

WAGES

“The CFMEU will continue to vigorously campaign for wage justice for our members. Conference notes that under John Howard’s WorkChoices, unions were severely disadvantaged in the bargaining process with massive government restrictions in relation to what unions could pursue on our members’ behalf.

The election of a Federal Labor Government provides an historic opportunity to introduce an industrial relations system that is in the interests of all Australians, especially the hardworking Australians we represent.

The CFMEU rejects the calls from some ALP and Liberal politicians, various right wing economic commentators and views that responsibility for fighting inflationary pressures sits at the doorstep of Australian workers.

To the extent that inflationary pressures exist in our economy, they are the result of poor Howard Government policy that has caused substantial capacity constraints together with repeated short sighted tax cuts.

Most of Australia’s ten million workers have endured considerable pressure on their pay packets in the Howard years and it would be entirely inappropriate for politicians to now be relying on Australian working families to endure more sacrifices.

Corporate profits and executive salaries have spiralled ever upwards in the Howard years leaving the share of GDP going to wage and salary earners at record lows.

Politicians who actually address corporate and executive greed will have a far better chance of having their calls for restraint listened to by the ordinary workers we represent.

The CFMEU recognises that the cornerstone of our current wages system is bargaining in the workplace. While we didn’t design or favour this system during the Keating or Howard years, it is the system successive politicians have put in place and we will continue to secure the best gains we can for our members under the rules laid down.”