond their reach financially. These workers without doubt are the most exploited sector of the workforce. No back up, no one to advise them so that they are forced to accept unfair conditions.

APPRENTICESHIPS: Mature age apprenticeships could not be considered unless those involved had financial backing or were still residing in the family home, as are junior apprentices with family support. The remuneration for the mature age group would not cover rent in most cases.

RENTAL COSTS: Now at a level well above affordability for minimum wage and casual workers and Rental Agencies are now insisting on proof of income to establish ability to meet rent payments.
EXPLOITATION: I attach copy of letter handed to my 
son, a cook employed on a casual basis in 
2007 at a Motel-Restaurant. For several months 
he fulfilled his duties without default. On approximately 
6 December 2007 he was handed this letter addressed to 
Centrelink so that he could present it to them and receive 
unemployment benefits. There was no indication that he 
would be re-employed after 5th February 2008, presumably 
he was expected to report for work after the 54 day period 
without income. On 6th February he received a phone call 
from the Chef asking when he was 
coming back to work. By this time he had found a temporary 
job which unfortunately will cease on 18 March.

The Minimum Wage Review is a long overdue initiative 
and should be welcomed by the forgotten sector of the 
Australian workforce, the unskilled, particularly those 
actively seeking work. I welcome the Fair Pay Commission's 
Review and look forward to some positive long term outcomes.

E_HILL.
12/3/08.