



**HON REBECCA WHITE MP**  
TASMANIAN LABOR LEADER

**23 MAR 2017**

Award Modernisation Team  
Fair Work Commission  
By email: [amod@fwc.gov.au](mailto:amod@fwc.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in the strongest possible terms to respectfully express the view that Tasmanian Labor does not support the decision made by the Fair Work Commission to cut penalty rates for up to 700,000 Australians.

This decision will negatively affect Tasmania's economy and the take home pay of up to 44,000 Tasmanians.

My colleagues and I have spoken to many Tasmanians directly affected by the proposed cuts to penalty rates. There is an overwhelming feeling of stress and confusion at the reasons given for this decision.

Students, low-income families, single parents and, disproportionately, women will be the hardest hit by any reduction in penalty rates.

With wage growth at record low levels and a rising cost of living it's unfair to expect some of the lowest paid workers, with the least job security in our country, to effectively take a pay cut to increase the profits of business, with no guarantee that it will result in employment growth.

Expecting people to work more hours for the same pay is a step back when we should be providing better living conditions for our workers. Reducing the take home pay of 44,000 people means 1 in 6 workers in the retail sector alone in Tasmania will be affected.

These workers spend their disposable income in local business and with local services. This reduction in their overall take home pay means less money for shops, restaurants and cafes already adapting to the changes in the economy.

As the former Leader of the Tasmanian Labor Party outlined in Labor's submission to the Fair Work Commission on 23 August 2016, the tourism, hospitality and retail sector are a crucial part of the Tasmanian economy and these sectors are continuing to experience strong growth. This growth has been achieved under the existing penalty rate regime, which clearly challenges the arguments of industry that penalty rates act as an impediment to investment.

Since the decision was announced publicly, there has been a groundswell of support in the community for penalty rates. This is an acknowledgement that penalty rates are a fair reward for working on weekends and being away from friends and loved ones, while the rest of the country is enjoying their rest or recreation with family and friends. The Tasmanian Labor Party will continue to ensure that every Tasmanian worker is informed about this decision and how it will affect his or her take home pay.

The Tasmanian Labor Party supports the Federal Labor Opposition's position to introduce legislation to protect workers from this unjust outcome.

I respectfully urge the Commission to set aside the decision to reduce penalty rates.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca White', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca White MP  
**Tasmanian Labor Leader**