Summary of submission
An increase in opportunity should be given rather than an increase in direct wages. I propose the idea that training and education opportunity be granted to people who are in the low earning wage brackets through a government/employer sponsored arrangement. Perhaps a system where employees in low income categories could be given an accumulating amount of training or study credits which could offset or help pay for education. The credits could be redeemed at registered education institutions, allowing low income earners a real chance at improving their opportunity through education.

The capacity for the unemployed and low paid to obtain and remain in employment
The capacity for unemployed people low paid people to obtain and remain in employment has been very good over recent years. Economic prosperity has provided a large number of low income jobs for those who have been willing to look, and opportunity to find a job has been good. The low income job market in Australia does require a lot from the potential job seeker, especially in terms of accredited training certificates, proven experience, and references. This factor of providing "barriers of entry" (certificates etc.) for what are largely basic job opportunities has the effect of keeping potential employees out of opportunistic positions if they do not meet the criteria. Unemployed people who are out of experience, and missed 'on the job' training are further disadvantaged by this type of position.

Employment and competitiveness across the economy
I believe that current wage conditions provide a fair opportunity for people to live on in Australia, and we need to reconsider the idea of simply putting up minimum wages to help people live more comfortable lives. It is true that there is an ever increasing gap between high and low income earning people, but simply increasing minimum wage will not alleviate the problems of unemployment or social issues such as crime and degenerative behaviour which could potentially be linked to low income. Many businesses rely on having competitive wage costs to sustain their business, and it is important to keep business functioning in order for people to receive employment. In this proposal people who are willing to be educated can receive increased opportunity through a mutually beneficial system.

The provision of a safety net for the low paid
I agree that a minimum wage is important and is to be protected in our country. We are fortunate that we have a good medical and welfare system that takes good care of our people and we need to be thankful for that. We should continue to provide for the sick and injured as well as the handicapped and the low paid in our society, However we should not become a society that fosters a mentality of entitlement without personal effort. It is an unfortunate reality that a portion of people who are low paid will not be interested in education or opportunity, and seek only more money for doing the same tasks. I think the current minimum wage is adequate as a safety net, however allowing people to have access to better jobs through education and training is a real need.
The provision of 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.
I believe that these needs still needed to be provided for and care should be taken to ensure people with disabilities and their carers have adequate resources to live. I think our current system is good and should be maintained. I believe that junior and training employees who have reduced wages for competitiveness is a fair system, however care should be taken to help these people if in difficult circumstances, such as high rent, travel difficulties etc. The minimum wage set for juniors and training arrangements should be maintained to avoid exploitation of these workers.

Conclusion
The Australian job market for the low income earners has restrictions in terms of requirement of certificates, experience, and training. These restrictions can make it hard for low income earning people to improve their income earning opportunities, and as such help should be given to provide opportunity for training and education rather than just increased money per se. A system whereby credits could be accumulated through low income work could provide a way to help people to help themselves. An employer/government arrangement whereby credits are redeemable at educational institutions could provide people with opportunity to upskill and increase their standard of living. Our current social safety net for disabled and disadvantaged people and their carers needs to be maintained, and care should be taken to avoid the exploitation of junior and training workers.