



Speech by

**Hon. GORDON NUTTALL**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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Hansard 1 April 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Award Wages**

**Hon. G. R. NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.14 a.m.): I am pleased to announce the introduction of an historic wage ruling that guarantees a minimum rate of pay for all Queensland workers, whether covered by an award or not. From the first pay period after 1 April 2003, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission has ordered a Queensland minimum wage weekly rate of \$431.40 for full-time employees. For the first time in Queensland, the minimum wage will include employees not covered by an award or agreement. Importantly, as many as one in 12 workers are reportedly not covered by awards or agreements. Some of these people will be unaffected because they already earn a higher rate of pay, or they are exempted because of special conditions. But it is the non-award workers employed at the lower paid end of the working population, such as farm employees, domestic cleaners and gardeners, who will benefit by the introduction of a minimum wage.

Combined with current leave entitlements and protection against unfair dismissal, this decision gives Queensland's lower-paid workers a broad safety net of wages and conditions. From 1 April, these workers will be entitled to a minimum rate of pay. Employees covered by an award or agreement that sets a higher rate of pay will retain their current entitlement. Workers younger than 20 are entitled to a percentage of the minimum wage based on age or experience, whichever gives the higher rate. This is great news for some of our most vulnerable workers in Queensland, and I would urge all members to help publicise this decision throughout their electorates.