

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence



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VICTORIAN INQUIRY CONDEMNS CUTS TO PENALTY RATES

The Andrews Labor Government is standing up for Victorian workers missing out on hard earned pay.

Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins today tabled the Government's response to the final report of the Victorian Parliament select committee inquiry into penalty rates.

This inquiry report found cutting penalty rates disproportionately affects women and young workers, and that the reduction in income of some workers will likely have a flow on effect to the Victorian economy, particularly in small regional communities.

The inquiry also identified that cutting penalty rates had failed to generate jobs or create extra hours of work.

It also found that avoiding the legal obligation to pay correct wages and conditions was disproportionately higher in the hospitality and retail sectors.

Working at night and on weekends can have a detrimental impact on health, family and personal relationships. More than one third of those employees who received penalty rates for working unsociable hours rely on them to cover household expenses.

The Labor Government has accepted all nine recommendations of the inquiry report, including that the Victorian Government advocate for the Commonwealth to restore penalty rates to their previous levels.

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will introduce legislation to make wage theft a criminal offence. Wage theft offences will be investigated and prosecuted by the Victorian Wage Inspectorate – a new employment watchdog funded with \$22 million in the *Victorian Budget 2018/19*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations, Natalie Hutchins

“Cuts to penalty rates disproportionately affect women and vulnerable workers who are tired of working longer hours for less pay to make ends meet.”

“The Morrison Liberal Government needs to stop punishing workers and bring penalty rates back to where they were.”