



7 September 2017

The Associate to the Honourable Justice Iain Ross AO
President
Fair Work Commission
Victorian Registry
Level 4, 11 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Via awr@fwc.gov.au

Dear Associate

Annual Wage Review 2017-2018 – Statement of 25 August re Budget Standards Research

I refer to the above matter and the invitation from the Panel to make submissions as to the utility of a preliminary hearing to consider the research.

United Voice submits that a preliminary hearing should not be conducted. United Voice understands that this is also the position of the ACTU.

In our submission it would be inappropriate for the Panel to hear submissions on this research because:

1. Considering it without knowledge of the various specific positions of parties regarding an annual adjustment to the NMW and Modern Award wages and the latest available data would have no, or very limited utility;
2. The conduct of a preliminary hearing on this issue may be seen to elevate this relevant consideration over the other factors the Panel is required to consider; and
3. Consideration of the specific issue of budget standards in isolation seems highly likely to invite formulaic or mechanical suggestions regarding the NMW and Modern Award wages, an approach the Panel has consistently rejected.

We also note that the research has taken place over a number of years, and raises a range of complex issues, which the parties should be given an appropriate opportunity to consider. While United Voice was involved in the research, we did raise a series of issues with the methodology and approach. These contents appear, in the limited time we have had to consider the research, to be born out in the final reports. In our submission this further supports the research being addressed by the parties and considered by the panel in the ordinary course of the submissions and consultations in 2018.

Yours faithfully,

Jo-anne Schofield
National Secretary
United Voice