

With the costs of everyday needs such as petrol, electricity, gas, insurance, food, housing, water- basically everything except air increasing constantly, I was not surprised to hear of the amount people that are living in poverty in Australia, around 20%. Not good enough. I count my blessings that I have a job and that myself and my daughter are not included in those statistics, not yet anyway. I work hard to provide for my daughter and myself. My salary used to be considered average in Australia. My salary is now below average. Everything I need to pay for in order to have a decent standard of living is becoming further out of reach and increasingly more difficult to pay for. We quite often have to go without. The pressure on my finances is ever increasing. I have had to increase my working hours in order to pay for our immediate needs. This has meant that my daughter needs to go to outside school hours care, a cost on the taxpayer, and an added cost to me. This has also meant that I had to decrease the amount of time I spend on studying as I have to work more now. This situation is not family friendly and is highly stressful. Increases in the costs of living are inevitable, which I understand. The problem is that I, and ALL of my colleagues, (oops, slight error, except the highly paid executives) have not had pay increases in several years. This is due to an ongoing dispute between my employer and the employees. Our employer wishes to amend our agency agreement and put our hard earned rights into policy whilst giving us a very low pay increase. It is just not good enough. We need this to come to an end. Staff morale is low. We are sick of the ongoing dispute. As public servants we put our clients first, yet it is becoming increasingly difficult to focus on the job and provide good client service and have the drive to do well, or even attend work with this ongoing issue ever present. We want to retain ALL our rights AND receive a decent pay increase. We've worked hard for it and deserve it and our children need it.

Kind regards

Cara Wright