

Penalty pay cut and power sale are no job plan

UnionsWA today joined with other unions to criticise the announced election policy of the Barnett Liberal Government to cut penalty pay and called for a constructive policy to create jobs in WA.

Meredith Hammat, Secretary, UnionsWA said:

“The Liberal election policy of cutting penalty rates is economically dangerous.

“A cut in weekend take home pay for working people in tourism, hospitality and retail will simply mean they have less money to spend and will depress our economy further.

“Of course, such a cut in wages to the lowest paid in our community would be deeply unfair.

“These working people lose out on time with family and friend and in the community, whether that’s sporting, religious or other shared activities.

“A cut in their pay will mean needing to work even longer and unsociable hours of work, just to take home the same pay.

“This announcement shows how the Barnett Government is only interested in advancing the interests of business at the expense of working West Australians.

“As unemployment and underemployment are growing, what WA needs is a comprehensive, positive plan for jobs.

“No single initiative can address WA’s high unemployment.

“Policy action, led by government and involving business and community, needs to have jobs growth as a central aim.

“A starting principle for such action needs to be that during an economic down turn, when corporations and business struggle, government requires a strong public sector in order to lead.

“The announcement today of the proposed sale of Western Power is an example of weakening government.

“Selling public assets, like Western Power, to fund infrastructure will not create long term jobs.

“A privatised Western Power will employ far fewer people, particularly apprentices and we will be worse off in the long run.

“The sale is also a missed opportunity to use the technological capacity of Western Power build WA’s research and innovation.

“What’s needed is better management, but that is a hard ask from a tired government that constantly make the wrong decisions.

“We must manage better to build infrastructure and skills for the long-run while ensuring a fair economic transition for all working people in the short-term.

“WA needs a more diverse economy.

“The path to more secure employment is not through lower and lower wages, nor continuing over-reliance on the resources sector.

“We need to build skills, particularly for our young people.”

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