



# Union Factsheet

## Minimum wages

**Unions win  
\$26 a week  
pay rise for  
low paid  
workers from  
1 July 2010**

- Under WorkChoices, the wages of more than a million award-reliant workers declined in real terms.
- The final decision of the WorkChoice's Fair Pay Commission was a wage freeze for low-paid workers.
- The Rudd Government has now introduced a more transparent method of setting minimum wages by Fair Work Australia.
- With the first decision of the Fair Work Australia Minimum Wage Panel unions have won a \$26 a week pay rise for 1.4 million working Australians from 1 July 2010.
- This was a dividend from the Federal Government's successful handling of the Global Financial Crisis and the new Fair Work laws.

## A fairer system for setting minimum wages

**Rudd Govt has  
introduced a  
better way of  
setting  
minimum wages**

One of the key outcomes of the Fair Work laws was to make the process for determining minimum rates of pay fairer and more transparent.

The changes have had immediate results with Fair Work Australia's Minimum Wage Panel awarding a pay rise of \$26 a week to more than 1.4 million workers from 1 July. For the first time, the National Minimum Wage will be \$15 an hour, or \$569.90 a week.

In its decision, the panel said there was a strong case for a rise in minimum wages to provide a fair and relevant safety net, protect the relative living standards of award-reliant workers and assist the low-paid to meet their needs.

This decision ended a wage freeze of almost two years for award-reliant workers and restored the real value of wages for the low-paid and most vulnerable members of the workforce.

## Minimum wage earners would fall further behind under Liberals

**Liberals and  
Nationals  
oppose fairness  
for the low-paid**

- The Liberals are always on the side of big business at the expense of working Australians
- When in government, the Liberals always opposed a decent wage rise for the low-paid
- This is despite the facts showing moderate and consistent increases to minimum wages do not cost jobs
- Big business and Tony Abbott just want to bring back WorkChoices

The Liberal Party prefers to let markets rule and give employers the power to set pay rates rather than provide a proper safety net for low-paid and vulnerable workers.

As part of WorkChoices, they established the so-called Fair Pay Commission, which put economic and business considerations ahead of protecting the living standards of the low-paid. Its four decisions resulted in the real value of minimum award wages falling by as much as \$97.75 a week.

In their responses to this year's \$26 a week rise, the Liberals again made it clear they would always back business against a boost to the living standards of the low-paid.