



27 March 2026

Expert Panel
Annual Wage Review 2026
Fair Work Commission

Dear Panel,

2026 Annual Wage Review

The AHA supports the submission of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry regarding the 2026 Annual Wage Review. The AHA supports a fair, reasonable and sustainable increase in the national minimum wage of 3.5%.

The Fair Work Commission must establish and maintain a safety net of fair minimum wages, taking into account:

- relative living standards and the needs of the low paid
- employment growth
- performance and competitiveness of the national economy
- inflation
- business competitiveness and viability

Members report that just in the last 2-3 weeks, patron attendance and business turnover has slowed down. This is presumed to be primarily because of:

- increases to mortgage costs caused by the increase by the RBA to the official cash rate
- inflation rising to 3.7% in February
- the effect on fuel prices and availability caused by the war in the Middle East.

Higher costs for inputs such as food and beverages are expected due to higher fuel prices caused by the disruption in the Middle East. Productivity improvement in the economy appears weak.

The AHA encourages an increase to minimum and modern award wages that is fair and reasonable for both employees and employers. The decision needs to ensure inflation is not contributed to and that are as few pressures on businesses financial ability to employ.

A decision higher than 3.5% will place undue pressure on business viability and the broader economy.

Yours faithfully,

STEPHEN FERGUSON
NATIONAL CEO

