

Classification structure in the *General Retail Industry Award 2020*

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Introduction

This information note provides detail on the classification structure in the *General Retail Award 2020*, (the Retail Award) and sets out a brief history of the creation of the modern award.

Current classification structure

The classification structure in the Retail Award is set out at clauses:

- [14—Classifications](#)
- [17—Minimum rates](#)
- [Schedule A—Classification definitions](#)

The Retail Award has 8 classification levels. The classification structure provides for Retail Employees level 1–8 and also provides for Clerical Assistant Level 1 and Clerical Officer Levels 2–4.¹

¹ A clerical assistant level 1 is the equivalent of a retail employee level 1; a clerical officer level 2 is the equivalent of a retail employee level 4; a clerical officer level 3 is the equivalent of a retail employee level 6 and a clerical officer level 4 is the equivalent of a retail employee level 7

The minimum rates of pay are set out at clause 17.1 and are expressed as hourly and weekly rates.

Schedule A provides the definitions for each of these classifications.

These clauses are extracted at Attachment A to this information note.

Award history

Background

The [General Retail Industry Award 2010](#) (the Retail Award) was created on 19 December 2008 by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) acting pursuant to the award modernisation request made by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. The award commenced operation on 1 January 2010.

A Statement was issued on 12 September 2008² in which the Award Modernisation Full Bench observed that the retail industry generally covers a broad range of activities, including supermarkets, recreation, clothing and department stores, motor vehicle and parts retailing, fuel retailing, specialised food retailing, pharmaceutical retailing and other store-based retailing. While excluding motor vehicle retailing and real estate agencies, the Full Bench categorised the making of a modern award to cover the retail sector as a priority industry.³ In this Statement, the Award Modernisation Full Bench confirmed its intention to create a single Retail award (covering general retail; fast food; community pharmacies; and hair and beauty).

The Full Bench indicated that it intended to prepare the draft award to cover all classifications employed in a shop. At the time, community pharmacies, fast food outlets or hairdressing services and retail meat operations were included for consideration in this award. The Full Bench commented that the range of classifications to be included required further examination, but it intended to consider the inclusion of a broad range of awards to maximize the potential for rationalisation of award coverage.⁴

The Full Bench later observed an increasing overlap of goods sold and services provided in a variety of retail establishments and a similarity of duties and skills required to be exercised in different types of establishments. Noting that different skills and circumstances can be dealt with by different classifications, the Full Bench proceeded to draft a comprehensive retail award.⁵ The Full Bench noted that it incorporated key features of areas of employment from existing instruments including the classification structures from various sectors such as community pharmacies, clerical employment and hairdressing services.⁶

After considering submissions regarding the draft award, in its decision on 19 December 2008, the Full Bench decided to make separate awards for general retailing, fast food, hair and beauty, and community pharmacies.⁷ It commented that the contents of the 4 awards were derived from the existing awards and NAPSAs applying to the different sectors and it generally followed the main federal industry awards and had regard to all other applicable instruments.⁸

² [\[2008\] AIRCFB 717](#)

³ [\[2008\] AIRCFB 717](#) at [84]

⁴ [\[2008\] AIRCFB 550](#) at [83]

⁵ [\[2008\] AIRCFB 717](#) at [87]

⁶ [\[2008\] AIRCFB 717](#) at [91]

⁷ [\[2008\] AIRCFB 1000](#) at [284]

⁸ [\[2008\] AIRCFB 1000](#) at [286]

In discussing coverage clauses, the Full Bench made the following general comments touching on classifications:

[23] While the coverage clauses will contain a common approach and concepts they must be adapted to the needs of the industries or occupations under consideration and the “model” will necessarily be subject to modification in some areas. It is also necessary that coverage clauses in some awards deal with the interaction between industry awards and occupational awards. As a general rule awards with occupational coverage will be expressed not to cover employees covered by an industry award with relevant classifications. There will also be a note at the end of the coverage clause in most industry awards and in awards with both industry and occupational coverage indicating that, where there is no classification for a particular employee in the award, another award with occupational coverage might cover that employee.

[24] In our statement of 12 September 2008 we indicated that we had included maintenance classifications in some draft industry awards and invited further comment about the desirability of that and about related allowances. We have decided in light of the views and submissions of the parties affected that we shall not include maintenance classifications in industry awards unless there are existing arrangements which make it desirable or there is a consensus and it is appropriate to do so.

In a decision issued on 19 December 2008, the scope of the modern award was restricted to what was defined as the ‘general retail sector’. Separate awards were made to cover employers and employees in the pharmacy, hair and beauty and fast food industries:

‘The more awards with disparate provisions are aggregated the greater the extent of changes in the safety net. Changes may be able to be accommodated by a “swings and roundabouts” approach, specific provisions relevant to part of the industry or transitional provisions.

However, significant changes may also result in net disadvantage to employees and/or increased costs for employers. The publication of an exposure draft which sought to rationalise the terms and conditions across the various types of retail establishment provided a means whereby the impact of such an approach could be fully evaluated.

We have considered these matters and the submissions of the parties and have decided to make separate awards for general retailing, fast food, hair and beauty, and community pharmacies...

In reaching this decision we have placed significant reliance on the objective of not disadvantaging employees or leading to additional costs. We note that such an approach will not lead to additional awards applying to a particular employer or employee.

The contents of the four awards we publish with this decision are derived from the existing awards and NAPSAs applying to the different sectors. Although the scope of the awards is obviously reduced, this did not eliminate the variations in terms and conditions within each part of the industry. We have generally followed the main federal industry awards where possible and had regard to all other applicable instruments. In this regard we note in particular the significant differences in awards and NAPSAs applying to the fast food and pharmacy parts of the industry.’⁹

On 29 January 2010 a Full Bench made a decision regarding an application to vary the *General Retail Industry Award 2010* so as to confine the Shop Manager classification in Level 8 to a

⁹ [2008] AIRCFB 1000 at [283]–[286]

Manager of a shop with departments/sections, reclassify the Shop Manager to level 6 and reclassify the Assistant Shop Manager from level 6 to level 4.¹⁰

The Full Bench observed that it is clear from the instruments that the Level 6 rate of \$17.63 per hour is more in line with the range of rates for similar classifications in pre-reform awards and NAPSAs applying to general retail. It commented that these rates are generally within the range of \$16.78 and \$17.87 per hour and the higher rate for Level 8 is not appropriate except for a very senior level of manager.

The Full Bench decided to vary the definitions in clause 3.1 and wording of the classification definitions in Schedule B in line with the application.¹¹ It also agreed to amend the definition of general retail industry so as not to exclude retail activities conducted from seafood processing plants.¹²

Pre-reform Awards

In the making of the modern Retail Award the main Federal award was deemed to be the *Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association - Victorian Shops Interim Award 2000* (the Victorian Shops Interim Award).¹³

The award that existed prior to this was *Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association - Victorian Shops Interim Award 1994*.

¹⁰ [\[2010\] FWAFB 305](#) at [4]

¹¹ [\[2010\] FWAFB 305](#) at [6]

¹² [\[2010\] FWAFB 305](#) at [7]

¹³ [AP796250](#).CRV

Attachment A—Extracts of relevant clauses

14. Classifications

- 14.1** An employer must classify an employee covered by this award in accordance with Schedule A—Classification Definitions.
- 14.2** The classification by the employer must be based on the skill level as determined by the employer that the employee is required to exercise in order to carry out the principal functions of the employment.
- 14.3** Employers must notify employees in writing of their classification and of any change to it.

17. Minimum rates

17.1 Adult rates

An employer must pay an adult employee (other than an apprentice) the minimum hourly rate specified in column 3 or for a full-time employee the minimum weekly rate specified in column 2, in accordance with the employee classification specified in column 1 of **Table 4—Minimum rates**.

NOTE 1: Adult employee is defined in clause 2—Definitions.

NOTE 2: Provision for calculating rates for a junior employee is at clause 17.2.

NOTE 3: Clause 25—Rate of pay for shiftwork sets out rates of pay for shiftwork.

NOTE 4: Schedule B—Summary of Hourly Rates of Pay contains a summary of hourly rates including overtime, shiftwork and penalty rates.

Table 4—Minimum rates

Column 1 Employee classification	Column 2 Minimum weekly rate (full-time employee)	Column 3 Minimum hourly rate
	\$	\$
Retail Employee Level 1	813.60	21.41
Retail Employee Level 2	833.00	21.92
Retail Employee Level 3	846.00	22.26
Retail Employee Level 4	862.50	22.70
Retail Employee Level 5	898.00	23.63
Retail Employee Level 6	911.00	23.97
Retail Employee Level 7	956.70	25.18
Retail Employee Level 8	995.50	26.20

Schedule A—Classification Definitions

A.1 Retail Employee Level 1

A.1.1 Retail Employee Level 1 means an employee performing any of the following functions at a retail establishment:

- (a) receiving or preparing for sale or displaying goods in or about a shop; or
- (b) pre-packing, packing, weighing, assembling, pricing or preparing goods, provisions or produce for sale; or
- (c) displaying, filling shelves, replenishing or any other method of exposing or presenting goods for sale; or
- (d) selling or hiring goods by any means; or
- (e) receiving, arranging or paying by any means; or
- (f) recording a sale or sales by any means; or
- (g) wrapping or packing goods for despatch or despatching goods; or
- (h) delivering goods; or
- (i) window dressing or merchandising; or
- (j) loss prevention; or
- (k) demonstrating goods for sale; or
- (l) providing information, advice or assistance to customers; or
- (m) receiving, preparing or packing goods for repair or replacement or making minor repairs to goods; or
- (n) as a direct employee of the retailer, providing cleaning, store greeting, security, lift attending, store cafeteria services or food services; or
- (o) any function of a Clerical Assistant Level 1; or
- (p) work that is incidental to, or connected with, any of the functions mentioned in clause A.1.1(a) to clause A.1.1(o).

A.1.2 A Retail Employee Level 1 must undertake duties as directed within the limits of their competence, skills and training, including incidental cleaning. For this purpose, the cleaning of toilets is not incidental cleaning except for a take away food establishment.

A.1.3 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 1 are:

- (a) shop assistant;
- (b) clerical assistant;
- (c) check-out operator;
- (d) store worker;
- (e) reserve stock hand;
- (f) driver;
- (g) boot or shoe repairer (not qualified);
- (h) window dresser (not qualified);

- (i) loss prevention officer;
- (j) photographic employee;
- (k) store greeter;
- (l) assembler;
- (m) ticket writer (not qualified);
- (n) trolley collector;
- (o) video hire worker;
- (p) telephone order salesperson;
- (q) door-to-door salesperson or retail outdoor salesperson;
- (r) demonstrator or merchandiser not elsewhere classified (including a demonstrator or merchandiser who is not a direct employee of the retailer).

A.1.4 Clerical Assistant Level 1 means an employee accountable for clerical and office tasks as directed within the skill levels set out in this clause.

A.1.5 Employees at this level may include the initial recruit who may have limited relevant experience. An initial recruit performs work under close direction using established practices, procedures and instructions.

A.1.6 Employees at Clerical Assistant Level 1 perform routine clerical and office functions requiring an understanding of clear, straightforward rules or procedures and may be required to operate certain office equipment. Problems can usually be solved by reference to established practices, procedures and instructions.

A.1.7 Employees at this level are responsible and accountable for their own work within established routines, methods and procedures and the less experienced employee's work may be subject to checking at all stages. The more experienced employee may be required to give assistance to less experienced employees in the same classification.

A.1.8 Indicative typical duties and skills within the definition of a Clerical Assistant Level 1 include any of the following:

- (a) reception or switchboard, for example, directing telephone callers to appropriate staff, issuing or receiving standard forms, relaying internal information or the initial greeting of visitors; or
- (b) maintaining basic records; or
- (c) filing, collating or photocopying; or
- (d) handling or distributing mail, including messenger service; or
- (e) recording, matching, checking or batching of accounts, invoices, orders or store requisitions; or
- (f) operating keyboard or other allied equipment in order to achieve competency as set out in Level 2.

A.2 Retail Employee Level 2

A.2.1 Retail Employee Level 2 means an employee performing work at a retail establishment at a higher skill level than a Retail Employee Level 1.

A.2.2 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 2 include:

- (a) forklift operator;
- (b) ride on equipment operator.

A.3 Retail Employee Level 3

A.3.1 Retail Employee Level 3 means an employee performing work at a retail establishment at a higher level than a Retail Employee Level 2.

A.3.2 Indicative of the tasks that might be required at this level are the following:

- (a) providing supervisory assistance to a designated section manager or team leader; or
- (b) opening or closing the premises or providing associated security; or
- (c) securing cash; or
- (d) fitting a surgical corset.

A.3.3 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 3 include:

- (a) machine operators;
- (b) second-in-charge to department manager;
- (c) senior salesperson (including designated second-in-charge of a section);
- (d) corsetiere;
- (e) driver selling stock;
- (f) cook (not qualified) in a cafeteria;
- (g) senior loss prevention officer, including an armed loss prevention officer;
- (h) loss prevention officer supervisor;
- (i) Designated second-in-charge to a service supervisor;
- (j) person employed alone, with responsibilities for the security and general running of a shop.

A.4 Retail Employee Level 4

A.4.1 Retail Employee Level 4 means an employee performing work at a retail establishment at a higher level than a Retail Employee Level 3. This may include an employee who has completed an appropriate trades course or holds an appropriate Certificate III and is required to use their qualifications in the course of their work.

A.4.2 Indicative of the tasks that might be required at this level are the following:

- (a) managing a defined department or section; or
- (b) supervising up to 4 sales staff (including self); or
- (c) stock control; or
- (d) buying or ordering requiring the exercise of discretion as to price, quantity, quality and other matters; or
- (e) utilising the skills of a trades qualification for the majority of the time in a week; or

(f) any function of a Clerical Officer Level 2.

A.4.3 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 4 include:

- (a) assistant, deputy, or second-in-charge shop manager of a shop without departments;
- (b) butcher, baker, pastry cook or florist (for an employee who is required to utilise the skills of a trade qualification for the majority of the time in a week);
- (c) qualified auto parts and accessories salesperson;
- (d) window dresser (Certificate III or equivalent experience);
- (e) boot or shoe repairer (Certificate III);
- (f) shiftwork supervisor;
- (g) department or section manager with up to 2 employees (including self);
- (h) service supervisor of up to 15 employees;
- (i) nightfill supervisor or leader.

A.4.4 Clerical Officer Level 2 characteristics:

- (a) Clerical Officer Level 2 caters for employees who have had sufficient experience or training to enable them to carry out their assigned duties under general direction.
- (b) Employees at this level are responsible and accountable for their own work which is performed within established guidelines. In some situations, detailed instructions may be necessary. This may require the employee to exercise limited judgment and initiative within the range of their skills and knowledge.
- (c) The work of these employees may be subject to final checking and, as required, progress checking. These employees may be required to check the work of, or provide guidance to, other employees at a lower level or provide assistance to less experienced employees at the same level.

A.4.5 Indicative typical duties and skills within the definition of Clerical Officer Level 2 include:

- (a) reception or switchboard duties as in Level 1 and, in addition, responding to enquiries as appropriate, consistent with the acquired knowledge of the organisation's operations and services, or where presentation and use of interpersonal skills are a key aspect of the position; or
- (b) operating computerised radio telephone equipment, micro personal computer, printing devices attached to personal computer or dictaphone equipment; or
- (c) using a word processing software package to create, format, edit, correct, print and save text documents, for example, standard correspondence and business documents; or
- (d) stenographer or person solely employed to take shorthand and to transcribe by means of appropriate keyboard equipment; or
- (e) copy typing and audio typing; or

- (f) maintaining records or journals, including initial processing and recording relating to any of the following:
 - (i) reconciliation of accounts to balance; or
 - (ii) incoming or outgoing cheques; or
 - (iii) invoices; or
 - (iv) debit or credit items; or
 - (v) payroll data; or
 - (vi) petty cash imprest system; or
 - (vii) letters; or
- (g) using a software package that may include any of the following functions:
 - (i) creating new files or records; or
 - (ii) spreadsheet or worksheet; or
 - (iii) graphics; or
 - (iv) accounting or payroll file; or
 - (v) following standard procedures and using existing models or fields of information; or
- (h) arranging routine travel bookings and itineraries or making appointments; or
- (i) providing general advice or information on the organisation's products and services, for example, front counter or telephone.

A.5 Retail Employee Level 5

A.5.1 Retail Employee Level 5 means an employee performing work in or in connection with a retail establishment at a higher level than a Retail Employee Level 4.

A.5.2 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 5 include:

- (a) tradesperson in charge of other tradespersons within a department or section;
- (b) service supervisor (more than 15 employees).

A.6 Retail Employee Level 6

A.6.1 Retail Employee Level 6 means an employee performing work in or in connection with a retail establishment at a higher level than a Retail Employee Level 5.

A.6.2 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 6 include:

- (a) department or section manager with 5 or more employees (including self);
- (b) manager or duty manager in a shop without departments or sections (may be under direction of a person not exclusively involved in shop management);
- (c) assistant or deputy or second-in-charge to a shop manager of a shop with departments or sections;
- (d) Clerical Officer Level 3.

A.6.3 Clerical Officer Level 3 characteristics:

- (a) Employees at this level have achieved a standard to be able to perform specialised or non-routine tasks or features of the work. Employees require only general guidance or direction and there is scope for the exercise of limited initiative, discretion and judgment in carrying out their assigned duties.
- (b) Employees may be required to give assistance or guidance (including guidance in relation to quality of work and that may require some allocation of duties) to employees at Levels 1 and 2 and be able to train such employees by means of personal instruction and demonstration.

A.6.4 Indicative typical duties and skills at this level include:

- (a) preparing cash payment summaries, banking reports and bank statements; calculating and maintaining wage and salary records; following credit referral procedures; applying purchasing and inventory control requirements; post journals to ledger; or
- (b) providing specialised advice or information on the organisation's products and services; responding to client or public or supplier problems within own functional area utilising a high degree of interpersonal skills; or
- (c) applying one or more computer software packages developed for a micro personal computer or a central computer resource to do any of the following:
 - (i) create new files or records; or
 - (ii) maintain computer-based records management systems; or
 - (iii) identify and extract information from internal and external sources; or
 - (iv) use advanced word processing or keyboard functions; or
- (d) arranging travel bookings and itineraries; making appointments; screening telephone calls; responding to invitations; organising internal meetings on behalf of executive(s); establishing and maintaining reference lists or personal contact systems for executive(s); or
- (e) applying specialist terminology or processes in professional offices.

NOTE: These typical duties or skills may be either at Level 3 or Level 4 dependent on the characteristics of that particular Level.

A.7 Retail Employee Level 7

A.7.1 Retail Employee Level 7 means an employee performing work in or in connection with a retail establishment at a higher level than a Retail Employee Level 6.

A.7.2 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 7 include:

- (a) visual merchandiser (Diploma); and
- (b) Clerical Officer Level 4.

A.7.3 Clerical Officer Level 4 characteristics:

- (a)** Employees at this level must have achieved a level of organisation or industry specific knowledge sufficient for them to give advice or provide information to the organisation and clients in relation to specific areas of their responsibility.
- (b)** Employees would require only limited guidance or direction and would normally report to more senior staff as required. Although not a pre-requisite, a principal feature of this level is supervision of employees in lower levels in terms of responsibility for the allocation of duties, co-ordinating workflow, checking progress, quality of work and resolving problems.
- (c)** Employees exercise initiative, discretion and judgment at times in the performance of their duties.
- (d)** Employees are able to train employees in Clerical Levels 1–3 by personal instruction and demonstration.

A.7.4 Indicative typical duties and skills at this level include:

- (a)** providing secretarial or executive support services that may include maintaining executive diary; attending executive or organisational meetings and taking minutes; establishing or maintaining current working and personal filing systems for executive; answering executive correspondence from oral or handwritten instructions; or
- (b)** preparing financial or tax schedules, calculating costings or wage and salary requirements; completing personnel or payroll data for authorisation; reconciliation of accounts to balance; or
- (c)** giving advice or providing information on any of the following:
 - (i)** employment conditions; or
 - (ii)** workers compensation procedures and regulations; or
 - (iii)** superannuation entitlements, procedures and regulations; or
- (d)** applying one or more computer software packages, developed for a micro personal computer or a central computer resource to do any of the following:
 - (i)** create new files or records; or
 - (ii)** maintain computer-based management systems; or
 - (iii)** identify and extract information from internal and external sources; or
 - (iv)** use advanced word processing or keyboard functions.

NOTE: These typical duties or skills may be either at Level 3 or Level 4 dependent on the characteristics of that particular Level.

A.8 Retail Employee Level 8

A.8.1 **Retail Employee Level 8** means an employee performing work in or in connection with a retail establishment at a higher level than a Retail Employee Level 7.

A.8.2 A Retail Employee Level 8 may have a Diploma qualification.

A.8.3 Indicative job titles that are usually within the definition of a Retail Employee Level 8 include:

- (a)** shop manager of a shop with departments or sections; and
- (b)** Clerical Officer Level 5.

A.8.4 Clerical Officer Level 5 characteristics:

- (a) Employees at this level are subject to broad guidance or direction and report to more senior staff as required.
- (b) Employees will typically have worked or studied in a relevant field and will have achieved a standard of relevant or specialist knowledge and experience sufficient to enable them to advise on a range of activities and features and contribute, as required, to the determination of objectives, within the relevant field(s) of their expertise.
- (c) Employees are responsible and accountable for their own work and may have delegated responsibility for the work under their control or supervision, in terms of, among other things, scheduling workloads, resolving operations problems, monitoring the quality of work produced as well as counselling staff for performance as well as work related matters.
- (d) Employees would also be able to train and supervise employees in lower levels by means of personal instruction and demonstration. They would also be able to assist in the delivery of training courses. They often exercise initiative, discretion and judgment in the performance of their duties.
- (e) The possession of relevant post secondary qualifications may be appropriate but not essential.

A.8.5 Indicative typical duties and skills at this level include:

- (a) applying knowledge of the organisation's objectives, performance, projected areas of growth, product trends and general industry conditions; or
- (b) applying computer software packages within either a micro personal computer or a central computer resource, including integrating complex word processing or desktop publishing, text and data documents or
- (c) providing reports for management in any of the following areas:
 - (i) account or financial; or
 - (ii) staffing; or
 - (iii) legislative requirements; or
 - (iv) other company activities.
- (d) administering individual executive salary packages, travel expenses, allowances and company transport; administering salary and payroll requirements of the organisation.