



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle



29 April 2005

MAY DAY WORKING PEOPLE STAND UP FOR THE MINIMUM WAGE

On the eve of May Day, Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson has launched a petition calling on the Howard Government to:

- guarantee that no individual Australian employee will be worse off under proposed changes to the minimum wage, and
- allow the national minimum wage to continue to be set annually by the independent umpire, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC).

As the independent arbiter, the AIRC takes submissions from government, unions and employers, and then balances the need for a fair living wage with the need to consider the wider economic implications of the minimum wage level.

That it has managed to meet these two objectives under significant pressure from the Howard Government to slash the minimum wage shows how effective it is an independent umpire.

The Howard Government clearly believes the minimum wage for the lowest-paid Australians is too high - it has opposed every minimum wage increase since 1996. If the Howard Government's submissions to the AIRC over this time had been adopted, employees on award wages would be \$2,300 a year worse off.

Having lost the arguments in front of the independent umpire, the Government now wants to get rid of it.

On May Day working people everywhere remember and celebrate the achievements of organised labour in gaining decent wages and conditions.

This year we will be telling the Howard Government very clearly to keep its hands off the minimum wage. It's not fair to expect people to work for anything less.

The May Day March will begin at 10.00am on Sunday 1 May at Civic Park

For more information contact Sharon Grierson on 4926 1555

Newcastle
427 Hunter Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
Ph: 02-4926 1555 Fax: 02-4926 1895
e-mail: Sharon.Grierson.MP@aph.gov.au



Canberra
Suite R2 88
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
Ph: 02-6277 4221 Fax: 02-6277 8461
Web Page: www.newcastle-alp.com