



IRC Decision in State Wage Fixing Principles Case

As noted in [Sitrep 60](#), the FBEU recently made submission to the Wage Fixing Principles ('WFP') case being heard by the new Industrial Court. WFPs are a guide used by the Commission when making decisions in relation to new or varied public sector NSW Awards and are significantly important to our current arbitration process and to any future applications pursued by the FBEU.

The review of WFP is an early initiative of the new Industrial Court and an important first step in changes to the IR Act campaigned for by the FBEU and the broader Union movement.

Our submission (found [here](#)) sought to ensure the delivery of a fair and equitable framework to determine wage claims in Award cases by bolstering work value processes, improving access to productivity and efficiency gains, and creating greater significance of cost of living considerations.

Our submission was one of few from our movement and provides important counterweight to the interests of the Industrial Relations Secretary, effectively the employer representative for the public sector.

This week the Full Bench of the IRC issued their decision on the case (found [here](#)). I am happy to report that our participation has made a positive impact on the result, with the decision reflecting the following FBEU arguments:

1. That overtime, wages might be expected to increase in real terms (at a rate higher than CPI), in line with increases in productivity
2. That the Commission develop a mechanism to consult (including with Unions) and implement an annual base wage increase across the public sector, distinct from any notion of a wages 'cap'
3. The removal of what was in effect a presumption that all existing Awards provided fair and reasonable terms and conditions of employment, giving greater consideration to the context and environment of our future claims
4. The introduction of a principle to allow wage increases to address changes in the cost of living

These changes will, in practice, provide for a more comprehensive and considered assessment of our claims in the upcoming Award arbitration, set for February 2025.