




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Record of Proceedings, 28 February 2017

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Fair Work Commission

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.23 am): Last week's Fair Work Commission decision handed down in relation to Sunday penalty rates can only be described as devastating for the thousands of Queensland low-paid workers who will have a cut to their take-home pay. What we have seen is that the lowest paid workers in this state—cooks, cleaners, kitchen hands and retail assistants—face cuts of up to \$6,000 a year in their take-home pay. They are facing cuts that will make it hard to make ends meet and make it hard to put food on the table.

The Deputy Premier forgot to mention 'Apologetic Leader of the Opposition'. What have we heard not only from the Leader of the Opposition but also from the member for Kawana in relation to this decision? Absolutely nothing. There are crickets out there that are louder than they are when it comes to sticking up for the lowest paid workers in this state.

The Palaszczuk government made it very clear. We submitted to the Fair Work Commission and to the Productivity Commission that we did not want to see cuts in penalty rates. The federal Labor opposition are doing something to prevent these cuts from occurring, and the Palaszczuk government stands behind them 100 per cent, because these cuts to low-paid workers could not come at a worse possible time. We are seeing record low wage growth in this country. These workers rely the most on award entitlements and have little bargaining power. Yet at the same time we see massive increases in executive pays and we see massive profits occurring.

It is interesting that they talked about an independent decision. It did not appear that the Turnbull government had problems overturning the independent decision of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal and then sacking them. They did not mind legislating to pre-empt the decision of the Fair Work Commission in relation to the Country Fire Authority.

These pay cuts are going to affect 700,000 Australian workers and many hardworking, low-paid Queensland workers. What should the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kawana apologise for? They should apologise for the 14,000 Queenslanders they sacked. They should apologise for the 16-month wage freeze they put on public servants. They should apologise for axing Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Mr Bleijie: The bloke in front of you set the Fair Work Commission up. In 2009 Cameron Dick set the commission up.

Ms GRACE: We hear from the member for Kawana, who they locked away for six months of the last election campaign. They kept him quiet. They locked him in some box. They let him out after the election. They should apologise for cutting the workers comp entitlements to injured workers and their families. They are very silent on this important issue.