Australian FairPay Commission
Minimum Wage Submission

* the capacity for unemployed and low-paid Australians to obtain and remain in employment; Rising costs of living including, but not limited to, mortgage and rental payments, petrol, and food; increase the pressure on unemployed and low-income earners. The pay/income that they receive needs to be adequate to provide a “healthy” level of living, no employee (who works more than a 30 hour week) should be in the class of the “working poor”.

The costs of getting to and from employment could have a substantial impact on the ability to earn a “decent” wage, to this end, opportunities for employment need to be offered in relatively close proximity or within easy access via reliable public transport to those looking for work.

* employment and competitiveness across the economy;

* providing a safety net for low-paid Australians; and No employee (who works more than a 30 hour week) should be in the class of the “working poor”. The level at which Centrelink payments are reduced needs to recognise that people being in employment is preferable to being reliant on welfare payments. If an employee earns $200 via working their welfare payment should only be reduced by 80% of this, in effect providing them with a bonus for working.

* minimum wages for junior employees, employees to whom training arrangements apply and employees with disabilities that ensure those employees are competitive in the labour market.
The minimum wage for all employees, junior or adult, should be the same. This would assist in limiting the selective employment of staff based upon their age. Many juniors complete the same tasks at works as those who are paid higher wages as adults. It would also enable minors who are living independently to earn enough money at any job to support themselves.

Employers should be encouraged to hire apprentices more readily via an increase in the associated subsidies (especially for apprentices who are entering from other industries). The wage received by an apprentice should be enough to provide a decent level of living. Particularly as with the changing spread of opportunities for apprenticeships/training agreements, employees are often required to move away from family and support themselves in new towns. Those who are lucky enough to be able to live with family will often save to buy new tools or start themselves off with house deposits, cars etc. The apprenticeship program should be reviewed to assess whether all programs could run for the same period of time i.e. 3 or 4 years.

Both individual and group employment opportunities should be provided for employees with disabilities. Employers who choose employ disabled staff should be able to access support and guidance and depending on the severity of the disabilities receive additional moneys either via subsidy or grants to support the reduced capacity of the staff or the alterations of work processes/machinery to suit the disabled employee.

A subsidy of at least a third of the wage should be provided to employers who hire disabled employees or apprentices (1st year, grading down to 10% for a final year apprentice).
B Richards