

## Minimum Wages: Issues and Facts

### Quick Fact:

Since 1996, the increase in award minimum rates achieved by the ACTU and unions through Minimum Wage cases total \$99. The current minimum award rate is \$448.40, equal to \$11.80 per hour.

### Issues For Policy At Congress 2003

- there are about 1.7 million workers who rely on award wages and are paid only the minimum rate.
- these workers are more likely to be women; to be in casual or temporary employment; employed in the private sector; working in lower skilled jobs; and concentrated in just three industry sectors - hospitality, retail and community services.
- there is now a crisis of low pay in Australia. Half the new jobs created during the 1990s pay less than \$300 per week.
- the real value of wages for many low paid workers has declined over the last decade while pay for managers has grown over 40% in real terms.

### ACTU Draft Policy

The ACTU and unions will continue to:

- lift the real value of award minimum rates through national wage case proceedings;
- aim to achieve a Federal Minimum Wage of at least \$13 per hour or \$500 per week over the next three years;
- oppose the proposition that minimum wages be frozen or restrained on the basis of creating more jobs and containing inflation;
- support an independent and comprehensive inquiry into low pay.

### More information on Minimum Wages is available on the ACTU Website

- a comprehensive Congress background paper, and
- the full draft policy.

[www.actu.asn.au/Congress2003](http://www.actu.asn.au/Congress2003)

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