



Minister for Commerce  
Minister for Finance  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
Minister for Ageing  
Minister for Disability Services  
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

17 November 2006

## Wages falling under Work Choices

NSW Minister for Industrial Relations, John Della Bosca, said it was now undeniable that average wages are falling as a result of Work Choices.

"The Australian Bureau of Statistics' latest quarterly publication has revealed earnings for Australian workers failed to keep pace with inflation over the past year," Mr Della Bosca said.

"Twelve months ago, the seasonally adjusted private sector full time adult total earnings was \$1045.

"On our current inflation rate, it should now have risen to \$1086.

"However, the Bureau of Statistics has reported the average is \$1070, demonstrating that the average weekly wage has fallen in real terms by \$16.

**"The Howard-Debnam Work Choices laws are delivering the result they were designed to achieve: lower wages and conditions, with the low paid hit hardest.**

"We have an inflation rate of 3.9 per cent, yet Work Choices has delivered only a 2.4 per cent increase in full-time adult earnings in the private sector.

"As AWAs strip away the overtime, loadings and allowances that families rely on, take home pay is being reduced," Mr Della Bosca said.

The Commonwealth's own survey in the first few months of Work Choices showed every AWA cut away at least one protected award condition, and:

- 64 per cent did not retain leave loading
- 63 per cent did not retain penalty rates
- 52 per cent did not retain shift loadings
- 44 per cent did not retain substitute public holidays
- 41 per cent did not retain gazetted public holidays
- 27 per cent removed public holiday pay

"16 per cent of these individual contracts traded away **every** award condition – so it's no wonder that the ABS is now reporting wages falling in real terms," he said.

"In the first year of Work Choices, rates for the lowest paid are falling further behind.

"Retail workers not only failed to keep pace with inflation, they actually earned 0.8 per cent less than the year before," Mr Della Bosca said.

.../2

- 2 -

"Retail workers have some of the lowest wages, poorest conditions and least job security of any group in the workforce, and the Howard-Debnam Work Choices laws are making their lives worse," Mr Della Bosca said.

"Added to this hardship is John Howard's triple whammy of three interest rate rises in 12 months.

"If elected next year, the leader of the Opposition, Peter Debnam, has pledged to give up the one million workers in this state who are currently protected by the fair and balanced NSW system.

"This means all NSW families will stand to be exploited by Work Choices and have their wages, entitlements and lifestyle stripped away.

"The lemma Labor Government is the only thing standing between Mr Howard and Mr Debnam and further attacks on hard-working NSW families," he said.

**Media contact: Andrew Plumley 9228 4777 or 0438 455 562**