

Inequality Noted by FWC

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By now you would have heard there has been an increase in the minimum wage in Australia.

Last week, the Fair Work Commission reviewed the national minimum wage and minimum wages in modern awards – a job it is required to do each financial year.

The result of the review was a 2.4% increase of the previous minimum wage rates. The minimum wage per hour is now \$17.70 and the minimum wage per week is \$672.70.

The increase to the minimum wage also applies to modern awards. The wages listed therein also being increased by 2.4% - with weekly wages to be rounded to the nearest 10 cents.

Along with these increases, there are also increases in the sliding scale of minimum wages applicable to junior employees and the minimum wage applicable to apprentices.

Within the decision the Fair Work Commission cited the deteriorated position of low-paid workers over the past decade, noting some are actually living below the poverty line. Another consideration of the commission was that women were over-represented in the group of low-paid workers. The wage increase was also an effort to address this inequality.

Employers need to ensure the changes to their employee's pay rates take effect from no later than July 1. Of course the superannuation contributions based upon these minimum wages will also need to be adjusted at the same time.

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Elspeth's articles can be accessed on the Daily Mercury website at <http://www.dailymercury.com.au/topic/elspeth-ledwy/> or you can find Elspeth's column "Mind Your Own Business" in the Daily Mercury newspaper each Wednesday.



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