



PRIME MINISTER

2 May 1974

MINIMUM WAGE FOR FEMALES

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, said that the Australian Government warmly applauded the decision of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to bring the minimum wage for women under federal awards up to the level of that determined for men.

"This is a significant step forward in the application of the principle of economic remuneration for work of equal value to the award wage structure of this country.

"The Labor Government has consistently supported the adoption of this basic human rights principle. This is an indication of the Labor Government's consistent support for wage justice for women.

"It supported the principle of equal pay for work of equal value when it sought successfully to re-open the National Wage and Equal Pay cases immediately on coming to office in December 1972.

"It applied the principle immediately to its own female employees rather than phasing it in over two and a half years as allowed by the Commission in that case.

"It amended the Conciliation and Arbitration Act to delete the discriminatory reference to a minimum wage for adult males.

"It strongly supported the ACTU application for an equal minimum wage for women.

Today's decision by the Commission is a further significant step to the Government's goal of ratifying I.L.O. Equal Pay Convention (No. 100) of 1951. There is now full compliance with the requirements of the convention in those areas where the Australian Government can take action.

"Three States (Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania) have agreed to ratification, and consultation is continuing as a matter of urgency with the other three States to obtain their agreement to ratification without delay. Convention No. 100 is the only I.L.O. Human Rights Convention which Australia is yet to ratify, and the Australian Government is treating its early ratification as a matter of top priority to confirm at the international level Australia's commitment to the basic rights for women."