

ACTU calls for interim pay rise of “at least” 9% for workers in key feminised industries

Workers in key feminised industries should get at least a 9% pay rise in the Annual Wage Review, according to the ACTU’s reply submissions filed today with the Fair Work Commission.

This rise would be a critical step in achieving equal pay for workers in occupations that historically have been undervalued based on gender – including care and degree-qualified occupations in early childhood education, education and health support services, veterinary care and disability home care, among others.

The 9% pay rise call is based on the 5% increase the ACTU is advocating across all awards, supplemented by at least an additional 4% in key low-paid feminised industries.

If accepted, a full-time care worker could see their pay boosted by \$90 a week, - a step towards equal pay, pending a full assessment. A similar assessment in aged care recently found that workers required up to 23% pay increases to achieve pay equity.

The ACTU is also calling for a process to provide interim increases quickly while a proper valuation of underpayment is done in retail, pharmacy, administrative services, cabin crew, and legal services, among others.

This year’s Annual Wage Review is working to address equal pay, in line with the Albanese Government’s 2022 changes to the Fair Work Act to achieve gender equality.

The ACTU’s submission has also slammed employer proposals, some of which would leave some of Australia’s lowest-paid workers nearly \$1,350 worse off each year compared to the ACTU claim of a 5% pay increase.

The ACTU claim would help workers struggling with cost-of-living pressures, and start to recover the real wages they lost over the past 3 years. A worker earning the average award wage three years ago would be \$5,200 better off today if wages had kept up with inflation.

The Fair Work Commission’s Annual Wage Review decision will impact the pay of 2.9 million minimum and award wage workers.

New research from the Fair Work Commission shows that minimum and award wages now constitute a smaller share of GDP and the total wages bill than they did last year, further reinforcing the ACTU’s argument that a pay increase for low-paid workers would have no negative impact on inflation.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“Achieving equal pay for women requires systemic change and targeted pay rises in industries traditionally dominated by women and historically very low-paid.

“A 9% pay increase will not only support families with cost-of-living pressures, it will also be a vital first step to properly valuing the work of working women doing critical work for our community, such as educating the next generation and caring for our loved ones.

“When employers push for real pay cuts while enjoying record corporate profits, they are disregarding the struggles of working women in Australia.

“Equal pay and cost of living increases are good for workers and good for the economy.”

ENDS

Selected care work examples of an interim 9% pay increase:

Award	Classification example	Current wage		Interim 9% increase		Difference	
		Hourly	Weekly	Hourly	Weekly	Hourly	Weekly
Children's Services	Childcare worker (level 3.1)	26.18	994.84	28.54	1084.38	2.36	89.54
Animal Care and Veterinary Services	Veterinary Nurse or Assistant (level 3)	26.18	994.84	28.54	1084.38	2.36	89.54
Education Services (schools) General Staff	Classroom support (level 3)	26.18	994.84	28.54	1084.38	2.36	89.54
Health Professionals and support services (support services stream)	Personal care worker (grade 2)	25.88	983.44	28.21	1071.95	2.33	88.51
SCHADs (Home care workers for persons with disability)	Home care employee - disability care (level 3)	26.18	994.84	28.54	1084.38	2.36	89.54

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