




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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ADJOURNMENT

Fair Work Commission, Penalty Rates

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (10.36 pm): Over 11,000 of Central Queensland's lowest paid workers in pharmacy, retail, hospitality and fast food are set to face a pay cut of up to \$77 per week following the Fair Work Commission's decision to slash Sunday penalty rates. Every day I talk to local people in my community who rely on penalty rates to make ends meet. Those rates are meant to be a reward for the sacrifice staff make in giving up time with family and friends on weekends and other special occasions. This decision is devastating for thousands of hardworking Queenslanders. The commission's decision will also take money out of the real economy, reducing the spending power of thousands of Queensland families. This will have a negative impact on local economies, especially in Central Queensland.

I support federal Labor's private member's bill to prevent the penalty rates cut from taking effect and to ensure that in the future penalty rates cannot be cut if it results in a reduction in workers' take-home pay. I am incredibly disappointed that the federal member for Capricornia is turning her back on the workers of Central Queensland and supporting these penalty rates cuts. Whilst Michelle Landry and the LNP is giving the big banks a \$50 billion tax handout, she is giving the person making her coffee a pay cut. The member for Capricornia, Minister Canavan and Senator Hanson must vote to support our community's lowest paid workers and vote in favour of Labor's private member's bill.

We are seeing the same old LNP that we have seen time and time again—proposing to slash penalty rates. It is in their DNA—like the federal LNP member for Gilmore who likened these penalty rates cuts to 'a gift, a gift for our young people', and the Prime Minister who told parliament last week that 'he supports the decision' to cut penalty rates for 700,000 workers. Then there is LNP Senator Ian Macdonald who last week was fighting for his right to have a travel gold pass after he retires but wants to get rid of penalty rates. Turnbull and the LNP are tough on pensioners but soft on banks. Honest Australians are being accused of Centrelink fraud, while multinationals are avoiding tax. This is the most out-of-touch government in Australian history.

The LNP's BFF, Senator Hanson, has also turned her back on local workers. She too has called for penalty rates to be abolished entirely. 'Right across the board, get rid of the penalty rates,' Senator Hanson said. 'Get rid of the 17½ per cent loading,' she said, and 'You can't survive in today's climate paying penalty rates.' I beg to differ, and so too do many of the businesses in Keppel, like Katie and Zen at Yeppoon Central Meats and Billingtons Cedar Park Meats, who run their business with a social conscience and who know that their workers deserve their weekend penalty rates. Both businesses have said that they will not be enforcing the Fair Work Commission's ruling and will not be cutting their staff's penalty rates. It is no surprise that, since their announcement, thousands of local people have thrown their support right behind these businesses because our community knows that workers deserve those penalty rates. I say to those businesses: good on you. We are right behind you.