



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

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Pay rise welcome but more needs to be done to address poverty

More than 2.6 million Australians have been granted a pay rise through this week's decision by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to raise the nation's minimum wage.

The approved increase of 3.75 per cent takes effect at the beginning of July. The minimum hourly rate will rise from \$23.23 an hour to \$24.10, or by \$33 per week for a full-time worker.

Bishop delegate for the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCER), Michael Kennedy, said that while the decision was welcome, employees who depend upon on a just and fair annual increment will continue to experience financial stress.

"Employees who rely on modern award minimum wage rates differ greatly to the typical Australian workforce," Bishop Kennedy said.

"They typically work part-time, are women, and casual employees. A just and fair rise in the national minimum wage is needed to keep millions of Australians such as these out of poverty and social disadvantage."

Bishop Kennedy said the submission to the FWC by ACCER had sought a 4.9 per cent increase.

"The submission by ACCER, in partnership with the Australian Catholic University, was based on intensive research which concluded that a 4.9 per cent boost in the minimum wage would help address the cost-of-living crisis, something the Albanese government has made a priority during its term in office," he said.

The submissions, and the findings of the research by Dr Tom Barnes, can be found [here](#).

Bishop Vincent Long – chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service - said while the increase was consistent with forecasts of inflation returning to a target below three per cent in 2025, bishops remain concerned for the standard of living of the lowest paid working Australians, including women, and workers with caring responsibilities.

"ACCER's proposal of 4.9 per cent was made in support of the interests of low paid workers, who live and work in poverty," Bishop Long said.

The Catholic Church is one of the largest private sector employers in Australia – employing more than 220,000 people across Australia in health, aged care, education, welfare and administration.

The Church holds an underpinning belief that workers have a right to wages that will support themselves and their families to a dignified standard of living. As far back as Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, it has been advocating for workers' rights.