

**Australian Catholic Council for
Employment Relations for the
Australian Catholic Bishops
Conference**

Annual Wage Review 2024-25
Submission

April 2025

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INTRODUCTION

1. This submission is made by the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (**ACCER**) for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (the **ACBC**). The submissions are made in partnership with Dr Tom Barnes and the Australian Catholic University (**ACU**). The ACCER submits that the Annual Wage Review should increase the National Minimum Wage (the **NMW**) and the annual wage review for the modern awards so as to provide a decent standard of living for low paid workers.
2. The ACBC is a permanent institution of the Catholic Church in Australia and is the vehicle used by the Australian Catholic Bishops to address issues of national significance.
3. The ACCER's submissions are informed by the Catholic Church's experience as one of the largest non-government employers in Australia. The Catholic Church employs more than 220,000 employees in health, aged care, education, welfare and administration. About 75% of these employees are covered by enterprise agreements. The balance are covered by awards made by the Fair Work Commission (the **Commission** or the **FWC**).
4. Notwithstanding the Catholic Church's status as a substantial employer, these submissions are advanced in support of the position and underpinning belief that workers have a right to wages that will support themselves and their families to a dignified standard of living. The Catholic Church has a long history of advocating for a safety net minimum wage. The idea that working people and their families live in poverty is inconsistent with safety net principles. The ACCER makes this submission in support of the statutory function of the minimum wage review and to support those workers reliant on the minimum wage. This belief arises from core Catholic social teachings. Modern expressions of these views can be found as early as Pope Leo XIII encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. These submissions are intended to give voice to those beliefs.
5. For the fourth year, the ACCER has partnered with Dr Tom Barnes of the ACU to conduct research with original analysis, considering whether the Australian economy and employers can sustain a real increase in the NMW. As part of this research program for 2025, the ACU has focused on the following key research questions:
 1. What role does the NMW play in mitigating the effects that push low-income earning households into poverty? What role can and should a revised NMW play in mitigating these effects in FY2025/26 and beyond?
 2. What role has the NMW played in the factors contributing to inflation, business profitability, business confidence and labour productivity in Australia in FY2024/25? What role is it likely to play in FY2025/26?
 3. Considering the above, what target ought the FWC set for the NMW, and for C10-C12 award rates, in 2025?
6. This submission makes use of original research undertaken by Dr Tom Barnes and Ms Sophie Cotton at ACU (**Research Report**). The Research Report is **annexed** and forms part of these submissions.
7. The ACCER **recommends** an increase in the **NMW of 4.5% for 2025**. This would provide an increase in the NMW of \$41.20 per week, bringing the NMW from \$915.90 to \$957.10 per week. This increase would raise the hourly rate of the NMW from \$24.10 to \$25.20.

8. This proposal is based on the view, as expressed and supported in the Research Report, that the FWC in establishing and maintaining a safety net of fair minimum wages and balancing the minimum wages objectives should:
 - i. pursue the safety net mandate by gradually eliminating the gap between the NMW and the National Poverty Line (**NPL**) for sole parents/carers with two dependent children and substantially narrowing the poverty gap for couples with dependent children;
 - ii. maintain growth in the NMW as a critically important benchmark in the prevention of low-income adult wage earners slipping into poverty in the aftermath of a generational cost-of-living crisis;
 - iii. remain cognisant of the ongoing view that the effect of wage rises, including and especially those arising from NMW determinations, have become marginal, in historical terms, to the causal mechanisms underlying inflation;
 - iv. remain vigilant in addressing the ongoing and barely abated challenges to household living costs, including and especially as confronted by low-income households. While Australia has recorded abatement in price rises for several non-discretionary items, the cost-of-living challenge vis-à-vis price movements in rents, insurance premiums, energy, food, pharmaceutical and medical products remains substantial. This challenge is especially concerning for low-income earners.
9. There are approximately 4,989,000 people in Australia living at or below the 60% poverty line. This includes over three million (3,319,000) people living in poverty (including 761,000 children) below the 50% poverty line.¹
10. Research demonstrates that a significant proportion of this group are employed in full-time work. ACCER submits that the NMW is intended to form a safety net with regard to the minimum wage objectives. The NMW does not rely on other industrial mechanisms (such as award based terms and conditions such as overtime or penalties) to deliver its safety net objective. For example, payments in addition to or outside of the NMW are compensatory on account of the cost imposed from working beyond or outside ordinary hours and the disadvantage that such time worked occasions upon a worker and/or their family.
11. The ACCER respectfully commends the FWC for its recent efforts in lifting the NMW to address the cost-of-living crisis, especially as it relates to low-income earners.
12. Despite these recent stronger increases in the NMW, Dr Barnes' research demonstrates that the gap between the NMW and the NPL has remained so significant that to completely eliminate the gap in 2025 would require a one-off increase in the NMW of 12.7% (or

¹ ACOSS and UNSW Sydney (2022) Poverty in Australia 2022: A Snapshot. Australian Council of Social Services and University of New South Wales Sydney, page 17, https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Poverty-in-Australia-2020_A-snapshot.pdf accessed 20 March, 2024; ACOSS and UNSW Sydney (2023) Poverty in Australia 2023: Who is Affected. Australian Council of Social Services and University of New South Wales Sydney, page 8, https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Poverty-in-Australia-2023_Who-is-affected_screen.pdf.

\$116.30), an increase which would still leave couple-based households with dependents in poverty relative to the NMW.

13. Accordingly, the ACCER seeks an **increase of 4.5% to the NMW**. This would provide for an increase in the NMW of \$41.20 per week, bringing the NMW from \$915.90 to \$957.10 per week.
14. The ACCER contends that an increase of 4.5% in 2025 is warranted to build towards eliminating the gap between the NMW and poverty lines in Australia. Extrapolating the NMW by an annual average of 4.4%, which is equivalent to the annual average of NMW increases over the past five years, would eliminate the poverty gap for wage earners who are single parents/carers with two dependent children in 8 years, by 2033, assuming an annual increase in the NPL of 2.6%, or equivalent to annual average NPL growth for the past 10 years.
15. The Research Report identifies and supports that the business environment is strong and resilient in a challenging international climate. Job growth and price changes signal a scenario that favours a further above-CPI increase in the NMW, one that balances much-needed relief for the low-income earners and working poor with sufficient caution with respect to uncertainties and challenges in the international economy.

LEGAL ISSUES

General Principles and Approach to the Task

16. Before coming to the substance of the ACCER's submissions as to the appropriate setting of the NMW, it is necessary to say something about the proper construction of ss. 284 and 285 of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (**FW Act**).
17. In *AWR Decision* [2023] FWCFB 3500 the Expert Panel canvassed the legislative scheme and approach to both ss. 134 and 285 of the FW Act at [12] to [23]. Then at [22] to [45] the Expert Panel considered the additional considerations that had been added to the FW Act since the last decision of the Expert Panel. At [22] the Expert panel observed:

[22] The discharge of the Commission's statutory functions under s 285 involves an evaluative exercise which is informed by the considerations in ss 284(1)(a)-(e) and 134(1)(a)-(h) (as applicable) and the object in s 3. The statutory objectives are very broadly expressed and do not necessarily exhaust the matters which the Panel might properly consider to be relevant. The range of such matters 'must be determined by implication from the subject-matter, scope and purpose' of the FW Act. There is a degree of overlap between the various considerations which must be taken into account under ss 284(1) and 134(1) and also a degree of tension between some of these considerations. No consideration is assigned any particular primacy and the relevance of and weight to be assigned to the considerations will vary depending upon the social and economic context and other facts and circumstances of the particular Review. The complex balancing exercise which is required has led the Commission in previous Reviews to eschew a mechanistic approach to wage fixation.

(Citations omitted)

18. The evaluative exercise described above is the production of an order which is a *safety net of fair minimum wages*. The matters identified in s. 284(1)(a)-(e) inform the making of that order, but do not change the nature of the exercise. This means that not only must the Commission take into account the matters specified in s. 284 (1)(a) to (e), but the order must also answer the statutory description of being a *safety net of fair minimum wages*.

19. With regard to the objects of the FW Act and the scheme of the FW Act whereby the minimum wages payable are those under either the modern award or the NMW, the purpose of the safety net must be to prevent employees from falling into disadvantage or poverty. To put it another way, the safety net is to provide a decent living wage for those who receive it. If the NMW was set at such a level to allow groups of workers to fall into poverty and disadvantage, it is difficult to see how that would achieve the object of promoting social inclusion for all Australians or satisfy the purpose of a "safety net". Persons suffering from poverty are unlikely to feel any degree of prosperity or social inclusion.

Issues arising from AWR Decision [2024] FWCFB

20. There are two legal issues arising from the *AWR Decision [2024] FWCFB* being, (a) the relevance of whether the Expert panel can identify persons receiving the NMW and (b) whether the Expert Panel should take into account overtime, penalty rates and other allowances that may be available to persons on the lower award classifications at C13-C10.

There is no need to identify persons on the NMW

21. In *AWR Decision [2023] FWCFB 3500*, the Expert Panel made the following observation about the NMW at [108]

[108] ... A comprehensive review of the NMW should be undertaken by reference to the budget standards research and other relevant material to arrive at a NMW amount which is set having proper regard to the needs of the low paid and the other considerations in s 284.

22. However, in *AWR Decision [2024] FWCFB 3500* the Expert panel discussed the application of the NMW at [14] to [28]. Then at [84] the Expert Panel relevantly said:

[84] ...We note that in the AWR 2023 decision the Expert Panel said that there should be a comprehensive review of the NMW by reference to the budget standards research and other relevant material to arrive at a NMW amount which is set having proper regard to the needs of the low paid and the other considerations in s 284(1) of the FW Act. However, as already stated, we have now come to the view that it is not currently possible to identify persons to whom the NMW actually applies, and the number of such persons is likely to be very small. In light of this, unless any evidence to the contrary emerges, we do not consider that such a review would be a practical proposition.

23. ACCER submits that there are three reasons why, with respect, the Expert Panel should not abandon the previously proposed comprehensive review of the NMW.
24. *Firstly*, the conclusion in [84] is based on the assumption that the reporting in the EEH Survey is not correct. With respect, that assumption is not necessarily sound.
25. Answers to the EEH survey are provided to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (**ABS**) pursuant to the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (Cth). Pursuant to s. 15, it is an offence for a respondent to provide false or misleading responses. Given the criminal sanctions that are applicable, the Expert Panel should assume that the recipients who have identified that they have employees covered by NMW have done so accurately.
26. The primary basis on which the Expert panel doubted the accuracy of the answer was a view that the answers concerning the application of the NWM were inconsistent with the answers to the employer's industry and the application of the Modern Awards. Whilst there are curiosities attached to the answers about the application of the NMW and the industry

of the employers, inaccuracy in the answer as to the applicability of the NMW is not the only explanation. Surveys of this nature necessarily require grouping of answers and responses within pre-determined fields. The idiosyncratic nature of commerce does not always accord with such neat divisions or distinctions. That is, the characterisation of a particular small business as being in a particular industry will not always be simple or clear. That is another way of saying that any errors in the responses to the survey questions might not all travel one way. It is just as plausible that the responses as to the industry and nature of the employer's business are affected by inaccuracy as the response that the NMW applies.

27. That is to say nothing about the results of the application the inchoate task of applying the primary purpose test in the context of broad-banded or highly generic Award classifications, and the potential absence of clear answers,² it is far from certain that simply because an employee's employer might describe their industry in a way that accords with an Award, that employee is necessarily covered by the Award.
28. Given that non-compliance with Awards is a serious legal matter and that providing misleading answer to the ABS is also a criminal offence, it is reasonable to think that employers who say they pay in accordance with the NMW do so because that is the truth of the situation. Put differently, having regard to the context in which the answers are provided, there is no reason to assume that a very large percentage of the respondents who have answered in that way are wrong. Whilst errors are always possible, it is not apparent why one would assume an error rate of the magnitude adopted by the Expert Panel.
29. *Secondly*, the existence of a cohort of workers on the NMW with families is consistent with the data in both the Research report and the *Poverty In Australia 2023: Who is Affected (Poverty in Australia Report)*, which was published by the Australian Council of Social Services. The fact that there are approximately 4,989,000 living at the 60% poverty line and 3,319,000 living at the 50% poverty line (ACOSS, 2022, page 17 and Poverty In Australia Report, page 23) is consistent with the data that families working full time at NMW to C11 rates are below the 60% line.
30. Unfortunately, the data does not descend to a sufficient level of granularity to enable a precise examination of the numbers of full time workers who are affected. Of the 4,989,000 persons living at the 60% poverty line, 3,897,000 are adults. Further, 701,000 were in poverty where the main income earner had full time work. It must be true that not all of those 701,000 people were the wage earners. If one assumes that the full time wage earners comprise slightly less than 20% of that group (i.e. one in every five of the 701,000 persons in poverty), that means that there are still approximately 140,000 people receiving a full time wage which is not sufficient to constitute a safety net for them and their families.
31. The report *Characteristics of employees on the National Minimum Wage (Characteristics Report)* promulgated by the FWC assists in answering some of the questions about who it is that is in receipt of the NMW. With regard to tables 2 and 3 of the Characteristics Report, approximately 52% of the total workers described in table 2 are women. Further, approximately 17.5% of the total workers described in table 2 are working full time. That suggests a large number of the persons described in the Poverty in Australia Report are either paid pursuant to the lower award classifications (for example those families described in Annexure B to these submissions) or are paid pursuant to individual arrangements which are in excess of the minimum standard established by the NMW, but insufficient to ensure that their household is not in poverty.

² By way of example see *Zheng v Poten & Partners (Aust) Pty Ltd* (2021) 307 IR 339 at [45].

32. Appendix B to the Research Report in ACCER's submission filed last year (which for convenience we have reproduced that analysis as Annexure B to these submissions) extracts data from 2021 Census concerning low-income families. Annexure B seeks to identify the composition of those families and the working patterns of the parents in those families. Appendix B provides an insight into the lives of 289,642 couple parent families and 254,356 sole parent families with dependent children which can be classed as low income (see Table B1). Those families are then analysed according to income and labour force status. Tables B2 and B3 show that the great majority of these low-income couple parent families were engaged in some kind of employment. Importantly, in the case of couple families, in 65,786 households one adult was working full time with the other not working. There were also an additional 14,172 households where one parent was working full time and the other was away from work or unemployed. In the case of single parent households, 20,336 families had full time work in their household.
33. The conclusion to be drawn from the ACOSS data and Annexure B is that there is a substantial number of full-time workers whose households fall below the 60% poverty line. That is entirely consistent with the EEH survey, which suggests that there are a significant number of workers who are paid pursuant to the NMW.
34. *Thirdly*, the task imposed by s. 284 is not dependent upon the Expert Panel being satisfied as to the number of workers receiving the NMW. The statute proceeds on the basis that there are cohorts of workers who receive the NMW and requires that the Expert Panel set the NMW at a rate that establishes a fair safety net.
35. The relevance of the NMW can also be seen from other provisions of the FW Act:
- (a) s. 206 requires the base rate of pay for employees covered by an enterprise agreement and not covered by a modern award to be paid a base rate of pay that at least equals the NMW; and
 - (b) Modern Awards sometimes set rates of pay by reference to the NMW. For the example, Adult apprentices covered by the *Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award 2020*, which subject to specific sub-sections, must not be less than the NMW plus the full rate of industry disability allowance as prescribed.³
36. Accordingly, ACCER submits that the Expert Panel should not abandon the comprehensive review of the NMW.

Overtime, penalty rates and allowances should not be taken into account

37. In considering the relative living standards and the needs of the low paid in 2024, the Expert Panel stated at [73] that:

[73] On the COE benchmark, every modern award minimum weekly rate of pay up to and including the C8 classification rate⁷¹ is below the low paid threshold. On the EEH benchmark, it is every modern award rate up to and including the C7 rate. However, other award ordinary time pay entitlements such as industry and other allowances, shift loadings, evening and weekend penalty rates payable on ordinary time, and the casual loading where applicable, also need to be taken into account in assessing employees' earnings for the purpose of comparison with the low paid benchmark. Thus, while the majority of modern award base pay rates are below the benchmark, only a minority, albeit a substantial minority (36.1 per cent) of

³ MA000026 *Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award 2020* Clause 18.3(a)(iii).

modern award-reliant employees (on adult rates of pay) are actually low paid.⁷² Using the comparative measure referred to, it is their needs which must be taken into account insofar as modern awards are concerned. This group constitutes approximately 6.2 per cent of the total employee workforce.⁷³

(Citations omitted, underlining added)

38. Then at [83] the Expert Panel noted that because of the operation of modern awards to award-reliant low paid employees in providing for "*additional allowances, loadings or penalty rates for ordinary time*", the prior analysis of household expenditure did not take these factors into account to form a realistic picture of disposable income for C10 employees. The Expert Panel considered further research was required for low paid employees to understand "*the earnings which employees can realistically expect to obtain at various award classification levels inclusive of additional payments such as allowances, loadings and penalty rates.*" [emphasis added]
39. ACCER submits the nature and purpose of award-based entitlements for overtime penalty rates is such that they should not be taken into account when assessing the needs of the low paid. This is so for two reasons.
40. *Firstly*, the prevalence and extent of any benefits actually paid to employees at C13 to C10 is uncertain. Employees are not guaranteed the payment of any of those additional payments. Whether and how those payments are received is inherently uncertain. Further, the receipt of those payments in one period does nothing to address the poverty and deprivation that arises in the times when the payments are not received.
41. Further, the data referred to at [26] to [32] above supports the idea that there is a significant cohort of full-time workers who are in poverty. That is consistent with the analysis of the base wages for C13 to C10 workers. It suggests that many of those workers do not regularly receive the additional payments referred to by the Expert Panel.
42. *Secondly*, it is well established that award-based entitlements are compensatory for the cost or disutility of the prerequisite conditions an employee must meet to obtain such an entitlement. If that purpose is accepted, it does not follow that those payments should be taken into account in considering the needs of the worker.
43. The starting point is that s. 285(2)(b) of the FW Act requires the Expert Panel to review Award minimum wages.
44. From the origins of the Harvester Decision,⁴ the basis of a fair and reasonable minimum wage in the case of unskilled labourers was concerned with the average necessary expenditure in 1907 on rent, food and fuel, in a labourer's household of about five persons.⁵
45. In *A New Province for Law and Order*,⁶ Higgins J stated:

"This was to be the primary test in ascertaining the minimum wage that would be treated as 'fair and reasonable' in the case of unskilled labourers. At my suggestion, many household budgets were stated in evidence, principally by housekeeping women of the labouring class; and, after selecting such of the

⁴ *Ex parte H.V. McKay* (1907) 2 CAR 1, Higgins J, President, 8 November 1907.

⁵ <https://www.fwc.gov.au/about-us/history/waltzing-matilda-and-sunshine-harvester-factory/harvester-case>; Henry Bournes Higgins, 'A New Province for Law and Order. III' (1920) 34(2) *Harvard Law Review* 105, 117.

⁶ Henry Bournes Higgins, *A New Province for Law & Order* (Constable, London, 1922).

budgets as were suitable for working out an average, I found that in Melbourne, the city concerned, the average necessary expenditure in 1907 on rent, food and fuel, in a labourer's household of about five persons, was £1.12s.5d. (about \$7.80 [US], taking a dollar as equivalent to 4s.2d); but that, as these figures did not cover light, clothes, boots, furniture, utensils, rates, life insurance, savings, accident or benefit societies, loss of employment, union pay, books and newspapers, tram or train fares, sewing machine, mangle, school requisites, amusements and holidays, liquors, tobacco sickness or death, religion or charity, I could not certify that any wages less than 42s per week for an unskilled labourer would be fair and reasonable. Then, in finding the wages which should be treated as fair and reasonable in the cases of the skilled employees, I relied mainly on the existing ratios found in the practice of employers. If, for instance, the sheet-iron worker got 8s. per day when the labourer got 6s., the sheet-iron worker should get, at the least, 9s. when the labourer's minimum was raised to 7s."

46. More recently, the Full Bench has earlier explored the concepts of loadings and allowances in considering the modern award objectives in *Four yearly review of modern awards* [2017] FWCFB 1001.⁷ While the Full Bench concluded the historical notion that to categorise award payments (such as penalty rates) as a deterrence to employers can no longer be supported, it was accepted that it remains within the objectives of the *Fair Work Act* that such rates are designed to compensate an employee for the disturbance of social and family life (see [143]-[153]). Similar views have been expressed of overtime in [2017] FWCFB 3541 at [549]:⁸

"[549] Overtime penalty rates serve the dual purpose of compensating employees for disabilities of that nature and establishing a disincentive for employers to require particular employees to work long hours. Employers in the industry sectors in question may be able avoid the cost of overtime penalty rates by adopting rostering systems and practices which ensure that no single employee is commonly required to work excessive hours, and in that sense the introduction of penalty rates need not cause significant additional cost burdens for employers. That is relevant to the consideration in s.134(1)(f), which we have taken into account as not being adverse to the proposition that a fair and relevant safety net should provide for casual overtime penalty rates."

47. Requiring, in effect, low paid employees to perform additional hours, shift or weekend work, or to work in such a way to attract another penalty or allowance to achieve a wage which lifts them out of poverty, cannot on any measure provide a safety net of 'fair' minimum wages. Such additional entitlements are not wages, but are compensation for the difficulty experienced in working outside ordinary hours, for working above reasonable hours and/or working in a way that attracts additional payment (hot work, cold work, providing tools etc). The purpose of those award based payments is as compensation for a disadvantage experienced or cost incurred.
48. ACCER submits that the low paid should not be necessitated to engage in disadvantage by having to work unsocial hours, to relinquish family and personal time or to work beyond ordinary hours to simply earn a wage that enables them to meet relative living standards. ACCER submits that the Expert Panel must set a wages safety net absent consideration

⁷ *Re 4 Yearly Review of Modern Awards - Penalty Rates* [2017] FWCFB 1001; (2017) 265 IR 1, [143]-[148] (Justice Ross, President, Vice President Catanzariti, Deputy President Asbury, Commissioner Hampton and Commissioner Lee).

⁸ *Re 4 Yearly Review of Modern Awards - Casual Employment and Part-time Employment* [2017] FWCFB 3541; (2017) 269 IR 125, [549] (Vice President Hatcher, Senior Deputy President Hamberger, Deputy President Kovacic, Deputy President Bull and Commissioner Roe).

of any allowances, loadings, penalty rates or overtime that might be available as a term and condition under a modern award. Where such entitlements are not a certainty, they cannot be relied upon to satisfy the safety net requirement.

49. In further support of this view is the maximum weekly hours under s. 62, set as a minimum national employment standard. The NES places no requirement on employees to work beyond 38 hours per week, without proper consideration to both the reasonableness of the request and the unreasonableness of any refusal. The purpose of a safety net cannot require considerations of reasonableness in every particular circumstance, it must operate as a standalone safety net.
50. The safety net is to provide a decent living wage for those who receive it. The setting of minimum wages for those at C13 to C10 at such a level that allows groups of workers to fall into poverty and disadvantage unless they perform work to which the terms and conditions of a modern award take application, would not achieve the object of promoting social inclusion for all Australians or satisfy the purpose of a "safety net". Persons suffering from poverty are unlikely to feel any degree of prosperity or social inclusion, particularly if they are required to work beyond or outside ordinary hours just to meet basic needs.
51. Having regard to the above legal principals, the ACCER submits that an approach to setting the NMW cannot place any reliance upon benefits which only might be conferred by a modern award. For those reasons, the ACCER respectfully submits that an increase in the amount of **4.5%** should be granted to the NMW and flowed on to, at a minimum, the wage rates at the C13 to C10 level in all modern awards.

ANNEXURE A: REPORT: APRIL 2025

ACU Research Report to Assist with Preparations for ACCER's Submission to the 2025 FWC Annual Wage Case⁹

Executive Summary

This report has been written to provide key research data to support ACCER's submission to the FWC Annual Wage Case. It documents and substantiates the following findings:

(1) The report recommends an increase in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) of 4.5 percent for 2025. This would provide for an increase in the NMW of \$41.20 per week, bringing the NMW from \$915.90 to \$957.10 per week. This increase would raise the hourly rate of the NMW from \$24.10 to \$25.20.

(2) This proposal is based on the view that the FWC should:

- maintain growth in the NMW as a critically important benchmark in the prevention of low-income adult wage earners slipping into poverty in the aftermath of a generational cost-of-living crisis.
- remain cognisant of the ongoing view that wage rise effects, including and especially those arising from NMW determinations, have become marginal, in historical terms, to the causal mechanisms underlying inflation.
- remain vigilant in addressing the ongoing and barely abated challenge of household living costs, including and especially as it confronts low-income households. While Australia has recorded abatement in price rises for several non-discretionary items, the cost-of-living challenge vis-à-vis price movements in rents, insurance premiums, energy, food and pharmaceutical and medical products remains substantial and especially concerning for low-income earners.
- return its gaze to a fuller pursuit of its safety net mandate by gradually eliminating the gap between the NMW and the National Poverty Line (NPL) for sole parents/carers with two dependent children and substantially narrowing the poverty gap for couples with dependent children. This gap has remained sufficiently large that its complete elimination in 2025 would require a one-off increase in the NMW of 12.7% (or \$116.30 per week), an increase which would still leave couple-based households with dependents in poverty relative to the NMW.

(3) Having emerged from a period of unprecedented turbulence during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a cost-of-living crisis driven by a major decline in real wages from 2022 to 2024, Australia's economic outlook and business climate looks comparatively positive and resilient. Notwithstanding uncertainties associated with changes to trade policies overseas (from the United States in particular), inflation has stabilised at a level within the Reserve Bank's target band. Inflationary effects in the period from 2022 to 2024

⁹ Prepared by Tom Barnes and Sophie Cotton, ACU. All correspondence to tom.barnes@acu.edu.au.

were not driven by wage increases, least of all wage increases relevant to the lowest-income earners. Unemployment remains low, employment continues to grow, and business profitability is in positive territory. While nominally low, labour productivity is forecast by the Reserve Bank and Treasury to continue to recover relative to the decline that occurred following the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of the much larger fall in real wages that occurred over that period, we content that a 4.5 percent increase in the NMW is extremely unlikely to significantly and negatively impact upon this trajectory.

(4) Several factors, including previous wage rises for low-income earners, appear to have lowered the gap between the NMW and the NPL for key household types, including couples with dependent children and especially for sole parents/carers with dependent children. This means that the possibility of eliminating this gap remains within reach, assuming an optimal approach in minimum wage setting that balances short-term considerations of headline inflation, business profitability and employment growth with longer-term ambitions to mitigate working poverty. In our view, the safety net provisions of the FWC mean that this task cannot be relegated to government transfers alone, requiring a more proactive role in minimum wage setting in 2025 and beyond. This report offers several pragmatic scenarios for pursuing this balanced approach. Our recommendation for a 4.5 percent increase in the NMW represents one such balance based on a target to eliminate the poverty gap for working sole parents/carers with dependent children by 2033 and a co-consideration of the economy's prosperous state in macroeconomic terms, while also considering current and forecasted movements in CPI inflation for FY2025/26.

FULL REPORT

1. Introductory Outline

This report is intended to support the ACCER submission to the Fair Work Commission's (FWC) Annual Wage Case with data and original analysis that focus on the following key research questions:

1. What role does the National Minimum Wage (NMW) play in mitigating the effects that push low income earning households into poverty? What role can and should a revised NMW play in mitigating these effects in FY2025/26 and beyond?
2. What role has the NMW played in the factors contributing to inflation, business profitability, business confidence and labour productivity in Australia in FY2024/25? What role is it likely to play in FY2025/26?
3. Considering the above, what target ought the FWC set for the NMW, and for C10-C12 award rates, in 2025?

In addressing Question 3, but also in addressing the parallel questions posed above, the report makes the case for a 4.5 percent increase in the NMW for 2025 in terms of current and ongoing cost-of-living challenges for the low-paid, the capacity of business to afford a further significant rise, and in terms of the longer-term challenge of redressing working poverty in Australia. This third goal is framed as a necessary and realistic objective that relates directly to the FWC's legislated mandate to provide social protection for Australia's most vulnerable wage-earners.

The report draws primary data from official sources, principally the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as well as the Reserve Bank of Australia and the FWC Statistical Report (FWC, 2025) and some secondary source materials. The report makes its case for a higher NMW in three main sections. Section 2 below focuses on Australia's macroeconomic outlook, including impacts and projections from Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Wage Price Index (WPI) inflation. This section outlines Australia's record of continuation in persistently low unemployment, ongoing employment growth, positive job creation and stable business profitability.

Section 3 outlines the substantial cost-of-living challenge that has continued to reverberate since the abatement of inflationary pressures from 2022 and 2024. Our findings focus on inflationary costs in key household essentials such as rents, food, energy, insurance premiums and medical items. Section 4 provides substantially updated analysis of the gap between the NMW and the NPL for key household types, outlining projected scenarios based on a technical analysis of movements in wages, disposable incomes and poverty. Our presentations and findings are derived from tables in Appendix A which have been updated with the latest data available on working poverty in Australia.

2. The outlook for inflation, employment and the National Minimum Wage

Australia has emerged from a period of profound socioeconomic instability—first, the unprecedented disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health, social and economic policies from 2020 until 2022, followed by an inflation-driven crisis in the cost-of-living from 2022 until 2024—towards a state of macroeconomic stability and prosperity relative to comparable high-income economies. Importantly, reverberations from the crisis of living costs and real wages continue to impact negatively on the lives of working people, most especially those on low-incomes and those who subsist on incomes at or near the poverty line (see below). Nevertheless, the outlook for the Australian economy is positive, as stated by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), who argue that the ‘labour market has remained strong’ and that ‘inflation has continued to moderate and by a little more than expected’ (RBA, 2025: 1). Notwithstanding uncertainties influenced primarily by international factors beyond Australia’s control, including uncertainty about changes to international trade policies stemming from the United States—factors discussed by the RBA and numerous other research and forecasting agencies—the prognosis for solid growth in wage earnings is highly positive, including and especially wage outcomes that can impact positively on the lives of low-income earners.

CPI inflation continues to moderate, as the RBA has stated. Figure 2.1 documents quarterly changes in the CPI over the most recent five years. These data show that the CPI began to increase sharply following the COVID-related economic downturns of 2020 and 2021. By December 2022, the rate of inflation peaked at its highest rate in over three decades (see Figure 2.2). The annual rate of inflation has abated significantly since then and, in the context of recent contraction in CPI growth, may be beginning to trend at levels below those considered typical during the economic boom period of the mid-2000s. Prices have continued to rise since the inflationary peak of FY2022/23, including for key items of expenditure that affect low-income earners and the working poor (see below); nevertheless, the outlook for inflation is positive and within the RBA’s target band. Given the scale of positive increases in the NMW in recent years, this outcome underscores the reality that any reverberating economic effects from wage increases at this low end of the wage spectrum have had little-to-no impact on inflation. We expect this scenario to continue, including for FY2025/26.

A further change in the inflationary outlook concerns the relationship between the CPI and the Wage Price Index (WPI), which measures changes in the price of labour. By 2024, changes in the CPI began once again to coalesce with changes in the WPI after a period of significant widening between these measures in the aftermath of a disruptive period of profit-driven inflation and contracting real wages (Jericho and Stanford, 2024). Since this period, CPI growth has fallen below WPI growth, although growth in the latter has been similarly trending downward (Figure 2.3). This trajectory into 2025 suggests that nominal wages growth continues to be modest at best.

Despite the uncertainty in the international situation, conditions for business in the near term (i.e., for the remainder of FY2024/25 and into FY2025/26) remain positive, indicating a strong capacity to afford a further shift in the NMW to meet the needs of the working poor. Other macroeconomic indicators support this conclusion. Real unit labour costs continue to grow at a very modest rate (as demonstrated by FWC, 2025: 21). Total employment growth remains positive, and unemployment remains at a low level by historical standards (Figure 2.4). In the shorter term, job creation looks very positive overall, as observed via data in the Weekly Payroll Jobs Index heading into 2025 (Figure 2.5). Company profitability has been dragged

down by the mining sector but gross company operating profits for non-mining enterprises increased by 3.3 percent in the year to December 2024 (FWC, 2025: 24).

In short, the business environment is strong and resilient in a challenging international climate, a picture buoyed by low wages growth, low-to-moderate inflation and low-to-moderate growth in wage costs across the economy. Coming after a period of high inflation and high costs driven by markets and supply chain pressures, this represents welcome relief for Australia’s macroeconomic picture moving forward. Jobs growth and price changes signal a scenario that favours a further above-CPI increases in the NMW, one that balances much-needed relief for the low-income earners and working poor with sufficient caution with respect to uncertainties and challenges in the international economy.

Figure 2.1 Consumer Price Index (CPI) 2019-2024

Change (%) from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a)

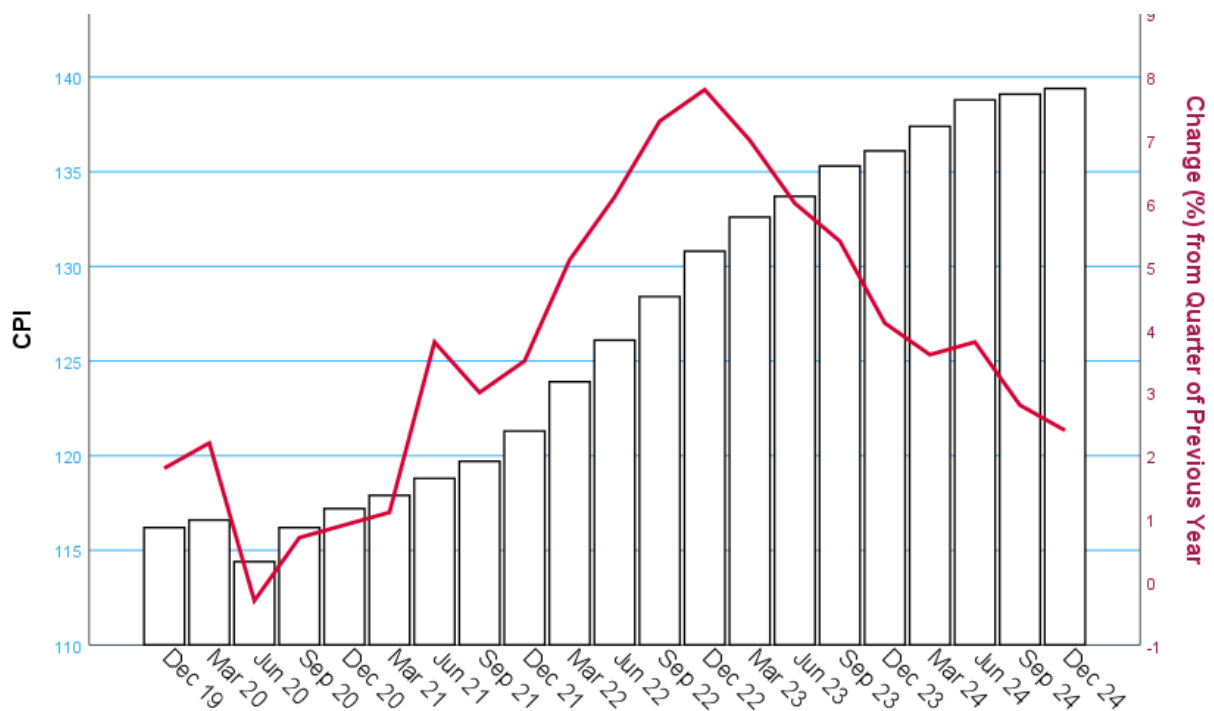


Figure 2.2 Annual change, Consumer Price Index (CPI) 1984-2024

Change (%) from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a)

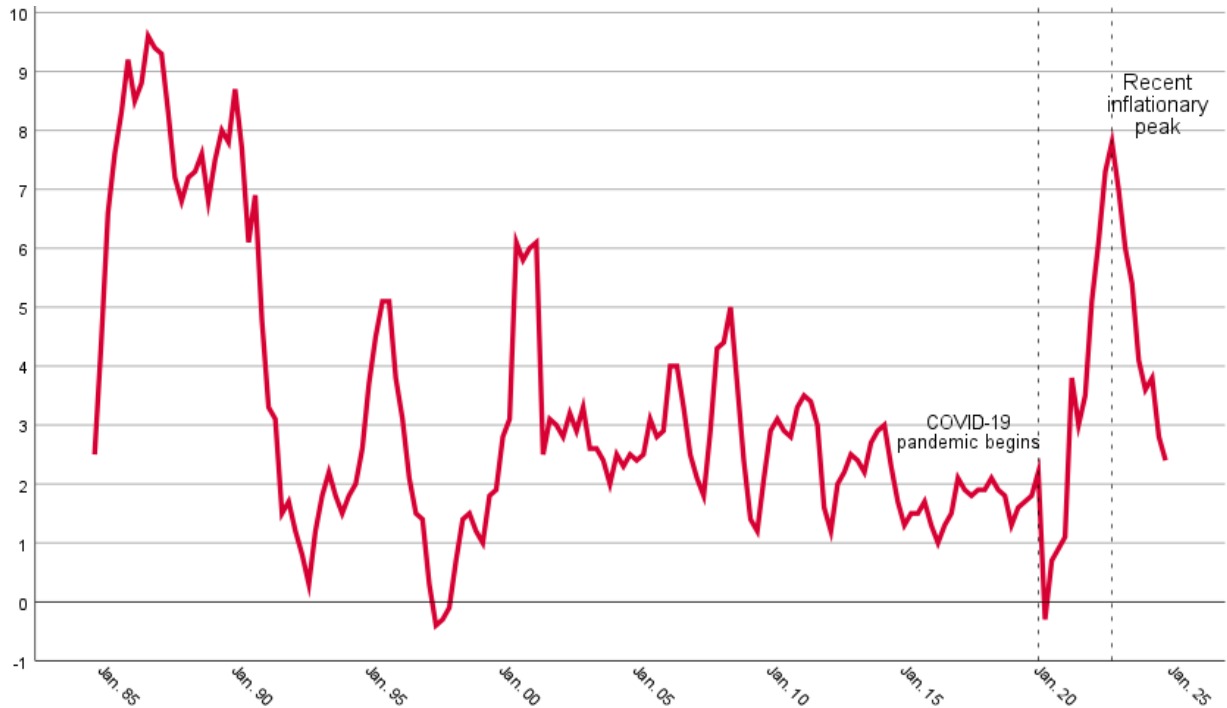


Figure 2.3 Annual change, Consumer Price Index (CPI) & Wage Price Index (WPI) 2019-2024, Change (%) from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a, 2025b)

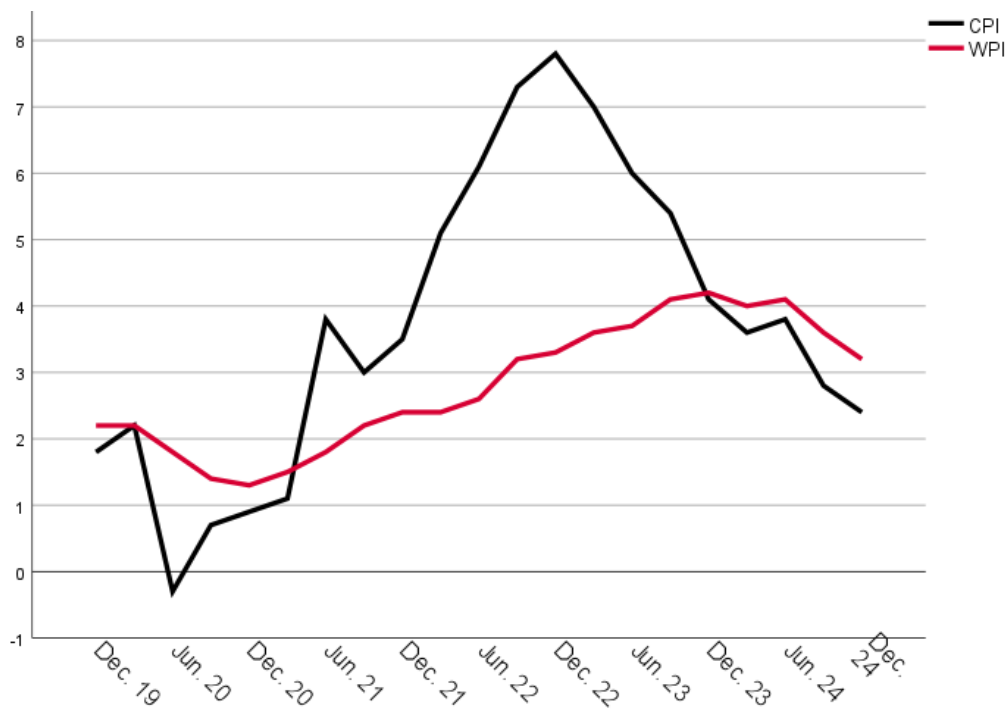


Figure 2.4 Unemployment Rate (%), seasonally adj., 2020-2025

Source: ABS (2025c)

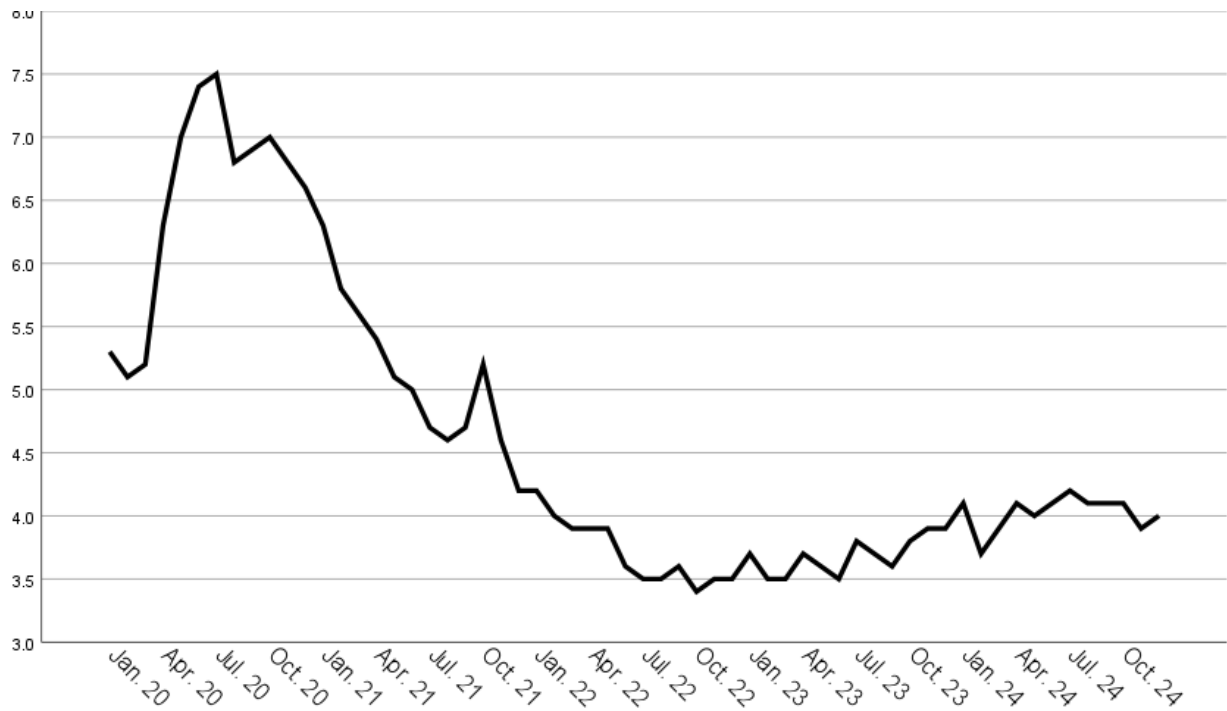


Figure 2.5 Weekly Payroll Jobs Index

Jan 2023 – Sep 2024. Source: ABS (2025d)



The COVID-19 pandemic produced not only a disruption to real wages growth but also to labour productivity. Labour productivity was negative over 2022 and 2023, with real wages outpacing productivity growth outcomes in 2023 and 2024. These results occurred in the aftermath of the shuttering of economic activities during the lockdown era of 2020 and 2021, and the COVID Recession, in part due to the state subsidization of wage and salary incomes via the JobKeeper program and related measures which meant that these incomes were maintained, albeit partially, despite a collapse in formal working hours and output.

The disruption in labour productivity represents a shift from long-run trends in productivity and wage growth (see Figure 1). Although productivity is still weak by longer term historical standards, it has returned to pre-pandemic levels (RBA 2025, p. 3), with 2024 productivity 0.5 per cent higher than 2019 levels (Figure 2). Although productivity is set to be sluggish for the rest of 2025, Treasury and the RBA are now suggesting a strengthening in labour productivity growth will occur from 2026 that aligns with this process of recovery. As the RBA stated in February that:

Growth in labour productivity is expected to remain weak over the coming year, which will weigh on the economy's supply potential, before picking up. Growth in unit labour costs is expected to moderate from elevated levels as productivity growth picks up (RBA, 2025, p.3).

Treasury argue that a 'cyclical upswing in labour productivity' is 'expected to be driven by capital deepening driven by elevated levels of business investment and easing employment growth' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2024, p. 45). Budget estimates are based on underlying productivity returning to 1.2 per cent per annum in the long run (Commonwealth of Australia, 2025, p. 51).

This gradual restoration of labour productivity continues to create room for reasonable wage growth. Moreover, the period of negative productivity growth mentioned above was eclipsed by negative real wages growth post-2019. This means that the modest restoration in labour productivity has not been matched by a commensurate restoration in real wages. Real wages began to recover in 2024 for the first time since the period of decline began, up (very modestly) by 0.6 per cent on 2023 levels. They remain significantly below 2019 levels by a margin of 4.6 per cent. These cumulative changes are represented in Figure 2.

These factors mean this report's proposed increase in the NMW are extremely unlikely to undermine prospects for productivity growth. The historical disconnect between productivity gains and wage growth, coupled with the deep real wage losses, strengthens the case for prioritising wage recovery through the NMW determination. While productivity forecasts suggest improvements from 2026 onward, workers have experienced a significant erosion of purchasing power that needs addressing in the present wage case. The recommended increase would help address these imbalances while remaining consistent with longer-term productivity objectives.

Figure 2.6: Labour productivity against real wages movements. Source: Table 2.1

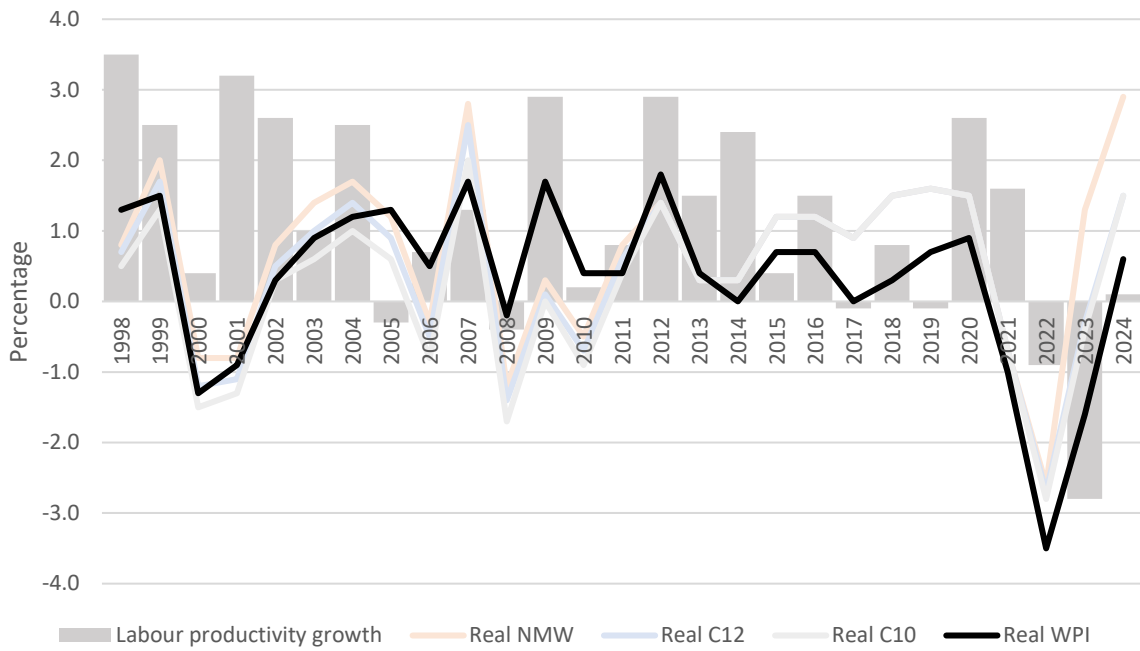


Figure 2.7 Cumulative change in labour productivity against wage movements (Q3 and Q4 of 1997 = 1.0). Source: Derived from Table 2.1

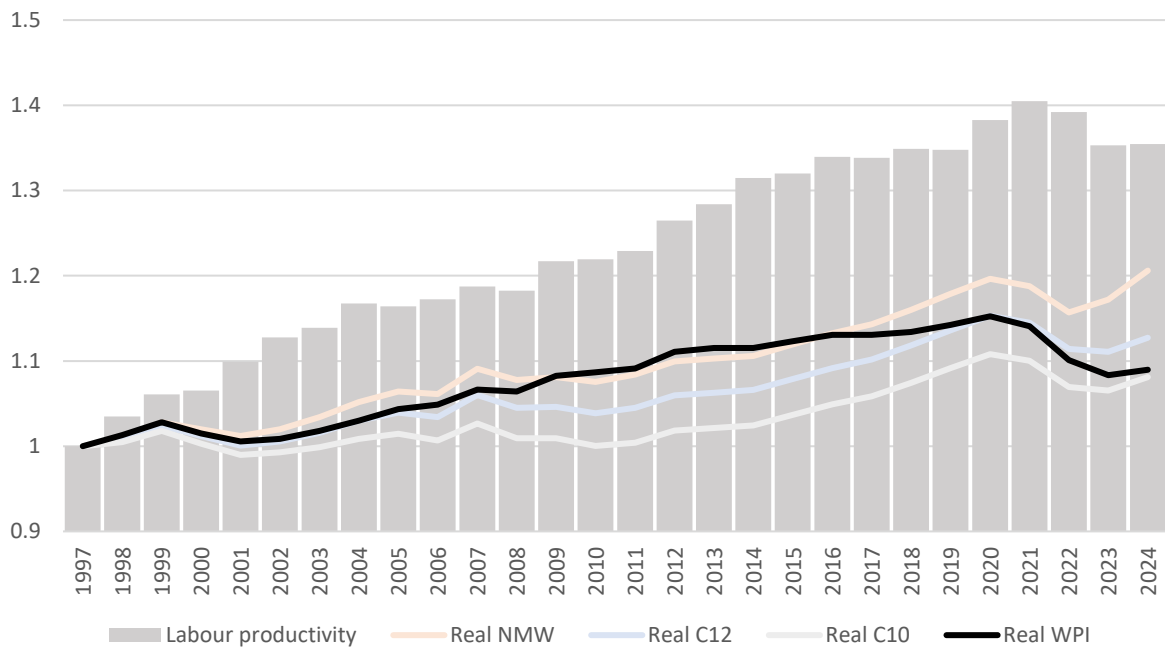


Table 2.1 Calendar year changes to labour productivity and wages (per cent): 1998 to 2024

Calendar year	Labour productivity growth	WPI		NMW		C12		C10	
		Nom.	Real	Nom.	Real	Nom.	Real	Nom.	Real
1998	3.5	2.4	1.3	3.9	0.8	3.5	0.7	3.1	0.5
1999	2.5	3.0	1.5	3.2	2.0	2.9	1.7	2.6	1.3
2000	0.4	3.1	-1.3	3.9	-0.8	3.5	-1.2	3.1	-1.5
2001	3.2	3.5	-0.9	3.2	-0.8	3.0	-1.1	3.0	-1.3
2002	2.6	3.3	0.3	4.4	0.8	4.0	0.5	3.5	0.3
2003	1.0	3.6	0.9	3.9	1.4	3.6	1.0	3.2	0.6
2004	2.5	3.6	1.2	4.2	1.7	3.9	1.4	3.5	1.0
2005	-0.3	4.0	1.3	3.6	1.2	3.4	0.9	3.0	0.6
2006	0.7	4.1	0.5	5.7	-0.3	5.2	-0.5	4.7	-0.8
2007	1.3	4.1	1.7	2.0	2.8	1.9	2.5	1.7	2.0
2008	-0.4	4.2	-0.2	4.1	-1.2	3.9	-1.4	3.5	-1.7
2009	2.9	3.5	1.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
2010	0.2	3.4	0.4	4.8	-0.5	4.5	-0.7	4.1	-0.9
2011	0.8	3.7	0.4	3.4	0.8	3.4	0.6	3.4	0.4
2012	2.9	3.6	1.8	2.9	1.4	2.9	1.4	2.9	1.4
2013	1.5	2.9	0.4	2.6	0.3	2.6	0.3	2.6	0.3
2014	2.4	2.5	0.0	3.0	0.3	3.0	0.3	3.0	0.3
2015	0.4	2.2	0.7	2.5	1.2	2.5	1.2	2.5	1.2
2016	1.5	2.0	0.7	2.4	1.2	2.4	1.2	2.4	1.2
2017	-0.1	2.0	0.0	3.3	0.9	3.3	0.9	3.3	0.9
2018	0.8	2.2	0.3	3.5	1.5	3.5	1.5	3.5	1.5
2019	-0.1	2.3	0.7	3.0	1.6	3.0	1.6	3.0	1.6
2020	2.6	1.7	0.9	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.8	1.5
2021	1.6	1.9	-1.0	2.5	-0.7	2.5	-0.7	2.5	-0.7
2022	-0.9	2.9	-3.5	5.2	-2.6	4.8	-2.7	4.6	-2.8
2023	-2.8	3.9	-1.6	8.6	1.3	5.7	-0.3	5.7	-0.4
2024	0.1	3.7	0.6	3.7	2.9	3.7	1.5	3.7	1.5

Note: Labour productivity growth is measured as seasonally adjusted GDP per hour worked, averaged over four quarters (ABS, 2024). WPI is measured as trend total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses, averaged over four quarters (ABS, 2025b). Nominal changes to NMW, C12 and C10 rates reflect the change in that calendar year. Real changes to WPI are calculated by deflating quarterly figures by CPI (ABS, 2025a) and then averaging over four quarters in the calendar year. Real changes to NMW, C12 and C10 rates are made by producing quarterly figures for minimum wage assuming it applies from July (and December in 2006). These figures are then averaged over four quarters. Series starts in September 1997.

3. Despite moderating inflation, cost-of-living pressure is far from extinguished

Despite the ongoing moderation in headline inflation, and the return of CPI change to the RBA’s target band, the severity of the cost-of-living crisis in recent years continues to generate reverberating cost pressures that impact upon living standards and that penalise low-income households especially. As argued in previous ACCER submissions, the budgets of low-income households are constrained especially by key expenditure items such as rent costs (given the much lower proportion of working age low-income households with home ownership and/or

mortgage debt), spending on food and grocery items, essential energy and utility costs and insurance premiums, as well as other items such as medical costs, dental costs, pharmaceuticals, and important educational expenses such as children's clothing and shoes. Price penalties continue in many of these categories despite the gradual abatement in CPI inflation since 2022.

First of all, annual increases in rent have fallen back slightly from a recent peak of 7.8 percent recorded in March 2024 to 6.4 percent in December 2024. However, this decrease has only brought growth in rental prices back in line to levels recorded in mid-2023. The overall trajectory of rent increases over the five years since the depth of the COVID Recession (mid-2020) demonstrates a remarkable rise in rent costs with knock-on effects that penalise low-income earners the most (Figure 3.1).

In other areas, remedial government policy has eased the cost-of-living crisis to some degree. For instance, the component of CPI used to measure electricity prices fell sharply throughout 2024 (Figure 3.2). On this issue, the RBA has emphasised that Federal (and State) Government subsidies are legislated to finish in 2025, generating additional household cost pressures (although these measures were extended in the recently announced Federal Budget for FY2025/26). The RBA cautions that this policy change 'will boost inflation over 2025' (RBA, 2025: 49). A further issue is that inflation on non-discretionary items has fallen, as expected, since the peak of inflationary pressures in 2022. In the most recent dataset (December 2024), non-discretionary inflation fell below inflation on discretionary items.

However, these moderating factors should be considered against rising prices in important non-discretionary items with a disproportionately large impact on low-income households. Figure 3.4 shows that the CPI measure for food and non-alcoholic beverages has trended downward since 2022 but recent change has moderated and remained 0.6 percentage points higher than headline inflation in December 2024. The figure also demonstrates that prices rises for pharmaceutical products (3.1 percent in December 2024) remains higher than headline inflation and well above the rate of increase over the previous five years.

Of these affected items, inflation for insurance premiums remains the highest. Even though insurance price rises abated from a peak of 16.4 percent in March 2024, they remained at 11.0 percent in December 2024. This is significantly higher than any level of premium rises prior to mid-2023 and over 4.5 times the current rate of headline inflation (Figure 3.4). Another item of concern is the CPI measure for childcare costs. Like insurance, the December 2024 quarter recorded a decline in childcare cost inflation from a peak of 12.1 percent (September 2024).

Figure 3.1 Annual change, Rents (CPI)

2019-2024. Source: ABS (2025a)

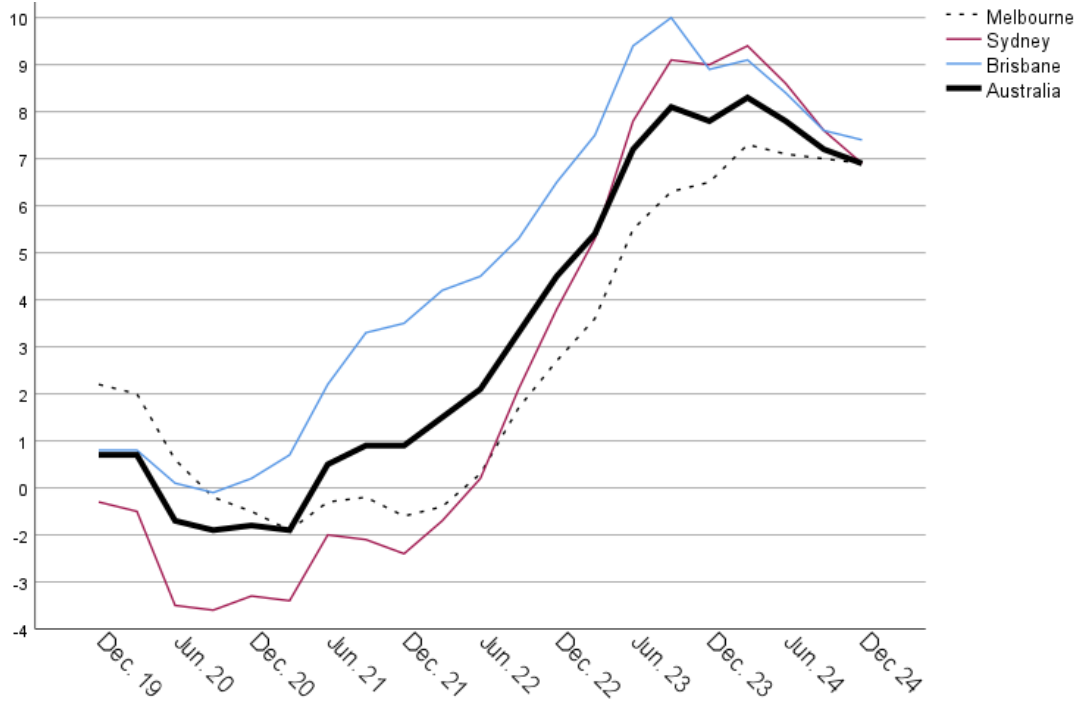


Figure 3.2 Annual Change (%), Electricity CPI

2019-2024. Change from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a)



Figure 3.3 Annual Change (%), Discretionary Inflation

2019-2024. Change from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a)

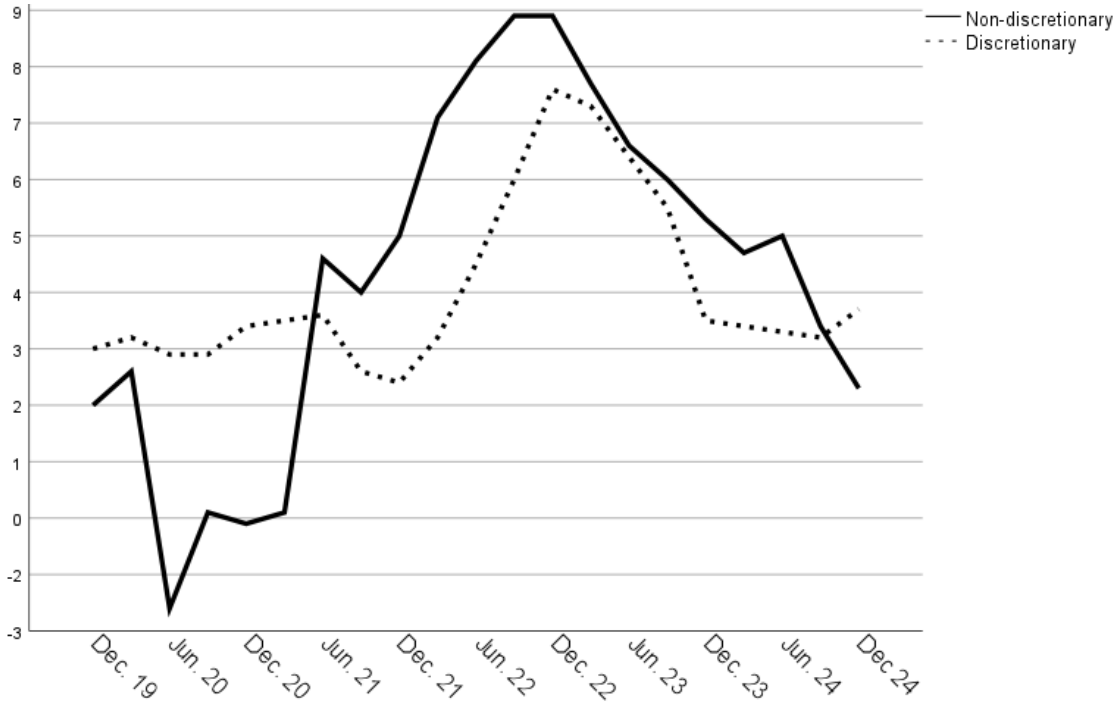


Figure 3.4 Annual Change (%), Insurance, Pharmaceuticals & Food/Beverages

2019-2024. Change from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a)

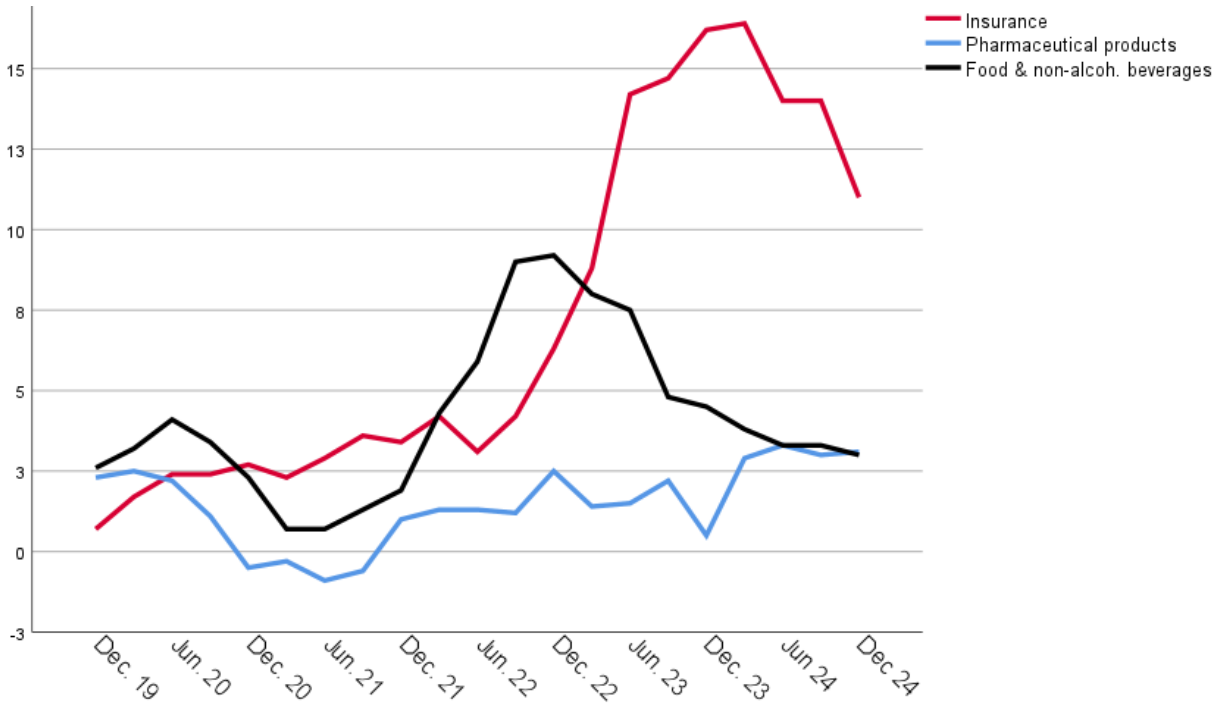


Figure 3.5 Annual Change (%), Childcare CPI

2019-2024. Change from Quarter of Previous Year. Source: ABS (2025a)



However, this most recent record (4.1 percent) remains higher than at any point since mid-2023 and 1.7 percentage points above current headline inflation. These above-headline rates of inflation for key non-discretionary items indicate that cost-of-living pressures have not been extinguished since the peak of the inflationary crisis in late 2022. On the contrary, the relatively high cost of food, insurance and childcare, alongside uncertainty about the ongoing impact of energy prices beyond the cessation of legislated price subsidies end at the end of 2025, represent disproportionate penalties for low-income earning households. These additional burdens that confront poorer households should be considered carefully by the FWC in deliberations for the NMW case in 2025.

The ongoing absolute impact of these inflationary pressures can be shown by utilising the ABS Living Cost Index (LCI) for employees to deflate historical income. Although not the standard measure for estimating price increases, these figures use an outlays approach rather than an acquisitions approach to calculate a consumer index of prices based on amounts spent by particular household classes rather than underlying prices at time of acquisition (see ABS 2025e, explanatory note). They are currently published as Australian totals only and December quarter figures are available to the end of 2024. This measure allows for an estimation of the ongoing absolute impact of these inflationary shifts for the main household types considered in this report. Figures 3.6 and 3.7 present real disposable incomes deflated by the employee living cost index. On this basis, real incomes have dropped significantly from 2022 to 2025. For single income households without children, real disposable incomes have dropped by 7.9 per cent (NMW dependent), 10.9 per cent (C12 dependent) and 11.7 per cent (C10 dependent). For single income households with two children, real disposable incomes have dropped by 4.6 per cent (NMW dependent), 6.7 per cent (C12 dependent) and 7.5 per cent (C10 dependent). Single income households are experiencing an ongoing real decline in disposable incomes.

Figure 3.6 Real Disposable Income for Single-Income Households Without Children, Scaled to Employee LCI 2001 levels.

Source: authors calculations from Appendix A and ABS (2025e)

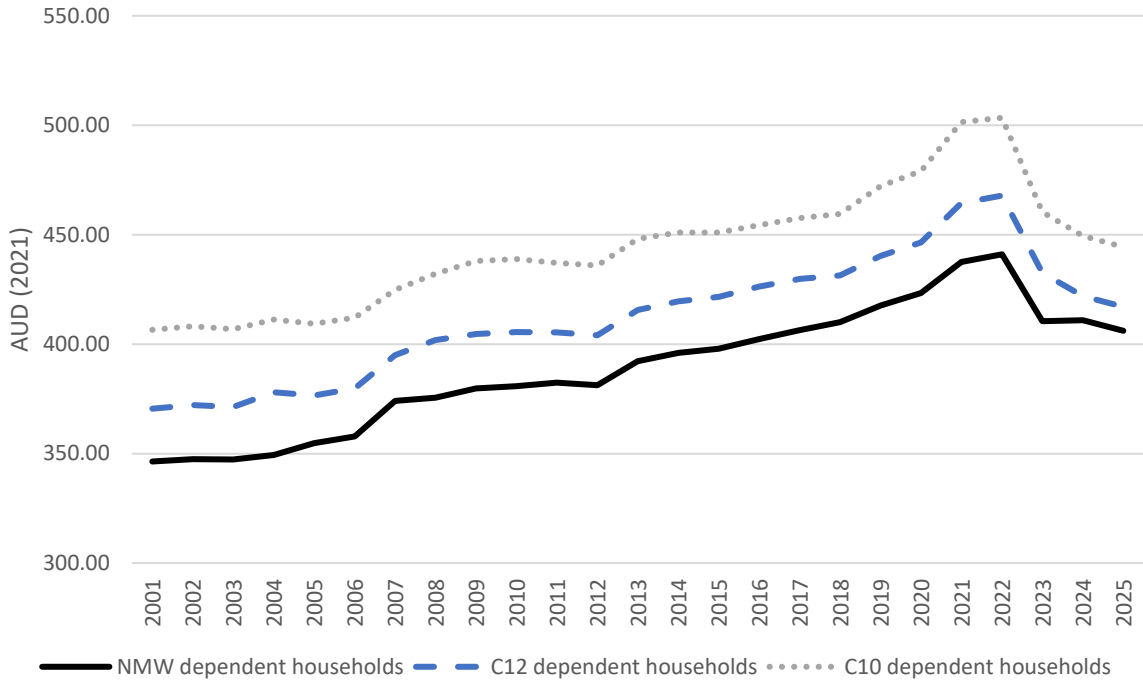
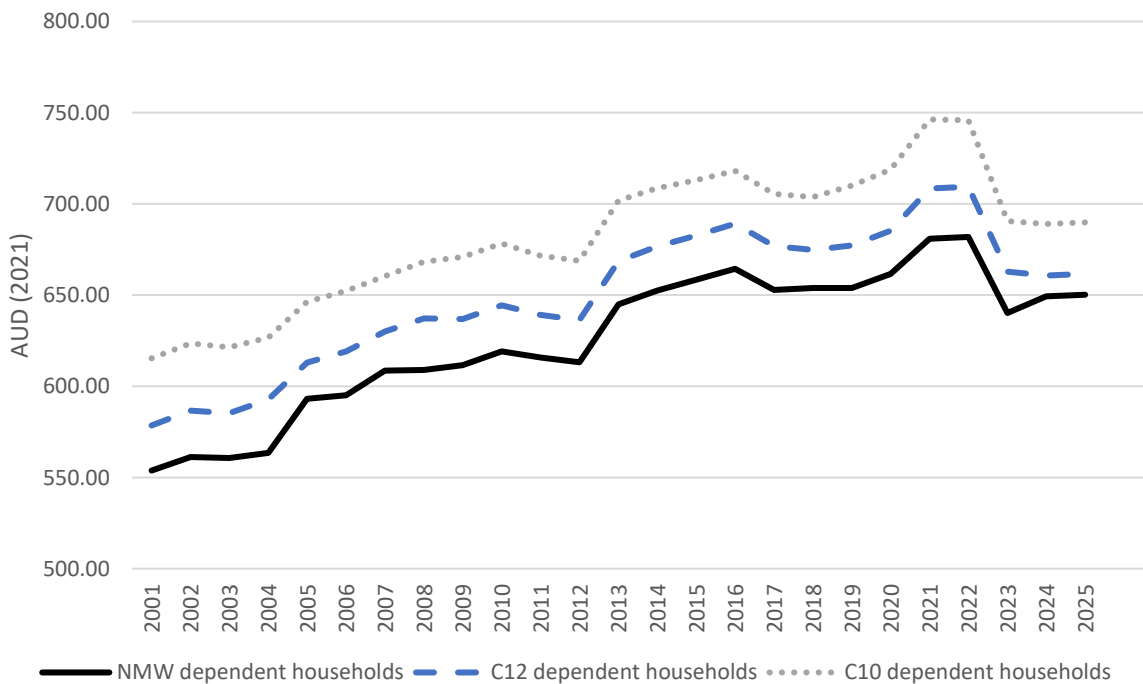


Figure 3.7 Real Disposable Income for Single-Income Households With Two Children, Scaled to Employee LCI 2001 levels.

Source: authors calculations from Appendix A and ABS (2025e)



4. Framing the National Minimum Wage as a benchmark to mitigate working poverty

We continue to argue that the legislated role of the NMW as a safety net should be approximated by the concept of a decent standard of living substantiated by the measure of relative poverty set at 60 percent of Median Equivalised Household Disposable Income (MEHDI). The FWC has not prioritised this question in the determination of NMW outcomes despite positive decision making in recent years with regards to above-CPI wage rises and despite ongoing evidence about persistent gaps between the NMW and the National Poverty Line (NPL) for key household types such as single parents/carers in part-time employment and single-income couples (see our analysis below, but also see FWC research, for example, Table 8.6 in FWC, 2025: 81). ACCER has demonstrated, both in the current submission and in previous iterations, that the gap between the NPL and NMW for several of these household types is unacceptably large from the vantage point of alleviating working poverty in Australia. We reiterate the logic of these claims in this section with the addition of updated data which reveals significant impacts from inflationary pressures on trajectories in the NPL.

First, Figure 4.1 shows annual changes in NMW decisions alongside changes in C12 and C10 Award rates over the past decade as they relate to changes in the NPL for different household categories: specifically, single person households, couples with two dependent children, and sole parents/carers with two dependent children. We combine data from the ABS Survey of Household Income and Wealth with backdated calculations for Household Disposable Income (HDI) per capita taken from annual reports of Poverty Lines Australia (Melbourne Institute, 2024). Full updated data and calculations are documented in Appendix A, which provide estimates for the most recently available data (March 2025). Although the NMW remains sufficient for single-person households from a poverty-line perspective, it remains far from adequate in addressing working poverty for multi-person households with dependents, including and especially for those in part-time employment or those under-employed.

The size of the gap between the NMW and the NPL is expressed more clearly in percentage terms (Figure 4.2). By 2024, the NPL for single person households was 29.6 percent higher than the NMW; however, the NPL for couples with two dependent children was 47.9 percent lower than the NMW. For sole parents/carers with two dependent children, the NPL was 12.7 below the NMW. It should be noted that this represents a significant *improvement* in the poverty gap for single parents/carers with two children compared to 2023, when the corresponding figure was 81.7 percent according to 2024 calculations (ACCER, 2024) and 15.7 percent according to our most up-to-date calculations in this report. A likely influence on this change was the relatively large increase in the NMW in 2023, an effect that is demonstrated descriptively in Figure 4.3. Similarly, Figures 4.4-4.12 below provides disaggregated findings on the gaps between the NMW, the C12 and the C10 Award rates and the NPL for each of the three main household types included in our analysis.

In brief, this data shows that the poverty gap has improved markedly for people categorised in all three types since the 2023 NMW determination and has been eliminated for sole parents/carers with two children at the C10 Award rate (see Figure 4.12). Despite these trends, however, this gap remains for couples with two children and sole parents/carers with two children and will likely worsen without further remedial action via NMW determinations. For this reason, we continue to argue that the gap between the NMW and the NPL for these household types remains an issue which should be incorporated as a more central concern in this year's NMW determination.

As in ACCER submissions over the previous three years, we argue that the interests of balance between various interests and concerns (employee well-being, employer and organisational performance and profitability, macroeconomic stability, etc) mean that it is more pragmatic and more desirable to approach the poverty gap in a gradual or incremental manner. To address the poverty gap for single parents/carers with two dependent children in 2025, for example, would require a one-off increase in the NMW of 12.7 percent based on our 2024 calculations. Evidently, such an increase would not satisfy the balanced approach outlined above and is not being proposed. Rather than excluding poverty gap considerations from the process of calculating and determining an optimal increase in the NMW, however, we continue to argue that a longer-term perspective in addressing working poverty represents a pragmatic and fair approach, one that balances the requirements of low-income earners with the shorter-term considerations of business operations, profitability and macroeconomic performance, and one consistent with the safety net mandate underpinning NMW legislation.

Figure 4.1 Outcomes for National Minimum Wage (NMW), C12 & C10 Award Rates & National Poverty Line (NPL) by Household Type

2015-2024. Source: Authors' calculations from Appendix A

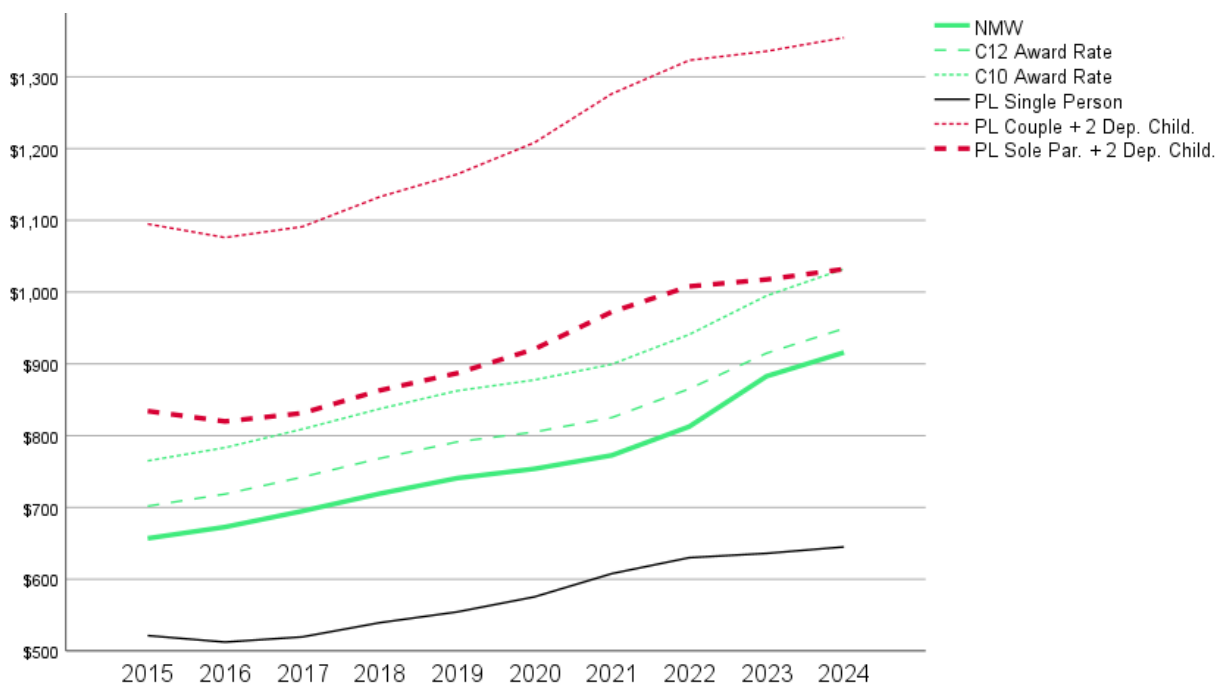


Figure 4.2 National Minimum Wage, Percentage (%) of National Poverty Line

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

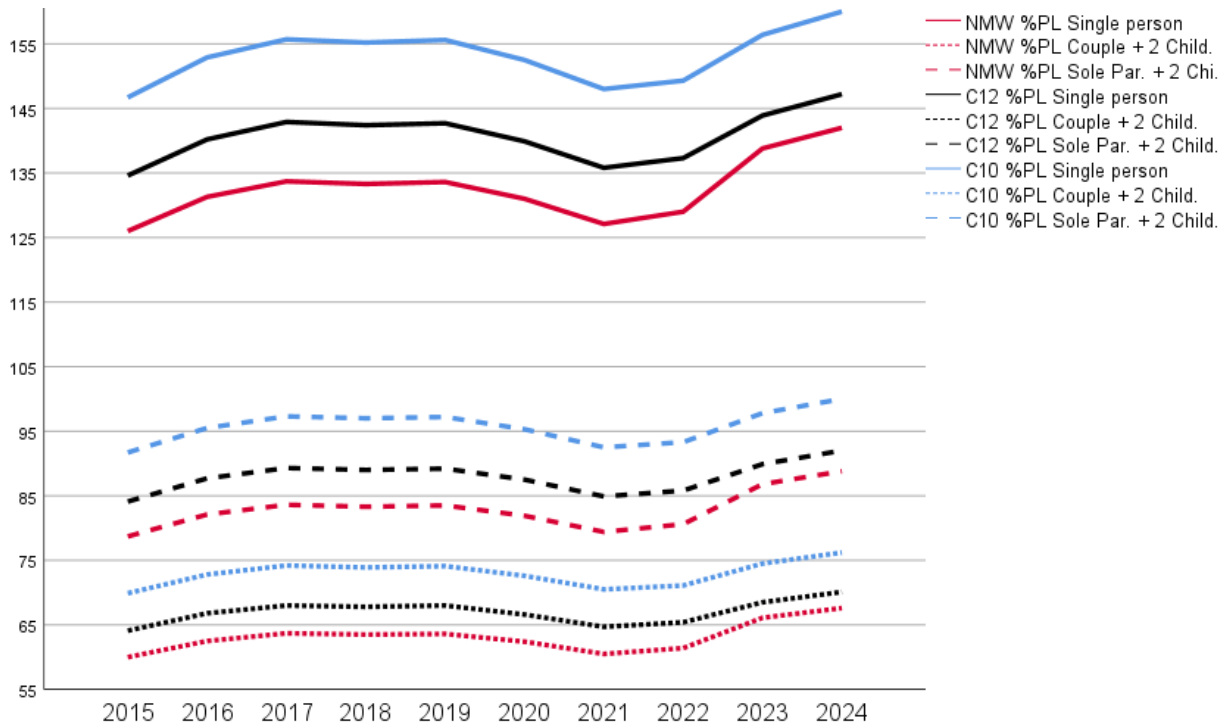


Figure 4.3 Annual Change (%), National Minimum Wage, C12-C10 Award Rates & National Poverty Line

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

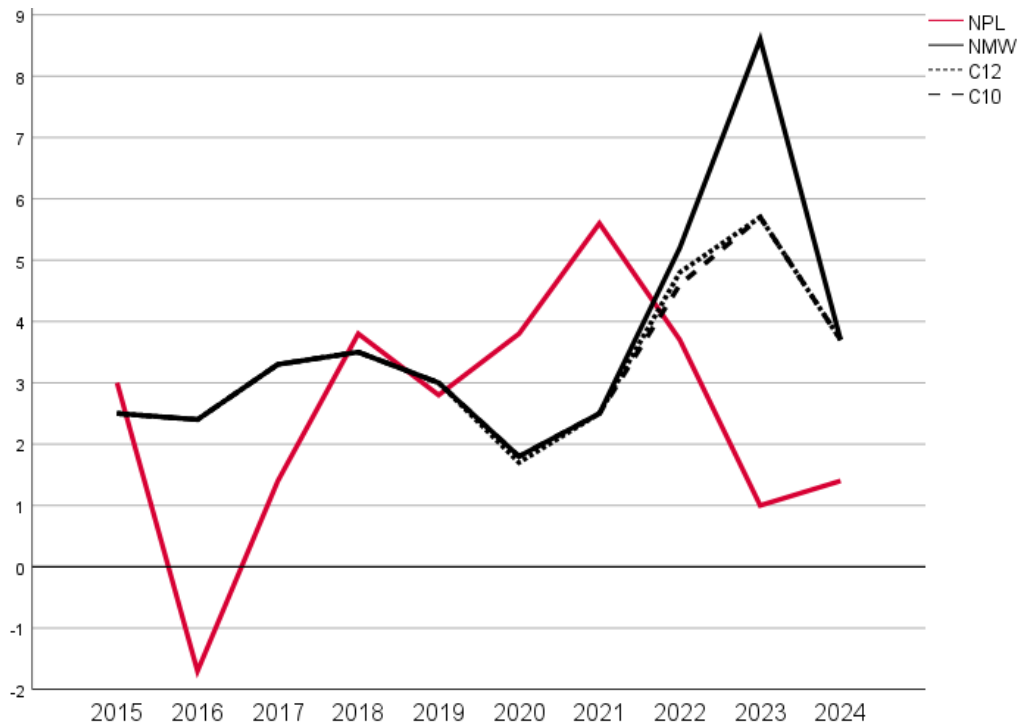


Figure 4.4 Gap between NMW & NPL for Single Person

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

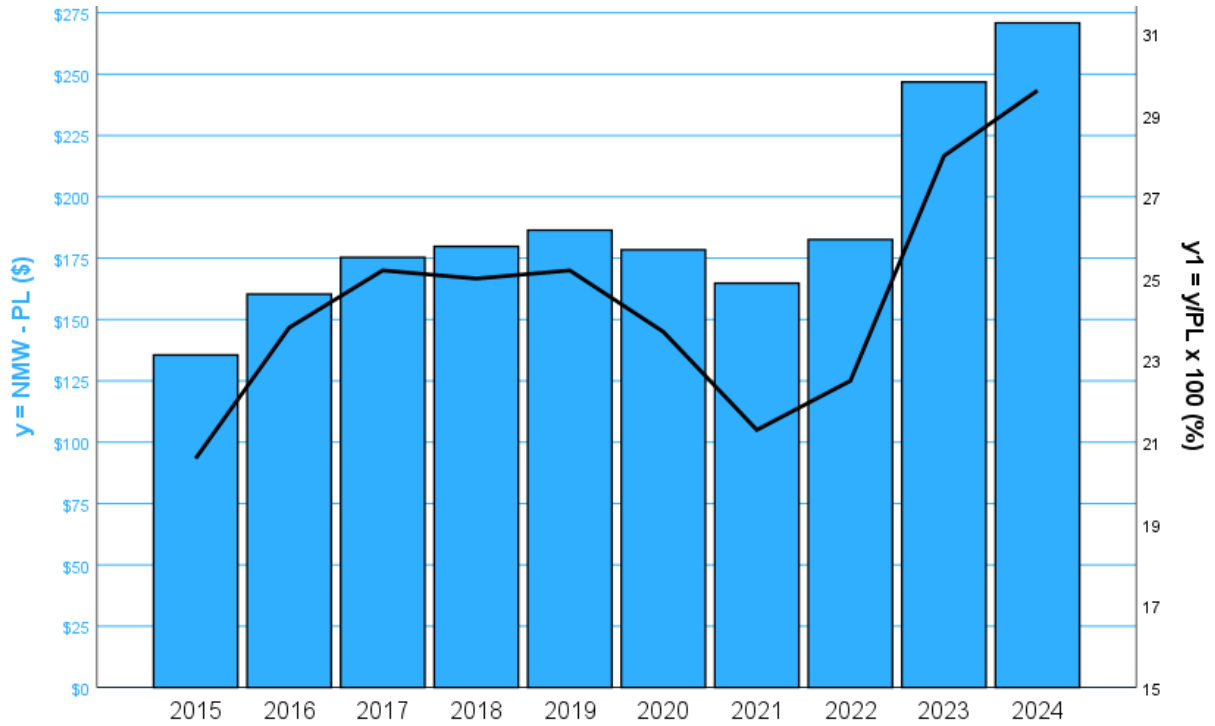


Figure 4.5 Gap between NMW & NPL for Couple with 2 Dependent Children

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

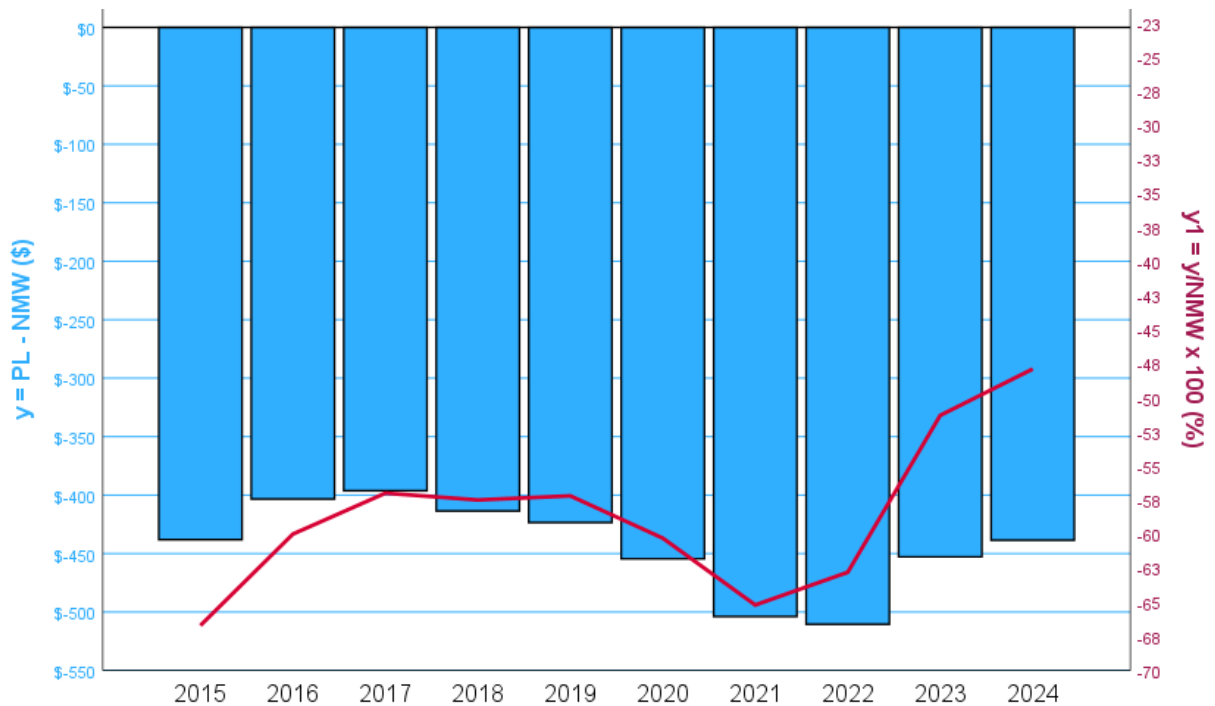


Figure 4.6 Gap between NMW & NPL for Sole Parent/Carer with 2 Dependent Children

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

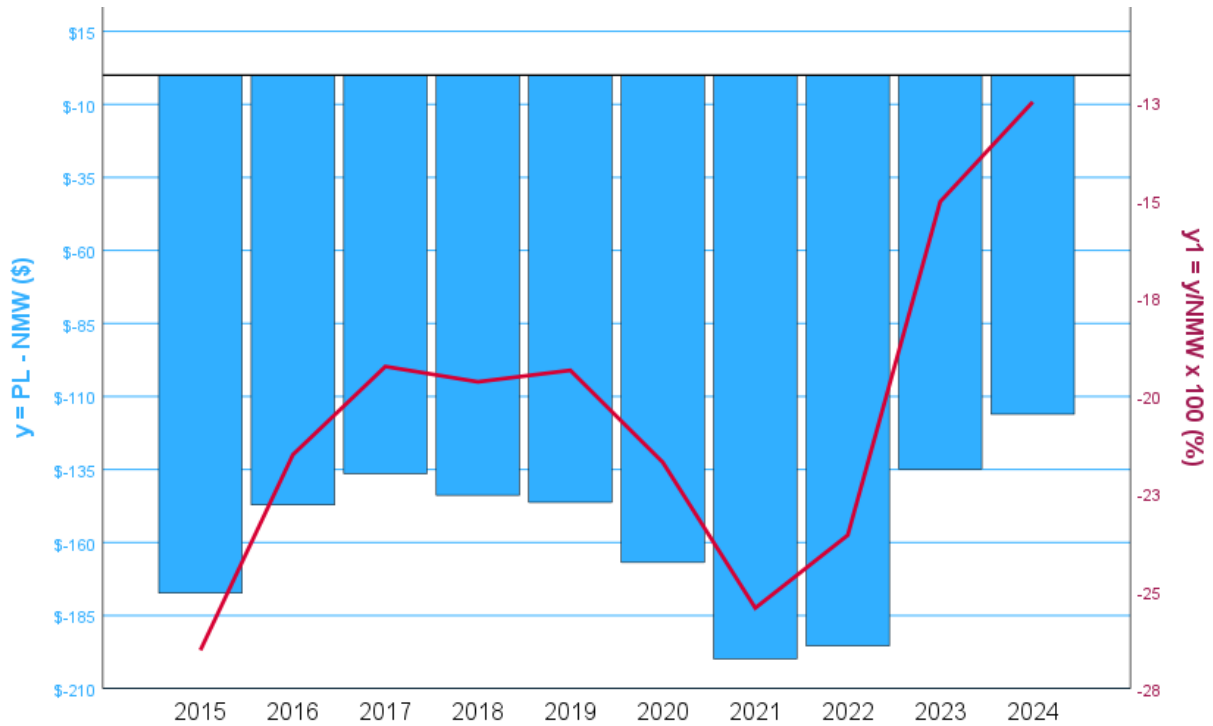


Figure 4.7 Gap between C12 & NPL for Single Person

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

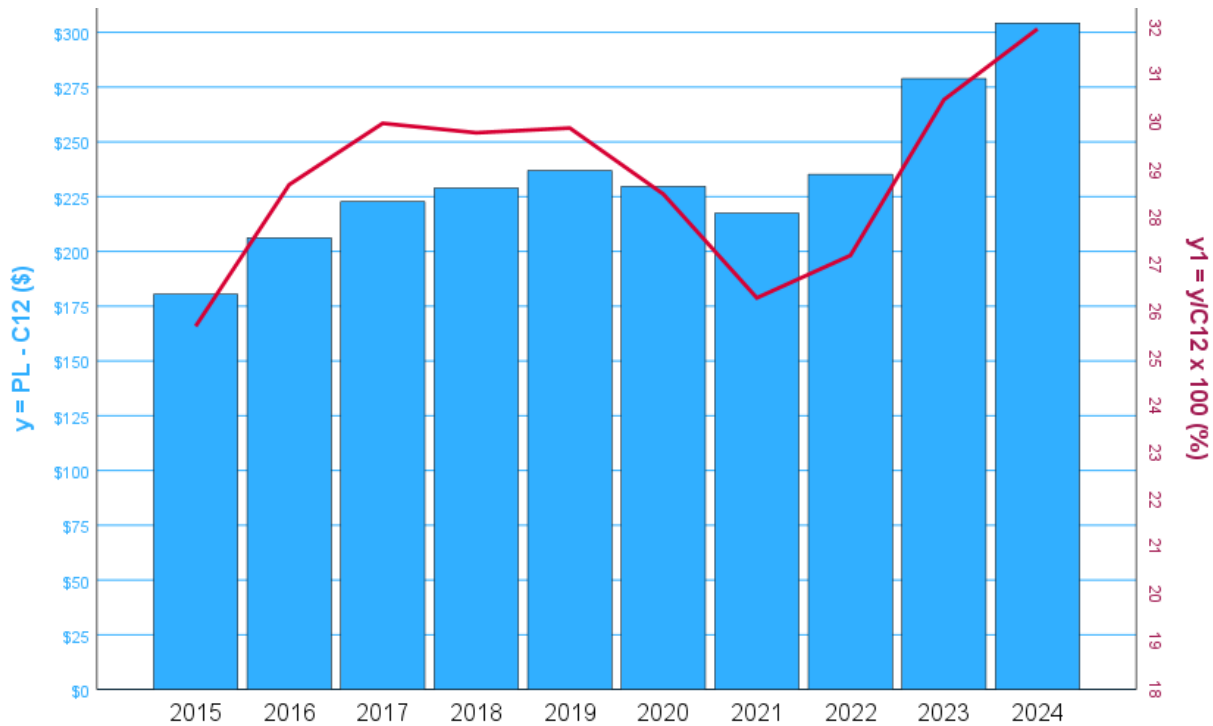


Figure 4.8 Gap between C12 & NPL for Couple with 2 Dependent Children

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

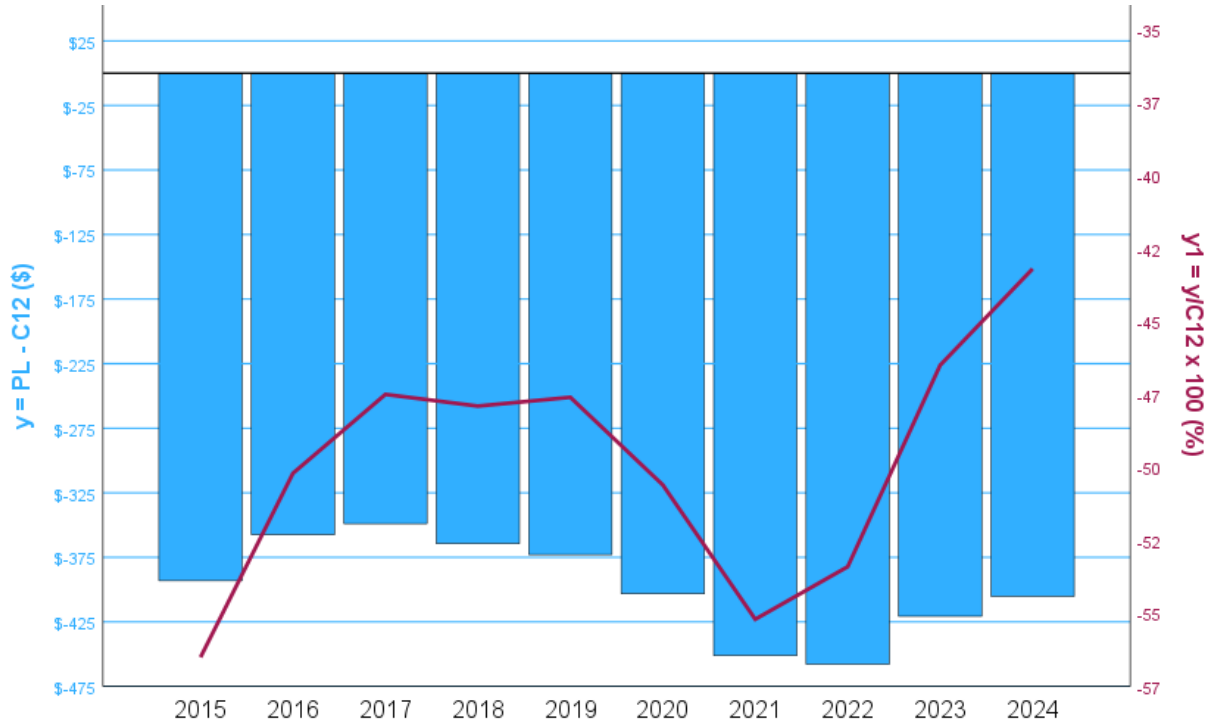


Figure 4.9 Gap between C12 & NPL for Sole Parent/Carer with 2 Dependent Children

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

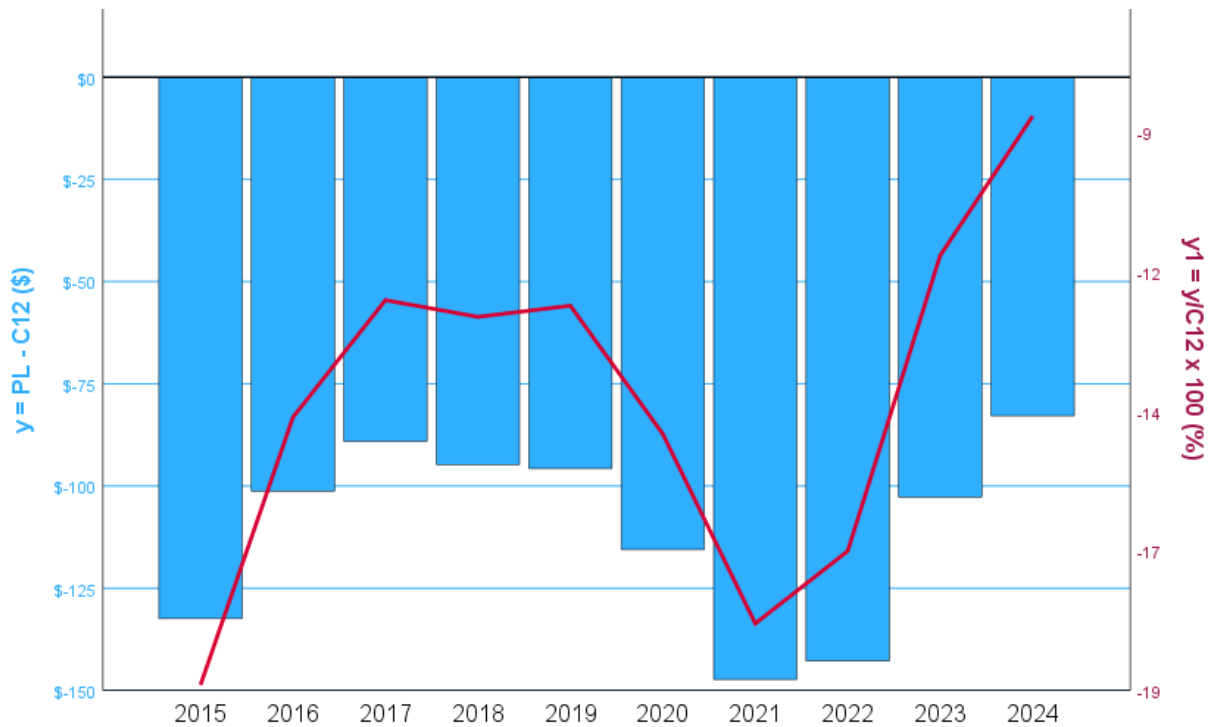


Figure 4.10 Gap between C10 & NPL for Single Person

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

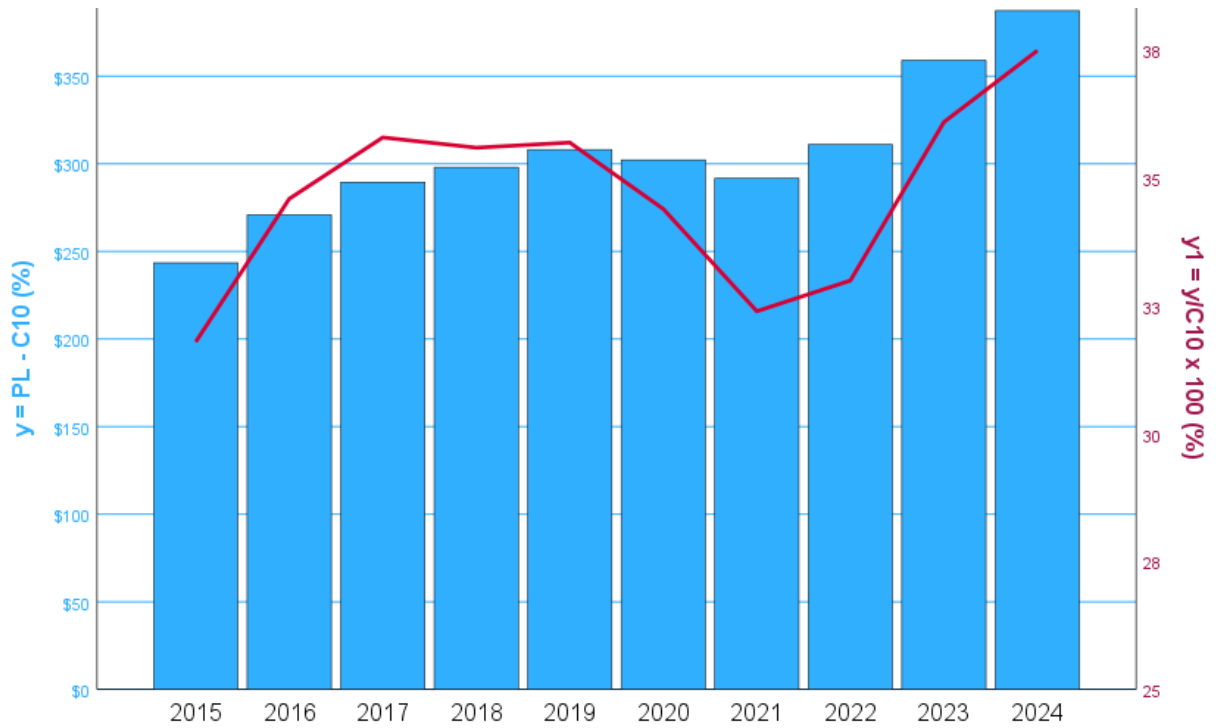


Figure 4.11 Gap between C10 & NPL for Couple with 2 Dependent Children

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A

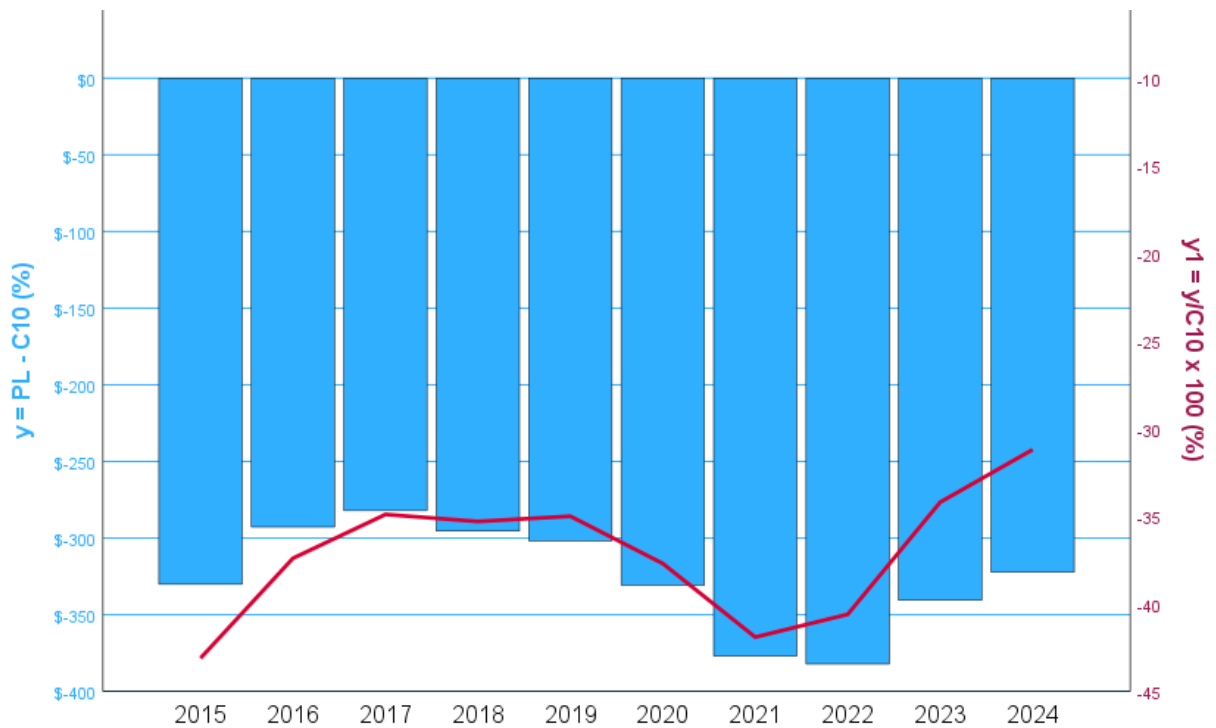
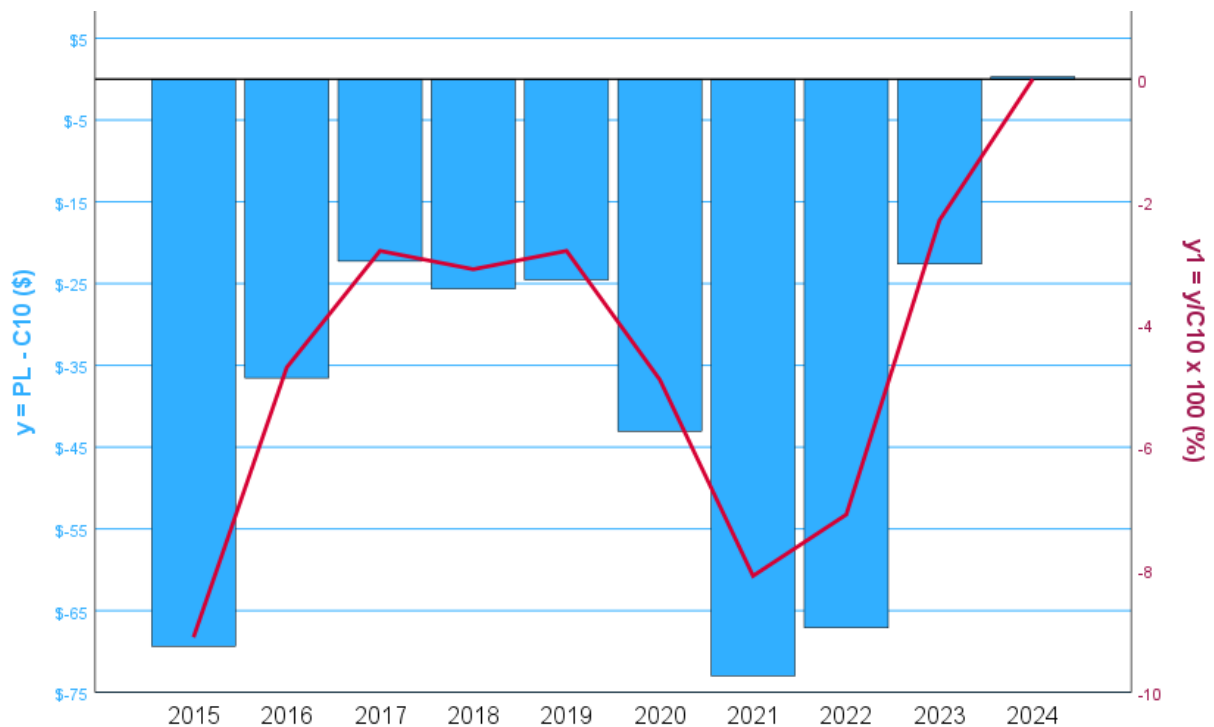


Figure 4.12 Gap between C10 & NPL for Sole Parent/Carer with 2 Dependent Children

2015-2024. Source: see Appendix A



To reiterate the mechanism for eliminating the poverty gap for sole parents/carers with two dependent children—and for substantially reducing the poverty gap for couple-based households—we have updated our calculations for average decadal trends in the (nominal) NPL. Based on these calculations derived from data tables in Appendix A, we find that the NPL increased by an annual average of 2.6 percent over the decade to 2024. Over the five years to 2024, the NPL increased by an annual average of 3.7 percent (Figure 4.13). These findings generate comparative trend lines which we use to project changes in the NMW, as demonstrated below.

We have then measured these projections against trend data for the NMW in the past decade to generate forecasts for the NMW from 2024 until 2035 based upon scenarios with different growth assumptions. For purposes of comparison, the NMW increased by an annual average of 3.7 percent in the 10 years to 2024. In the most recent years, the NMW increased by an annual average of 4.4 percent. By combining data from NPL and NMW trends to generate different forecast simulations, projections for the NMW are presented in Table 4.1 and summarised graphically in Figure 4.14. All updated datasets used for these calculations can be found in Appendix A. The projections in Figure 4.14 can be contrasted with the comparatively conservative projections in Figure 4.15 which are based on NMW increases that align with the most recent RBA forecasts for CPI inflation until June 2027 (RBA, 2015).

Figure 4.13 Future NPL (nominal) for household types

5 & 10yr annual average for NPL 2015-2035. Source: see Appendix A

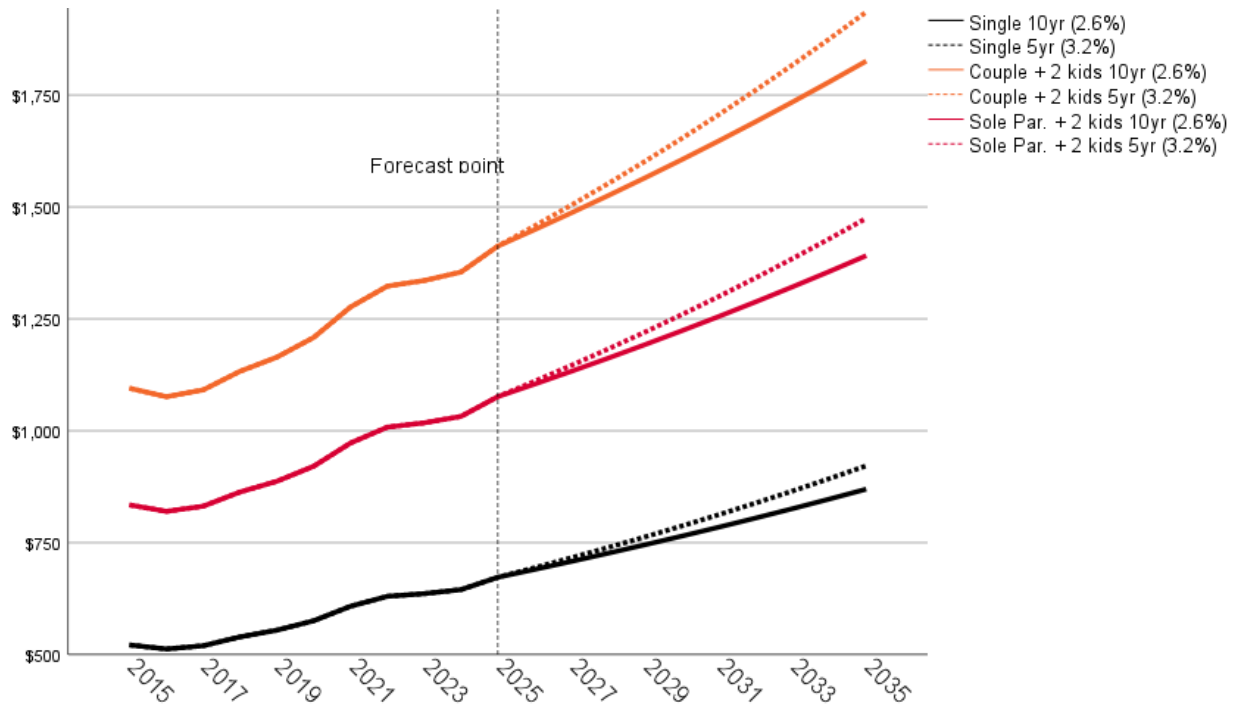


Figure 4.14 National Minimum Wage (NMW) Projections to 2035

2020-2035. Source: authors' calculations from Appendix A

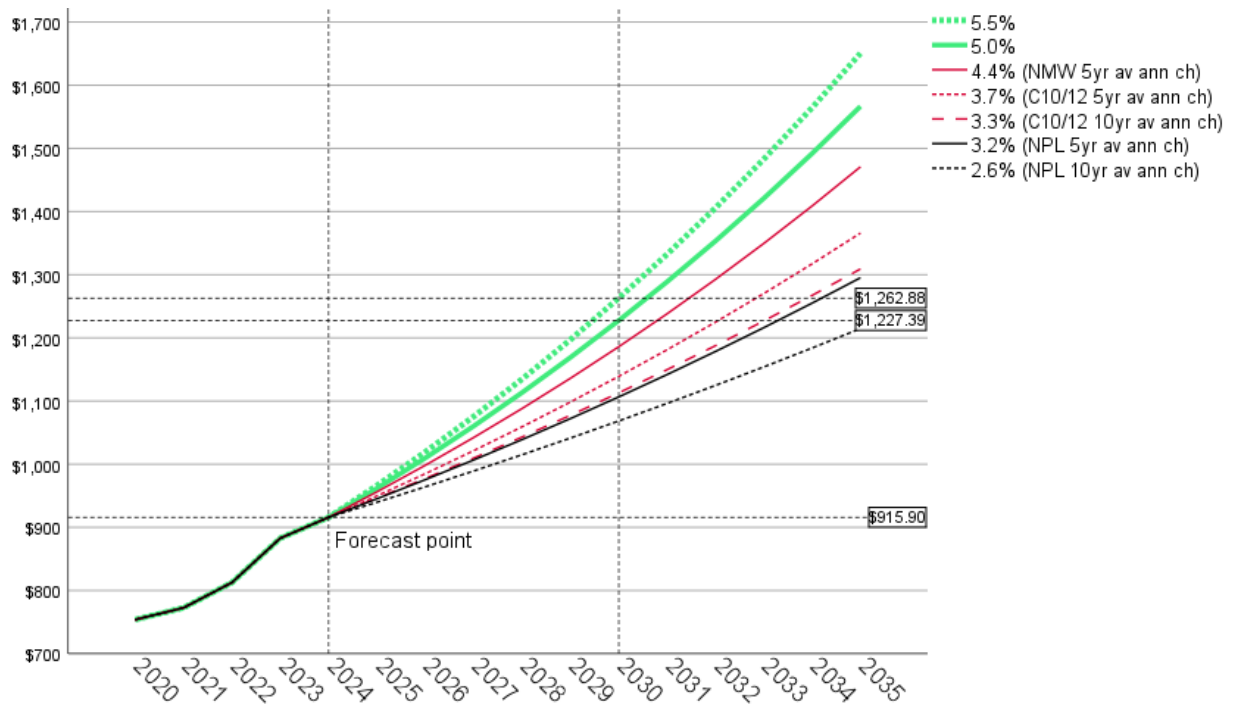
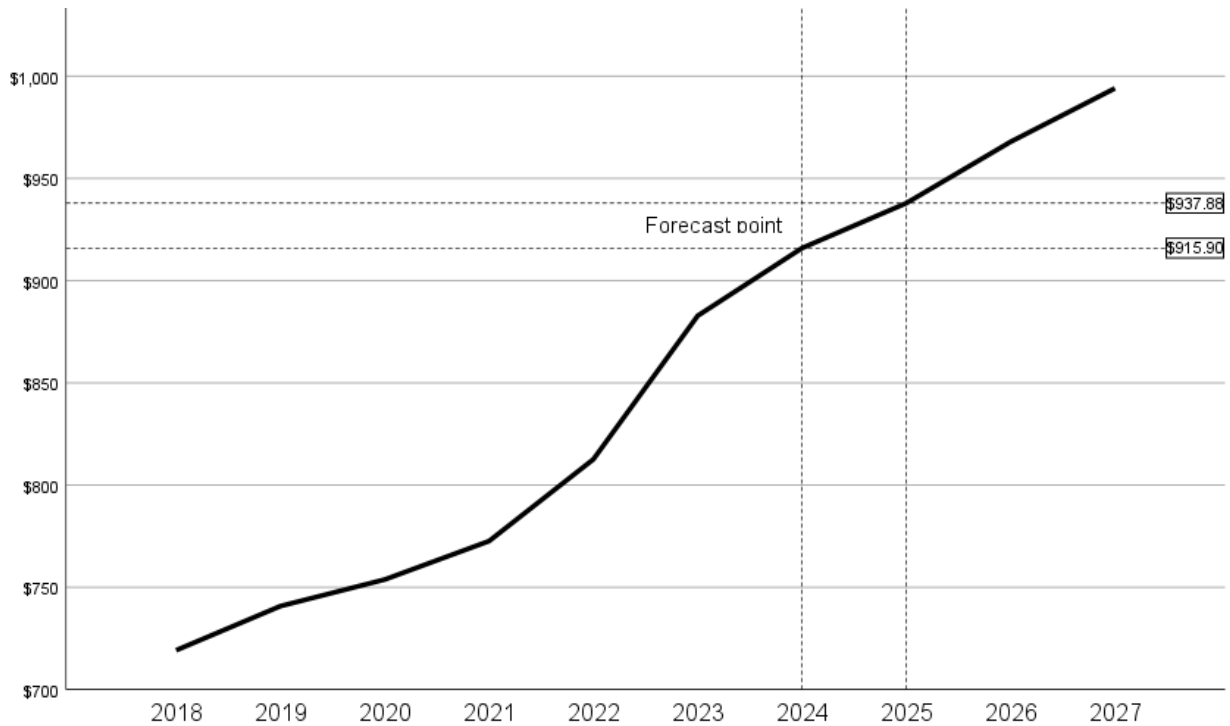


Figure 4.15 NMW Projection based on RBA Inflation Forecast

June Quarter forecasts 2025-2027. Source: authors' calculation from RBA (2025)



Data from Table 4.1 and Figure 4.14 demonstrate several possible scenarios for eliminating the gap between the NMW and the NPL for single parents/carers with two dependent children. Scenario 1 shows that extrapolating the NMW by an annual average of 4.4 percent, which is equivalent to the annual average of NMW increases over the past five years, would eliminate the poverty gap for wage earners in this category by 2033 (see green cells in Table 4.1), assuming an annual increase in the NPL of 2.6 percent, or equivalent to annual average NPL growth for the past 10 years. At this point, we note that the previous three ACCER submissions have outlined options for NMW determinations to eliminate this gap by the end of this decade, i.e., by 2030. From this vantage point, Scenario 1 represents a less ambitious and less effective target. It remains our view that a more ambitious NMW determination in 2024 in line with, or at least closer to the 2023 determination, would have rendered a 2030 target feasible. In the context of the more conservative 2024 determination, however, Scenario 1 remains one possible response.

However, a 2030 target remains possible with a larger increase in the NMW. Scenario 2 simulates the effect of a 5.0 percent increase in the NMW, which would enable the NMW to eliminate the poverty gap by 2030. This again assumes that the NPL grows by an average of no more than 2.6 percent over the projected period. If the NPL was to grow at a higher rate—for example, by its 5-year annual average (3.2 percent)—then a 5.5 percent increase in the NMW would be required to meet a 2030 target for working poverty elimination.

These scenarios represent pathways based upon assumptions derived from the most up-to-date historical data available at the time of writing. They each represent a different balance between the shorter-term macroeconomic and business climate considerations of the FWC and more

substantive, underlying and longer-term aims to address working poverty in a coordinated way, one consistent with the FWC's safety net mandate as outlined in legislation. In considering these pathways, we also consider the RBA's projections for inflation to June 2027 which state that the CPI is likely to increase from 2.4 percent to 3.7 percent by December 2025, returning to 3.2 percent by the end of FY2025/26. While CPI inflation has clearly abated in the short term, this consideration means we have raised our recommended increase in the NMW for 2025 from 4.4 percent (Scenario 1 in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.14) up to 4.5 percent. As demonstrated in this report, this increase is sufficiently modest from the perspective of the overall macroeconomic situation and the business climate while sufficiently meaningful in terms of providing an increase for low-income workers above CPI inflation and in terms of addressing the challenge of working poverty alleviation in a tangible way.

Objections that efforts to combat working poverty among single-income couple households and sole parent/carer households are better left to government transfers delegated to alternative policy regimes is belied by the fact that that our calculations take into account the effects of, for example, the Medicare exemption, Family Tax Benefits and Commonwealth Rental Assistance (see especially Tables A6-A8 in the Appendix). They also avoid the role of NMW determinations in fulfilling the social protection-oriented, safety net mandate enshrined in legislation. Furthermore, objections that working poverty among low-wage earners may be addressed via overtime payments do not fully consider two important points. First, the decision to work overtime is one generally determined by employers rather than employees; therefore, the pathway of working additional hours ascribes to minimum wage earners an individual agency that does not exist in many cases. It does not, for example, consider the point that many low-income earners in part-time employment may work in this category against their wishes; that is, it does not properly consider the problem of *involuntary* part-time employment, or under-employment. Conversely, this objection does not consider the *social and ancillary* costs of working overtime such as reduced time spent with family members or, alternatively, the additional household costs of childcare fees. For these reasons, we reiterate that, in the absence of empirical evidence to the contrary, NMW determinations ought to consider the problem of working poverty for single-income couple households and single parent/carer households from the vantage point of a 38-hour working week.

Table 4.1 Forecast Data and Simulated Growth Scenarios for National Minimum Wage (NMW)

Year	Forecast (\$AU) for...											
	... NMW assuming Scenario...								... NPL assuming Scenario...			
									Couple + 2 dep. kids		Sole par. + 2 dep. kids	
	(i) NMW 5yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 4.4%	(ii) C10/12 5yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 3.7%	(iii) C10/12 10yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 3.3%	(iii) NPL 5yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 3.2%	(iv) NPL 10yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 2.6%	(1) NMW \geq PL by 2033 ¹ = 4.4%	(2) NMW \geq PL by 2030 ¹ = 5.0%	(3) NMW \geq PL by 2030 ² = 5.5%	(a) NPL 10yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 2.6%	(b) NPL 5yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 3.2%	(c) NPL 10yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 2.6%	(d) NPL 5yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr = 3.2%
2015	656.90	656.90	656.90	656.90	656.90	656.90	656.90	656.90	1094.94	1094.94	834.24	834.24
2016	672.70	672.70	672.70	672.70	672.70	672.70	672.70	672.70	1076.04	1076.04	819.84	819.84
2017	694.90	694.90	694.90	694.90	694.90	694.90	694.90	694.90	1091.16	1091.16	831.36	831.36
2018	719.20	719.20	719.20	719.20	719.20	719.20	719.20	719.20	1132.74	1132.74	863.04	863.04
2019	740.80	740.80	740.80	740.80	740.80	740.80	740.80	740.80	1164.24	1164.24	887.04	887.04
2020	753.80	753.80	753.80	753.80	753.80	753.80	753.80	753.80	1208.34	1208.34	920.64	920.64
2021	772.60	772.60	772.60	772.60	772.60	772.60	772.60	772.60	1276.38	1276.38	972.48	972.48
2022	812.60	812.60	812.60	812.60	812.60	812.60	812.60	812.60	1323.00	1323.00	1008.00	1008.00
2023	882.80	882.80	882.80	882.80	882.80	882.80	882.80	882.80	1335.60	1335.60	1017.60	1017.60
2024	915.90	915.90	915.90	915.90	915.90	915.90	915.90	915.90	1354.50	1354.50	1032.00	1032.00
2025	956.20	949.79	946.12	945.21	939.71	956.20	961.70	966.27	1412.46	1412.46	1076.16	1076.16
2026	998.27	984.93	977.35	975.46	964.15	998.27	1009.78	1019.42	1449.18	1457.66	1104.14	1110.60
2027	1042.20	1021.37	1009.60	1006.67	989.21	1042.20	1060.27	1075.49	1486.86	1504.30	1132.85	1146.14
2028	1088.05	1059.16	1042.92	1038.88	1014.93	1088.05	1113.28	1134.64	1525.52	1552.44	1162.30	1182.81
2029	1135.93	1098.35	1077.33	1072.13	1041.32	1135.93	1168.95	1197.04	1565.18	1602.12	1192.52	1220.66
2030	1185.91	1138.99	1112.88	1106.44	1068.40	1185.91	1227.39	1262.88	1605.88	1653.39	1223.53	1259.72
2031	1238.09	1181.13	1149.61	1141.84	1096.17	1238.09	1288.76	1332.34	1647.63	1706.30	1255.34	1300.03
2032	1292.56	1224.84	1187.55	1178.38	1124.67	1292.56	1353.20	1405.62	1690.47	1760.90	1287.98	1341.64
2033	1349.44	1270.16	1226.74	1216.09	1153.92	1349.44	1420.86	1482.93	1734.42	1817.25	1321.47	1384.57
2034	1408.81	1317.15	1267.22	1255.00	1183.92	1408.81	1491.90	1564.49	1779.52	1875.40	1355.82	1428.87
2035	1470.80	1365.89	1309.04	1295.16	1214.70	1470.80	1566.50	1650.54	1825.79	1935.41	1391.07	1474.60

μ = average; Δ = change; ¹assumes Scenario (c); ²assumes Scenario (d); note that Scenario (1) \equiv Scenario (i) & that Scenario (ii) \approx NMW 10yr $\mu\Delta$ /yr

Source: Authors' calculations based upon Appendix A

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APPENDIX A

Measures of Living standards

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Table A1
Median equivalised disposable household income

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week)

	Median equivalised disposable household income (ABS)	Household Disposable Income per head (Melbourne Institute)	Median equivalised disposable household income (MEDHI)
January 2001	403.00	408.55	403.00
January 2002	-	449.83	444.00
January 2003	449.00	443.04	449.00
January 2004	491.00	469.78	491.00
January 2005	-	502.90	526.00
January 2006	564.00	519.31	564.00
January 2007	-	563.23	612.00
January 2008	688.00	602.10	688.00
January 2009	-	669.59	765.00
January 2010	714.00	667.59	714.00
January 2011	-	711.33	761.00
January 2012	791.00	746.61	791.00
January 2013	-	749.40	794.00
January 2014	844.00	777.70	844.00
January 2015	-	800.36	869.00
January 2016	854.00	800.07	854.00
January 2017	-	811.22	866.00
January 2018	899.00	828.81	899.00
January 2019	-	852.10	924.00
January 2020	959.00	870.58	959.00
January 2021	-	919.99	1013.00
January 2022	-	953.53	1050.00
January 2023	-	962.32	1060.00
January 2024	-	975.53	1075.00
January 2025	-	1017.94	1121.00

Household Disposable Income (HDI) per head figures for January 2001 to January 2024 are taken from Poverty Lines Australia published by the Melbourne Institute, September Quarter 2024, the latest available publication in this series. The figure used for each January is the published figure for the immediately preceding December quarter. The HDI estimate for January 2025 is the published figure for September 2024. The next in this series, covering the December Quarter 2024, is due to be published in April 2025.

The median equivalised disposable household income figures (ABS) are taken from Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2019-20. The financial year figures calculated by the ABS have been used for each January within the survey periods, from January 2001 to January 2020. As the published figures for those years are in 2018-19 prices, the earlier years have been re-calculated for nominal rate, using CPI adjustments and rounded to the nearest dollar. For the years, 2008 to 2020, the disclosed

price adjustments in Table 1.1 are used. For the years 2001 to 2006, the CPI factor in the previous release (Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2017-18) are used, multiplied by the CPI factor for 2017-18 in the current release (2019-20), rounded to 3 decimal places.

The MEDHI figure for periods not covered by ABS data releases are calculated by multiplying the most recent ABS calculated figure by the relative change in HDI between the two periods. Consistent with the ABS practice, the figures for the years not covered by the ABS surveys have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Table A2
Relative living standards single workers without children

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year January	Median equivalised disposable household income (MEDHI)	NMW Disposable income		C12 Disposable income		C10 Disposable income	
		\$ per week	% of MEDHI	\$ per week	% of MEDHI	\$ per week	% of MEDHI
2001	403.00	346.38	86.0%	370.50	91.9%	406.53	100.9%
2002	444.00	354.76	79.9%	380.05	85.6%	416.81	93.9%
2003	449.00	366.37	81.6%	391.74	87.2%	429.14	95.6%
2004	491.00	377.93	77.0%	408.93	83.3%	444.77	90.6%
2005	526.00	396.78	75.4%	421.18	80.1%	457.78	87.0%
2006	564.00	412.84	73.2%	438.14	77.7%	475.40	84.3%
2007	612.00	449.93	73.5%	475.17	77.6%	510.94	83.5%
2008	688.00	467.59	68.0%	500.28	72.7%	538.06	78.2%
2009	765.00	494.29	64.6%	526.67	68.8%	570.03	74.5%
2010	714.00	497.17	69.6%	529.54	74.2%	572.90	80.2%
2011	761.00	521.86	68.6%	553.15	72.7%	596.56	78.4%
2012	791.00	537.49	68.0%	569.59	72.0%	614.52	77.7%
2013	794.00	556.87	70.1%	589.96	74.3%	636.14	80.1%
2014	844.00	569.44	67.5%	603.31	71.5%	648.47	76.8%
2015	869.00	581.11	66.9%	615.71	70.9%	658.72	75.8%
2016	854.00	593.75	69.5%	629.22	73.7%	670.69	78.5%
2017	866.00	606.23	70.0%	641.07	74.0%	682.48	78.8%
2018	899.00	623.78	69.4%	656.23	73.0%	698.99	77.8%
2019	924.00	647.10	70.0%	682.20	73.8%	731.61	79.2%
2020	959.00	662.54	69.1%	698.65	72.9%	749.55	78.2%
2021	1,013.00	681.67	67.3%	723.48	71.4%	781.05	77.1%
2022	1,050.00	705.04	67.1%	747.91	71.2%	804.76	76.6%
2023	1,060.00	716.94	67.6%	755.59	71.3%	804.03	75.9%
2024	1,075.00	766.85	71.3%	787.39	73.2%	838.66	78.0%
2025	1,121.00	788.04	70.3%	809.35	72.2%	862.53	76.9%

Note: The MEDHI calculations are taken from Table A1. The disposable incomes in the three columns are taken from Tables A6 to A8.

Table A3
Relative living standards of couple parent families with two children

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year January	Median equivalised disposable household income (MEDHI)	NMW Disposable income		C12 Disposable income		C10 Disposable income	
		\$ per week	% of MEDHI	\$ per week	% of MEDHI	\$ per week	% of MEDHI
2001	846.30	553.80	65.4%	578.51	68.4%	615.33	72.7%
2002	932.40	573.16	61.5%	599.04	64.2%	636.62	68.3%
2003	942.90	591.41	62.7%	617.37	65.5%	655.59	69.5%
2004	1,031.10	609.60	59.1%	641.18	62.2%	677.84	65.7%
2005	1,104.60	663.43	60.1%	685.48	62.1%	722.90	65.4%
2006	1,184.40	686.40	58.0%	714.28	60.3%	752.36	63.5%
2007	1,285.20	731.95	57.0%	757.77	59.0%	794.36	61.8%
2008	1,444.80	758.09	52.5%	793.37	54.9%	831.97	57.6%
2009	1,606.50	796.03	49.6%	828.89	51.6%	873.07	54.3%
2010	1,499.40	808.36	53.9%	841.31	56.1%	885.49	59.1%
2011	1,598.10	840.44	52.6%	872.32	54.6%	916.54	57.4%
2012	1,661.10	864.41	52.0%	897.12	54.0%	942.89	56.8%
2013	1,667.40	915.54	54.9%	949.25	56.9%	996.30	59.8%
2014	1,772.40	938.24	52.9%	973.05	54.9%	1,019.11	57.5%
2015	1,824.90	961.70	52.7%	997.17	54.6%	1,041.41	57.1%
2016	1,793.40	980.78	54.7%	1,017.15	56.7%	1,059.88	59.1%
2017	1,818.60	973.71	53.5%	1,009.62	55.5%	1,052.18	57.9%
2018	1,887.90	994.61	52.7%	1,026.31	54.4%	1,070.40	56.7%
2019	1,940.40	1,013.16	52.2%	1,049.25	54.1%	1,100.04	56.7%
2020	2,013.90	1,035.32	51.4%	1,072.44	53.3%	1,124.76	55.8%
2021	2,127.30	1,060.72	49.9%	1,103.54	51.9%	1,162.56	54.6%
2022	2,205.00	1,090.04	49.4%	1,133.96	51.4%	1,192.30	54.1%
2023	2,226.00	1,118.02	50.2%	1,157.72	52.0%	1,206.16	54.2%
2024	2,257.50	1,211.76	53.7%	1,232.94	54.6%	1,285.81	57.0%
2025	2,354.10	1,262.09	53.6%	1,284.07	54.5%	1,338.92	56.9%

Note: The MEDHI calculations are taken from Table A1, multiplied by 2.1. The disposable incomes in the three columns are taken from Tables A6 to A8.

Table A4
Relative living standards of sole parent families with two children

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year January	Median equivalised disposable household income (MEDHI)	NMW Disposable income		C12 Disposable income		C10 Disposable income	
		\$ per week	% of MEDHI	\$ per week	% of MEDHI	\$ per week	% of MEDHI
2001	644.80	553.80	85.9%	578.51	89.7%	615.33	95.4%
2002	710.40	573.16	80.7%	599.04	84.3%	636.62	89.6%
2003	718.40	591.41	82.3%	617.37	85.9%	655.59	91.3%
2004	785.60	609.60	77.6%	641.18	81.6%	677.84	86.3%
2005	841.60	663.43	78.8%	685.48	81.4%	722.90	85.9%
2006	902.40	686.40	76.1%	714.28	79.2%	752.36	83.4%
2007	979.20	731.95	74.7%	757.77	77.4%	794.36	81.1%
2008	1,100.80	758.09	68.9%	793.37	72.1%	831.97	75.6%
2009	1,224.00	796.03	65.0%	828.89	67.7%	873.07	71.3%
2010	1,142.40	808.36	70.8%	841.31	73.6%	885.49	77.5%
2011	1,217.60	840.44	69.0%	872.32	71.6%	916.54	75.3%
2012	1,265.60	864.41	68.3%	897.12	70.9%	942.89	74.5%
2013	1,270.40	915.54	72.1%	949.25	74.7%	996.30	78.4%
2014	1,350.40	938.24	69.5%	973.05	72.1%	1,019.11	75.5%
2015	1,390.40	961.70	69.2%	997.17	71.7%	1,041.41	74.9%
2016	1,366.40	980.78	71.8%	1,017.15	74.4%	1,059.88	77.6%
2017	1,385.60	973.71	70.3%	1,009.62	72.9%	1,052.18	75.9%
2018	1,438.40	994.61	69.1%	1,026.31	71.4%	1,070.40	74.4%
2019	1,478.40	1,013.16	68.5%	1,049.25	71.0%	1,100.04	74.4%
2020	1,534.40	1,035.32	67.5%	1,072.44	69.9%	1,124.76	73.3%
2021	1,620.80	1,060.72	65.4%	1,103.54	68.1%	1,162.56	71.7%
2022	1,680.00	1,090.04	64.9%	1,133.96	67.5%	1,192.30	71.0%
2023	1,696.00	1,118.02	65.9%	1,157.72	68.3%	1,206.16	71.1%
2024	1,720.00	1,211.76	70.5%	1,232.94	71.7%	1,285.81	74.8%
2025	1,793.60	1,262.09	70.4%	1,284.07	71.6%	1,338.92	74.6%

Note: The MEDHI calculations are taken from Table A1, multiplied by 1.6. The disposable incomes in the three columns are taken from Tables A6 to A8.

Table A5
60% median poverty lines for workers and families

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week)

	Median equivalised disposable household income	Poverty Line Single	Poverty Line Couple and 2 children	Poverty Line Sole parent and 2 children
January 2001	403.00	241.80	507.78	386.88
January 2002	444.00	266.40	559.44	426.24
January 2003	449.00	269.40	565.74	431.04
January 2004	491.00	294.60	618.66	471.36
January 2005	526.00	315.60	662.76	504.96
January 2006	564.00	338.40	710.64	541.44
January 2007	612.00	367.20	771.12	587.52
January 2008	688.00	412.80	866.88	660.48
January 2009	765.00	459.00	963.90	734.40
January 2010	714.00	428.40	899.64	685.44
January 2011	761.00	456.60	958.86	730.56
January 2012	791.00	474.60	996.66	759.36
January 2013	794.00	476.40	1,000.44	762.24
January 2014	844.00	506.40	1,063.44	810.24
January 2015	869.00	521.40	1,094.94	834.24
January 2016	854.00	512.40	1,076.04	819.84
January 2017	866.00	519.60	1,091.16	831.36
January 2018	899.00	539.40	1,132.74	863.04
January 2019	924.00	554.40	1,164.24	887.04
January 2020	959.00	575.40	1,208.34	920.64
January 2021	1,013.00	607.80	1,276.38	972.48
January 2022	1,050.00	630.00	1,323.00	1,008.00
January 2023	1,060.00	636.00	1,335.60	1,017.60
January 2024	1,075.00	645.00	1,354.50	1,032.00
January 2025	1,121.00	672.60	1,412.46	1,076.16

Note: Poverty lines are 60% of relevant MEDHI rate in tables A2-4.

Table A6
Wages, taxes and family payments for NMW-dependent workers and families

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year	NMW			Benefits						Disposable income
	Weekly Gross	Annual Gross	Weekly Net	Medicare exemption	FTB A	FTB B	FTB A Supp.	FTB B Supp.	Rental assist. max.	
2001	400.40	20,893.00	346.38	6.00	116.20	34.79	-	-	50.43	553.80
2002	413.40	21,571.00	354.76	6.20	122.92	36.82	-	-	52.46	573.16
2003	431.40	22,510.00	366.37	6.47	126.70	37.94	-	-	53.93	591.41
2004	448.40	23,398.00	377.93	6.73	130.48	39.06	-	-	55.40	609.60
2005	467.40	24,389.00	396.78	7.01	133.56	39.97	23.50	5.81	56.80	663.43
2006	484.40	25,276.00	412.84	7.27	137.06	41.02	24.06	5.88	58.27	686.40
2007	511.86	26,709.00	449.93	7.68	140.84	42.14	24.76	6.02	60.58	731.95
2008	522.12	27,244.00	467.59	7.83	145.46	43.54	25.60	6.23	61.84	758.09
2009	543.78	28,374.00	494.29	8.16	151.34	44.87	26.30	6.44	64.63	796.03
2010	543.78	28,374.00	497.17	8.16	156.94	46.55	27.28	6.65	65.61	808.36
2011	569.90	29,737.00	521.86	8.55	160.30	47.53	27.84	6.79	67.57	840.44
2012	589.30	30,750.00	537.49	8.84	164.64	48.79	27.84	6.79	70.02	864.41
2013	606.40	31,642.00	556.87	9.10	193.25	50.53	27.84	6.79	71.16	915.54
2014	622.20	32,466.00	569.44	9.33	199.74	52.26	27.84	6.79	72.84	938.24
2015	640.90	33,442.00	581.11	12.82	204.51	53.66	27.84	6.79	74.97	961.70
2016	656.90	34,277.00	593.75	13.14	208.54	54.58	27.84	6.79	76.14	980.78
2017	672.70	35,101.00	606.23	13.45	186.99	55.49	27.84	6.79	76.92	973.71
2018	694.90	36,260.00	623.78	13.90	188.69	55.49	27.84	6.79	78.12	994.61
2019	719.20	37,528.00	647.10	14.38	182.21	54.13	28.82	7.00	79.52	1,013.16
2020	740.80	38,655.00	662.54	14.82	185.56	55.11	29.38	7.13	80.78	1,035.32
2021	753.80	39,333.00	681.67	15.08	188.91	56.09	29.94	7.27	81.76	1,060.72
2022	772.60	40,314.00	705.04	15.45	191.24	56.77	30.20	7.34	84.00	1,090.04
2023	812.60	42,401.00	716.94	16.25	197.96	58.73	31.34	7.62	89.18	1,118.02
2024	882.80	46,065.00	766.85	17.66	213.36	63.28	33.72	8.25	108.64	1,211.76
2025	915.90	47,792.00	788.04	18.32	222.04	65.87	35.11	8.60	124.11	1,262.09

Notes: Data for years 2001 to 2021 are from ACCER's 2021 submission to the Annual Wage Review. National Minimum Wage rates, tax rates and tax offsets are as at 1 January of that year. Payments are calculated based on the year being 52.18 weeks. NMW Net rate is NMW after tax, Medicare levy, and tax offsets. Benefits are assumed to be paid at the maximum rate and are calculated based on two children aged 8 to 12. From 2013 to 2016, the FTB A payment included the Schoolkids Bonus.

Table A7
Wages, taxes and family payments for C12-dependent workers and families

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year	C12			Benefits						Disposable income
	Weekly Gross	Annual Gross	Weekly Net	Medicare exemption	FTB A	FTB B	FTB A Supp.	FTB B Supp.	Rental assist. max.	
2001	439.60	22,938.00	370.50	6.59	116.20	34.79	-	-	50.43	578.51
2002	452.60	23,617.00	380.05	6.79	122.92	36.82	-	-	52.46	599.04
2003	470.60	24,556.00	391.74	7.06	126.70	37.94	-	-	53.93	617.37
2004	487.60	25,443.00	408.93	7.31	130.48	39.06	-	-	55.40	641.18
2005	506.60	26,434.00	421.18	7.60	133.56	39.97	23.50	2.87	56.80	685.48
2006	523.60	27,321.00	438.14	7.85	139.06	41.02	24.06	5.88	58.27	714.28
2007	551.00	28,751.00	475.17	8.26	140.84	42.14	24.76	6.02	60.58	757.77
2008	561.26	29,287.00	500.28	8.42	147.46	43.54	25.60	6.23	61.84	793.37
2009	582.92	30,417.00	526.67	8.74	151.34	44.87	26.20	6.44	64.63	828.89
2010	582.92	30,417.00	529.54	8.74	156.94	46.55	27.28	6.65	65.61	841.31
2011	609.00	31,778.00	553.15	9.14	160.30	47.53	27.84	6.79	67.57	872.32
2012	629.70	32,857.00	569.59	9.45	164.64	48.79	27.84	6.79	70.02	897.12
2013	648.00	33,813.00	589.96	9.72	193.25	50.53	27.84	6.79	71.16	949.25
2014	664.80	34,689.00	603.31	9.97	199.74	52.56	27.84	6.79	72.84	973.05
2015	684.70	35,727.00	615.71	13.69	204.51	53.66	27.84	6.79	74.97	997.17
2016	701.80	36,620.00	629.22	14.04	208.54	54.58	27.84	6.79	76.14	1,017.15
2017	718.60	37,897.00	641.07	14.52	186.99	55.49	27.84	6.79	76.92	1,009.62
2018	742.30	38,733.00	656.23	14.85	186.99	55.49	27.84	6.79	78.12	1,026.31
2019	768.30	40,090.00	682.20	15.37	182.21	54.13	28.82	7.00	79.52	1,049.25
2020	791.30	41,290.00	698.65	15.83	185.56	55.11	29.38	7.13	80.78	1,072.44
2021	805.10	42,010.00	723.48	16.10	188.91	56.09	29.94	7.27	81.76	1,103.54
2022	825.20	43,059.00	747.91	16.50	191.24	56.77	30.20	7.34	84.00	1,133.96
2023	865.20	45,146.00	755.59	17.30	197.96	58.73	31.34	7.62	89.18	1,157.72
2024	914.90	47,739.00	787.39	18.30	213.36	63.28	33.72	8.25	108.64	1,232.94
2025	949.20	49,529.00	809.35	18.98	222.04	65.87	35.11	8.60	124.11	1,284.07

Notes: Data for years 2001 to 2021 are from ACCER's 2021 submission to the Annual Wage Review. C12 rate is taken from Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award [MA000010], as at 1 January. Payments are calculated on the basis of the year being 52.18 weeks. From 2013 to 2016, the FTB A payment included the Schoolkids Bonus. Benefits are calculated based on two children aged 8 to 12.

Table A8
Wages, taxes and family payments for C10-dependent workers and families

January 2001 – January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year	C10			Benefits						Disposable income
	Weekly Gross	Annual Gross	Weekly Net	Medicare exemption	FTB A	FTB B	FTB A Supp.	FTB B Supp.	Rental assist. max.	
2001	492.20	25,683.00	406.53	7.38	116.20	34.79	-	-	50.43	615.33
2002	507.20	26,466.00	416.81	7.61	122.92	36.82	-	-	52.46	636.62
2003	525.20	27,405.00	429.14	7.88	126.70	37.94	-	-	53.93	655.59
2004	542.20	28,292.00	444.77	8.13	130.48	39.06	-	-	55.40	677.84
2005	561.20	29,283.00	457.78	8.42	133.56	39.97	23.50	2.87	56.80	722.90
2006	578.20	30,170.00	475.40	8.67	139.06	41.02	24.06	5.88	58.27	752.36
2007	605.56	31,598.00	510.94	9.08	140.84	42.14	24.76	6.02	60.58	794.36
2008	615.82	32,133.00	538.06	9.24	147.46	43.54	25.60	6.23	61.84	831.97
2009	637.48	33,263.00	570.03	9.56	151.34	44.87	26.20	6.44	64.63	873.07
2010	637.48	33,263.00	572.90	9.56	156.94	46.55	27.28	6.65	65.61	885.49
2011	663.60	34,627.00	596.56	9.95	160.30	47.53	27.84	6.79	67.57	916.54
2012	686.20	35,806.00	614.52	10.29	164.64	48.79	27.84	6.79	70.02	942.89
2013	706.10	36,844.00	636.14	10.59	193.25	50.53	27.84	6.79	71.16	996.30
2014	724.50	37,804.00	648.47	10.87	199.74	52.56	27.84	6.79	72.84	1,019.11
2015	746.20	38,936.00	658.72	14.92	204.51	53.66	27.84	6.79	74.97	1,041.41
2016	764.90	39,912.00	670.69	15.30	208.54	54.58	27.84	6.79	76.14	1,059.88
2017	783.30	40,873.00	682.48	15.67	186.99	55.49	27.84	6.79	76.92	1,052.18
2018	809.10	42,219.00	698.99	16.18	186.99	55.49	27.84	6.79	78.12	1,070.40
2019	837.40	43,696.00	731.61	16.75	182.21	54.13	28.82	7.00	79.52	1,100.04
2020	862.50	45,005.00	749.55	17.25	185.56	55.11	29.38	7.13	80.78	1,124.76
2021	877.60	45,793.00	781.05	17.55	188.91	56.09	29.94	7.27	81.76	1,162.56
2022	899.50	46,936.00	804.76	17.99	191.24	56.77	30.20	7.34	84.00	1,192.30
2023	940.90	49,096.00	804.03	17.30	197.96	58.73	31.34	7.62	89.18	1,206.16
2024	995.00	51,919.00	838.66	19.90	213.36	63.28	33.72	8.25	108.64	1,285.81
2025	1,032.30	53,865.00	862.53	20.65	222.04	65.87	35.11	8.60	124.11	1,338.92

Notes: Data for years 2001 to 2021 are from ACCER's 2021 submission to the Annual Wage Review. The C10 rate is taken from Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award [MA000010], as at 1 January. Payments are calculated on the basis of the year being 52.18 weeks. From 2013 to 2016, the FTB A payment included the Schoolkids Bonus. Benefits are calculated based on two children aged 8 to 12.

Table A9
Selected minimum wage rates as ratios of median earnings in main job

August 1997 - August 2024

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year August	Median Earnings \$ per week	NMW		C12		C10	
		\$ per week	% of median earnings	\$ per week	% of median earnings	\$ per week	% of median earnings
1997	581.00	359.40	61.9%	398.60	68.6%	451.20	77.7%
1998	615.00	373.40	60.7%	412.60	67.1%	465.20	75.6%
1999	652.00	385.40	59.1%	424.60	65.1%	477.20	73.2%
2000	694.00	400.40	57.7%	439.60	63.3%	492.20	70.9%
2001	712.00	413.40	58.1%	452.60	63.6%	507.20	71.2%
2002	750.00	431.40	57.5%	470.60	62.7%	525.20	70.0%
2003	769.00	448.40	58.3%	487.60	63.4%	542.20	70.5%
2004	800.00	467.40	58.4%	506.60	63.3%	561.20	70.2%
2005	843.00	484.40	57.5%	523.60	62.1%	578.20	68.6%
2006	900.00	511.86	56.9%	551.00	61.2%	605.56	67.3%
2007	940.00	522.12	55.5%	561.26	59.7%	615.82	65.5%
2008	1,000.00	543.78	54.4%	582.92	58.3%	637.48	63.7%
2009	1,000.00	543.78	54.4%	582.92	58.3%	637.48	63.7%
2010	1,050.00	569.90	54.3%	609.00	58.0%	663.60	63.2%
2011	1,100.00	589.30	53.6%	629.70	57.2%	686.20	62.4%
2012	1,150.00	606.40	52.7%	648.00	56.3%	706.10	61.4%
2013	1,153.00	622.20	54.0%	664.80	57.7%	724.50	62.8%
2014	1,208.00	640.90	53.1%	684.70	56.7%	746.20	61.8%
2015	1,230.00	656.90	53.4%	701.80	57.1%	764.90	62.2%
2016	1,250.00	672.70	53.8%	718.60	57.5%	783.30	62.7%
2017	1,284.00	694.90	54.1%	742.30	57.8%	809.10	63.0%
2018	1,342.00	719.20	53.6%	768.30	57.3%	837.40	62.4%
2019	1,380.00	740.80	53.7%	791.30	57.3%	862.50	62.5%
2020	1,431.00	753.80	52.7%	805.10	56.3%	877.60	61.3%
2021	1,495.00	772.60	51.7%	825.20	55.2%	899.50	60.2%
2022	1,518.00	812.60	53.5%	865.20	57.0%	940.90	62.0%
2023	1,600.00	882.80	55.2%	914.90	57.2%	995.00	62.2%
2024	1,709.50	915.90	53.6%	949.20	55.5%	1,032.30	60.4%

Notes: Over the period 1997 to 2021 the annual wage review decisions and their operative dates have varied. The Table assumes that the annual wage increase in each year was in operation before the month (August) in which the survey was undertaken. In 2006, 2007 and 2008 the wage increases came into operation after August.

Median earnings for years 2014 to 2024 are from the Commission's Statistical Report of 7 March 2025 (Version 1, Table 8.1). The figure for 2023 is from the Commission's Statistical Report of 29 February 2024 (Version 1, Table 8.1). Median earnings for the years 2010 to 2012 are taken from the

Commission's Statistical Report of 11 June 2021 (Version 11, Table 8.1). Median earnings for the years 1999 to 2009 are taken from the Commission's Statistical Report of 16 June 2011. The median earnings for 1997 are taken from Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia, August 1997, cat. no. 6310.0, page 30. The median earnings for 1998 are taken from Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia, August 1998, cat. no. 6310.0, page 30.

Table A10
Safety net rates compared to Average Weekly Earnings

November 1997-November 2024

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year November	Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (AWOTE)	NMW		C12		C10	
		\$ per week	% of AWOTE	\$ per week	% of AWOTE	\$ per week	% of AWOTE
1997	712.10	359.40	50.5%	398.60	56.0%	451.20	63.4%
1998	739.30	373.40	50.5%	412.60	55.8%	465.20	62.9%
1999	760.20	385.40	50.7%	424.60	55.9%	477.20	62.8%
2000	798.80	400.40	50.1%	439.60	55.0%	492.20	61.6%
2001	843.10	413.40	49.0%	452.60	53.7%	507.20	60.2%
2002	882.20	431.40	48.9%	470.60	53.3%	525.20	59.5%
2003	929.60	448.40	48.2%	487.60	52.5%	542.20	58.3%
2004	964.90	467.40	48.4%	506.60	52.5%	561.20	58.2%
2005	1014.50	484.40	47.7%	523.60	51.6%	578.20	57.0%
2006	1045.40	511.86	49.0%	551.00	52.7%	605.56	57.9%
2007	1100.70	522.12	47.4%	561.26	51.0%	615.82	55.9%
2008	1158.50	543.78	46.9%	582.92	50.3%	637.48	55.0%
2009	1225.20	543.78	44.4%	582.92	47.6%	637.48	52.0%
2010	1274.10	569.90	44.7%	609.00	47.8%	663.60	52.1%
2011	1333.40	589.30	44.2%	629.70	47.2%	686.20	51.5%
2012	1392.80	606.40	43.5%	648.00	46.5%	706.10	50.7%
2013	1437.20	622.20	43.3%	664.80	46.3%	724.50	50.4%
2014	1474.50	640.90	43.5%	684.70	46.4%	746.20	50.6%
2015	1499.90	656.90	43.8%	701.80	46.8%	764.90	51.0%
2016	1532.00	672.70	43.9%	718.60	46.9%	783.30	51.1%
2017	1567.70	694.90	44.3%	742.30	47.3%	809.10	51.6%
2018	1606.60	719.20	44.8%	768.30	47.8%	837.40	52.1%
2019	1659.30	740.80	44.6%	791.30	47.7%	862.50	52.0%
2020	1712.20	753.80	44.0%	805.10	47.0%	877.60	51.3%
2021	1749.50	772.60	44.2%	825.20	47.2%	899.50	51.4%
2022	1805.70	812.60	45.0%	865.20	47.9%	940.90	52.1%
2023	1885.80	882.80	46.8%	914.90	48.5%	995.00	52.8%
2024	1973.70	915.90	46.4%	949.20	48.1%	1,032.30	52.3%

Notes: Until 2005, wage increases were awarded in the first half of the calendar year. In 2006 wage increases awarded by the Australian Fair Pay Commission commenced in December 2006 and subsequent wage increases awarded by it commenced by November. Decisions from 2010 have taken effect on 1 July.

AWOTE data is from ABS Average Weekly Earnings, category number 6302.0, trend data for all persons, full time, adult, ordinary time earnings, as at November in the relevant year. Table 1 of November 2024 release covers years 2012 to 2024 (A84990044V). Table 1 of November 2011 release covers years 1997 to 2011 (A2810223V).

Table A11
Disposable incomes of safety net families and national

Household Disposable Income

(Couple parent and sole parent families with two children)

January 2001–January 2025

(\$ per week, unless stated)

Year January	Household Disposable Income per head (HDI)	NMW Family Disposable income		C12 Family Disposable income		C10 Family Disposable income	
		\$ per week	% of HDI	\$ per week	% of HDI	\$ per week	% of HDI
2001	408.55	553.80	135.6%	578.51	141.6%	615.33	150.6%
2002	449.83	573.16	127.4%	599.04	133.2%	636.62	141.5%
2003	443.04	591.41	133.5%	617.37	139.3%	655.59	148.0%
2004	469.78	609.60	129.8%	641.18	136.5%	677.84	144.3%
2005	502.90	663.43	131.9%	685.48	136.3%	722.90	143.7%
2006	519.31	686.40	132.2%	714.28	137.5%	752.36	144.9%
2007	563.23	731.95	130.0%	757.77	134.5%	794.36	141.0%
2008	602.10	758.09	125.9%	793.37	131.8%	831.97	138.2%
2009	669.59	796.03	118.9%	828.89	123.8%	873.07	130.4%
2010	667.59	808.36	121.1%	841.31	126.0%	885.49	132.6%
2011	711.33	840.44	118.2%	872.32	122.6%	916.54	128.8%
2012	746.61	864.41	115.8%	897.12	120.2%	942.89	126.3%
2013	749.40	915.54	122.2%	949.25	126.7%	996.30	132.9%
2014	777.70	938.24	120.6%	973.05	125.1%	1,019.11	131.0%
2015	800.36	961.70	120.2%	997.17	124.6%	1,041.41	130.1%
2016	800.07	980.78	122.6%	1,017.15	127.1%	1,059.88	132.5%
2017	811.22	973.71	120.0%	1,009.62	124.5%	1,052.18	129.7%
2018	828.81	994.61	120.0%	1,026.31	123.8%	1,070.40	129.1%
2019	852.10	1,013.16	118.9%	1,049.25	123.1%	1,100.04	129.1%
2020	870.58	1,035.32	118.9%	1,072.44	123.2%	1,124.76	129.2%
2021	919.99	1,060.72	115.3%	1,103.54	120.0%	1,162.56	126.4%
2022	953.53	1,090.04	114.3%	1,133.96	118.9%	1,192.30	125.0%
2023	962.32	1,118.02	116.2%	1,157.72	120.3%	1,206.16	125.3%
2024	975.53	1,211.76	124.2%	1,232.94	126.4%	1,285.81	131.8%
2025	1017.94	1,262.09	124.0%	1,284.07	126.1%	1,338.92	131.5%

Notes: Household Disposable Income (HDI) figures have been calculated by the Melbourne Institute; see Table A1. The disposable incomes for families dependent on the NMW, C12 and C10 wage rates are taken from Tables A6, A7 and A8, respectively. Note the disposable incomes for both families are the same because they receive the same amount of family payments.

Table A12
Safety Net Wages and Household Disposable Income – Single worker

April 1997–January 2025

(\$ per week, unless otherwise indicated)

Year January	Household Disposable Income per head (HDI)	NMW			C10		
		gross	net	net as % of HDI	gross	net	net as % of HDI
1997	350.99	359.40	305.70	87.1%	451.20	367.96	104.8%
1998	360.85	359.40	305.70	84.7%	451.20	367.96	102.0%
1999	362.92	373.40	316.69	87.3%	465.20	376.43	103.7%
2000	387.65	385.40	326.11	84.1%	477.20	384.03	99.1%
2001	408.55	400.40	346.38	84.8%	492.20	406.53	99.5%
2002	449.83	413.40	354.76	78.9%	507.20	416.81	92.7%
2003	443.04	431.40	366.37	82.7%	525.20	429.14	96.9%
2004	469.78	448.40	377.93	80.4%	542.20	444.77	94.7%
2005	502.90	467.40	396.78	78.9%	561.20	457.78	91.0%
2006	519.31	484.40	412.84	79.5%	578.20	475.40	91.5%
2007	563.23	511.86	449.93	79.9%	605.56	510.94	90.7%
2008	602.10	522.12	467.59	77.7%	615.82	538.06	89.4%
2009	669.59	543.78	494.29	73.8%	637.48	570.03	85.1%
2010	667.59	543.78	497.17	74.5%	637.48	572.90	85.8%
2011	711.33	569.90	521.86	73.4%	663.60	596.56	83.9%
2012	746.61	589.30	537.49	72.0%	686.20	614.52	82.3%
2013	749.40	606.40	556.87	74.3%	706.10	636.14	84.9%
2014	777.70	622.20	569.44	73.2%	724.50	648.47	83.4%
2015	800.36	640.90	581.11	72.6%	746.20	658.72	82.3%
2016	800.07	656.90	573.79	71.7%	764.90	670.70	83.8%
2017	811.22	672.70	606.23	74.7%	783.30	682.48	84.1%
2018	828.81	694.90	623.78	75.3%	809.10	698.99	84.3%
2019	852.10	719.20	647.10	75.9%	837.40	731.61	85.9%
2020	870.58	740.80	662.54	76.1%	862.50	749.55	86.1%
2021	919.99	753.80	681.67	74.1%	877.60	781.05	84.9%
2022	953.53	772.60	705.04	73.9%	899.50	804.76	84.4%
2023	962.32	812.60	716.94	74.5%	940.90	804.03	83.6%
2024	975.53	882.80	766.85	78.6%	995.00	838.66	86.0%
2025	1,017.94	915.90	788.04	77.4%	1,032.30	862.53	84.7%

Notes: The gross and net wages for 1997 are at April of that year following the decision of the Safety Net Review Case, April 1997. The HDIs for the period 2001 to 2025 are taken from Table A1 and are at January each year. The HDI for 1997 to 2000 is taken from Poverty Lines Australia: September Quarter 2023. The NMW column includes the FMW before 2010.

Table A13
Ratio of disposable income of selected households to their
60 per cent of median income poverty lines

September 2024

Adapted from Table 8.6 of the Commission's Statistical Report of 7 March 2025

	Household	60% median income (PL, \$pw)	Disposable income (DI) NMW-dependent		Disposable income (DI) C10-dependent	
			\$pw (derived)	Ratio DI:PL	\$pw (derived)	Ratio DI:PL
1	Single adult	672.80	807.00	1.20	881.00	1.31
2	Single parent working full time, 1 child	874.63	1,155.00	1.32	1,216.00	1.39
3	Single parent working part time, 1 child	874.63	778.00	0.89	831.00	0.95
4	Single parent working full time, 2 children	1,076.47	1,281.00	1.19	1,356.00	1.26
5	Single parent working part time, 2 children	1,076.47	915.00	0.85	958.00	0.89
6	Single-earner couple, one with Newstart/JobSeeker	1,009.19	1,130.00	1.12	1,130.00	1.12
7	Single-earner couple	1,009.19	817.00	0.81	888.00	0.88
8	Single-earner couple, one with Newstart/JobSeeker, 1 child	1,211.03	1,332.00	1.10	1,356.00	1.12
9	Single-earner couple, 1 child	1,211.03	1,150.00	0.95	1,223.00	1.01
10	Single-earner couple, one with Newstart/JobSeeker, 2 children	1,412.87	1,469.00	1.04	1,498.00	1.06
11	Single-earner couple, 2 children	1,412.87	1,286.00	0.91	1,356.00	0.96
12	Dual-earner couple	1,009.19	1,261.00	1.25	1,403.00	1.39
13	Dual-earner couple, 1 child	1,211.03	1,502.00	1.24	1,586.00	1.31
14	Dual-earner couple, 2 children	1,412.87	1,625.00	1.15	1,724.00	1.22

The 60% median income poverty line (PL) data and ratios are taken from the Table 8.6 of the Commission's Statistical Report of 7 March 2025 (Version 1). The disposable incomes of NMW- and C10- dependent households are derived from the ratios, rounded to the nearest dollar.

The Commission's notes to Table 8.6 are:

Note: Poverty lines are based on estimates of median equivalised household disposable income in 2017–18 for December 2018 and 2019–20 for December 2022 and December 2023, adjusted for movements in household disposable income per head as calculated by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and for household composition using the modified OECD equivalence scale. C10 and C4 are minimum award rates set under

the *Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award 2020*. AWOTE data are expressed in original terms.

Assumptions: Tax-transfer parameters as at September 2019, September 2023 and September 2024. Wage rates for 2019: NMW = \$740.80 pw, C10 = \$862.50 pw, C4 = \$1036.10 and AWOTE of full-time adult employees = \$1658.40 pw. Wage rates for 2023: NMW = \$882.80 pw, C10 = \$995.00 pw, C4 = \$1195.30 pw and AWOTE of full-time adult employees = \$1888.80. Wage rates for 2024: NMW = \$915.90 pw, C10 = \$1032.30 pw, C4 = \$1240.10 pw and AWOTE of full-time adult employees = \$1975.80. Other assumptions as per Table 8.4.

Source: ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*, November 2024; ABS, *Household Income and Wealth, Australia*, 2017–18 financial year; ABS, *Household Income and Wealth, Australia*, 2019–20 financial year; Fair Work Commission modelling; *Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award 2020*; Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, *Poverty Lines: Australia*, September quarter 2024.

ANNEXURE B - APPENDIX B TO THE ACU RESEARCH REPORT FILED BY ACCER IN 2024

The 2021 Census and low paid working families

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The purpose of this Appendix is to draw on data from the national Census of 10 August 2021 to address two matters: the work patterns of low paid working families and the number of low paid working families in or at risk of poverty and without a decent standard of living.

This inquiry into Census data is child-centred, looking at the families in which dependent children live, the incomes of those families and the working patterns of the parents in those families, so as to better understand the needs of low paid workers with family responsibilities.

A focus on low paid workers and their families is consistent with the object of the FW Act to promote social inclusion (section 3) and is necessary for the Commission to carry out its obligation to establish and maintain a safety net of fair minimum wages, taking into account, among other matters, "relative living standards and the needs of the low paid" (section 284(1)).

The 2021 Census found that there were 2,424,689 couple parent families with dependent children (with over 4,594,881 dependent children) and 674,058 sole parent families with dependent children (with 1,147,794 dependent children), as well as 519,457 couple parent families and 394,202 sole parent families with no dependent children, as shown in tables B7 and B8. This Census data regarding families with dependent children can be broken down by the number of dependent children (with the largest category being six and more children), the incomes of the families and the labour force status of the couples and sole parents.

This appendix provides an insight into the lives of 289,642 couple parent families and 254,356 sole parent families with dependent children which we class as low income (see table B1), analysing according to income and labour force status. We exclude nil, negative, partially reported and non-stated incomes, which sum to 378,657 couple parent and 115,793 sole parent families. Table B7 shows that low paid families comprise 13.5 per cent of couple parent families with dependent children who reported a positive income, or around 15.8 per cent of children in those families. Table B8 shows that low paid families comprise 44.1 per cent of sole parent families with dependent children who reported a positive income, covering around 50.9 per cent of those children.

The basis upon which these low income families are identified is by the use of an estimate of the 60% relative poverty line for each type of family. The 60% relative poverty line is not a precise measure of poverty, but it is, at least, a risk of poverty line and, it is a conservative measure of the standard of living needed to secure a decent standard of living in contemporary Australia.

The Census data does not permit the 60% of median poverty line to be fixed with precision. The categorisation that we have used is the best fit available in the Census data. It should be noted that the use of the 60% of median benchmark is not intended to capture all low paid workers with family responsibilities: the Commission has accepted that the term "low paid" in section 284(1) of the FW Act should be taken to include those workers earning up to two-thirds of median wages: see the June 2022 decision at paragraph 359. In 2021, two-thirds of median weekly earnings were \$733.33 (see table A9), higher than the poverty line used in this appendix, \$610.00 per week.

It should also be noted that the categorisation used here does not turn on the basis upon which workers are paid: the Census data covers low paid workers without any distinction being made between whether they are award reliant (i.e. only being paid the minimum award rate and not a dollar more) or they are paid a higher wage rate that still leaves them low paid and in or at risk of poverty.

The published poverty reports do not estimate how many children are living in poverty in wage-dependent households where there is a person in full time work. The Census provides data that shed considerable light on this important aspect. The Census data provide information about the labour force status, or the absence from the labour force, of the couple parents and of the sole parents in low income families.

Respondents to the Census were required to state the incomes of all members of their households from among a number of income ranges. Included in the Census income columns were the weekly amounts of \$650.00 to \$799.00 per week, \$800.00 to \$999.00 per week and \$1,000.00 to \$1,249.00 per week. The Census question in respect of each person in the household was "What is the total of all income the person usually receives?", excluding tax payments.

The comparison between the Census data and the estimated poverty lines, therefore, needs to take into account the fact that the Census required income data by reference to income ranges and that the Census recorded pre-tax rather than disposable incomes.

The income ranges for those considered at risk of poverty are shown in table B1. Due to limitations in the Census data, these categories include both those that have an income strictly below the 60% poverty line and those that may have a greater income but are counted in the same income bracket. This is the meaning of our category "at risk of poverty". On the other hand, our method of aggregating families with three or more children results in underestimating the disposable incomes of those with strictly greater than three children (see tables B4 and B6).

The opposite limitation occurs in our data for the working patterns in low-income households summarised in tables B2, B3 and B5. The Fair Work Commission's measure of low income individuals at two thirds of median wage is twenty per cent higher than our estimate for the 60% poverty line. Here, all individuals counted in the relevant income bracket in B1 have an income strictly below the low-income threshold, and some low-income individuals will be in the higher tax bracket.

Slight statistical anomalies exist between the tables due to data access through Census TableBuilder, where data are "randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data". Tables B7 to B14 in particular include cells with small values, for which the ABS advice is that "No reliance should be placed on small cells".

Tables Summary

Table B1 shows the indicative poverty lines and maximum income ranges used to analyse Census data. Tables B2 and B5 provide the labour market status of parents in families at risk of poverty for couple and sole parent families respectively, by the number of dependent children. Table B4 and B6 estimate the number of children and individuals at risk of poverty for couple and sole parent families respectively. Table B3 provides the employment status of individual adults in low income couple parent families.

The basic data from the Census is in Tables B7 to B14. Tables B7 and B8 show the count of families according to the number of dependent children and total income for couple and sole parent families respectively. Tables B9 to B14 provide information about parental labour force status for couple and sole parent families with one, two, and three or more dependent children. Tables B15 to B20 summarise this data according to those at risk of being below the Henderson poverty line and those not at risk. Table B21 provides the labour force status of 15 to 19 year olds.

Table B1
Census Income Levels and Estimated Poverty Lines August 2021

Family	60% Relative Poverty Line	Maximum Income Range in Census
Couple and one child	1,098.00	\$1,000.00 – \$1,249.00
Couple and two children	1,281.00	\$1,250.00 – \$1,499.00
Couple and three or more children	1,464.00	\$1,250.00 – \$1,499.00
Sole parent and one child	793.00	\$650.00 – \$799.00
Sole parent and two children	976.00	\$800.00 – \$999.00
Sole parent and three or more children	1,159.00	\$1,000.00 – \$1,249.00

Table B1 sets out the estimated 60% of median poverty lines at the time of the Census for the six family groups covered, and the maximum income range in the Census returns that has been used in each calculation.

The poverty lines are based on the median equivalised disposable household income reported in the ABS publication Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2019-20. At December 2019, equivalised disposable household income for a single person was \$959.00 per week, with the 60% relative poverty line being \$575.40. Using the Commission's adjustment method, based on changes in Household Disposable Income published in the Poverty Lines, Australia newsletter from December 2019 to June 2021, this figure should be increased by 6.4% (see Poverty Lines Australia June Quarter 2023, Table 2). The estimated figure for June 2021 is \$612.03. For present purposes, the figure for August 2021 can be rounded to \$610.00 per week.

Applying the equivalence scales used by the ABS, the 60% of median relative poverty line can be calculated for various kinds of households. Children are assumed to be aged less than 15 years. Despite this, the following tables count dependent students aged 15 to 24 years as dependent children, and therefore underestimate the poverty line for each relevant family by \$122.0 per 15 to 24 year old student. The poverty lines for the families with three or more children are calculated on the basis of three children only. As discussed at Table B, the poverty lines for couples with strictly more than three children are underestimated by \$183.0 per dependent child aged below 15 and \$305.0 per dependent student aged 15 to 24 years.

Table B2
Census 2021 Working patterns of low income couple parent families

	One child		Two children		Three or more children		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Both not in labour force	18,621	22.9	18,381	14.3	17,228	21.7	54,230	18.7
One full time and other not in labour force	16,998	20.9	30,245	23.5	18,543	23.3	65,786	22.7
One part time and other not in labour force	14,274	17.5	18,305	14.2	12,317	15.5	44,896	15.5
One unemployed and other not in labour force	4,161	5.1	4,460	3.5	4,110	5.2	12,731	4.4
One away from work and other not in labour force	3,639	4.5	5,239	4.1	3,730	4.7	12,608	4.4
Both part time	5,530	6.8	10,543	8.2	4,238	5.3	20,311	7.0
One full time and other part time	4,918	6.0	18,433	14.3	8,389	10.6	31,740	11.0
One part time and other unemployed	2,949	3.6	3,754	2.9	1,715	2.2	8,418	2.9
One part time and other away from work	1,325	1.6	2,845	2.2	1,229	1.5	5,399	1.9
Both full time	1,786	2.2	4,694	3.6	2,167	2.7	8,647	3.0
One full time and other unemployed	2,826	3.5	4,626	3.6	1,895	2.4	9,347	3.2
One full time and other away from work	918	1.1	2,686	2.1	1,221	1.5	4,825	1.7
Both employed, away from work	779	1.0	1,685	1.3	734	0.9	3,198	1.1
One away from work and other unemployed	595	0.7	681	0.5	355	0.4	1,631	0.6
Both unemployed	1,458	1.8	1,537	1.2	983	1.2	3,978	1.4
Status of one or both not stated	568	0.7	747	0.6	560	0.7	1,875	0.6
Total	81,343	99.9	128,878	100.1	79,421	99.8	289,642	100.1

Derived from Labour Force Status of Parents/Partners in Families (LFSF), Count of Dependent Children in Family (CDCF) and Total Family Income weekly (FINF). Low income families are those with income less than or equal to maximum income range in B1. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table B3
Census 2021 Employment status of adults in low income couple parent families

	Households	Adults					
		Full time	Part time	NILF	AFW	UN	Not stated
Both not in labour force	54,230			108,460			
One full time and other not in labour force	65,786	65,786		65,786			
One part time and other not in labour force	44,896		44,896	44,896			
One unemployed and other not in labour force	12,731			12,731		12,731	
One away from work and other not in labour force	12,608			12,608	12,608		
Both part time	20,311		40,622				
One full time and other part time	31,740	31,740	31,740				
One part time and other unemployed	8,418		8,418			8,418	
One part time and other away from work	5,399		5,399		5,399		
Both full time	8,647	17,294					
One full time and other unemployed	9,347	9,347				9,347	
One full time and other away from work	4,825	4,825			4,825		
Both employed, away from work	3,198				6,396		
One away from work and other unemployed	1,631				1,631	1,631	
Both unemployed	3,978					7,956	
Status of one or both not stated	1,875	315	277	535	288	72	2,263
Total	289,642	129,307	131,352	245,016	31,147	40,155	2,263

NILF: not in labour force; AFW: away from work; UN: unemployed

Derived from Labour Force Status of Parents/Partners in Families (LFSF), Count of Dependent Children in Family (CDCF) and Total Family Income weekly (FINF). Low income families are those with income less than or equal to maximum income range in B1.

Tables B2 and B3 show that the great majority of these low income couple parent families were engaged in some kind of employment. In the following figures we record the average across all three categories, and in brackets the average for two-children families, which make up 45 per cent of these families.

Only in 18.7 per cent (14.3 per cent of two-child families) of these households were both parents out of the labour force. As for the rest of the households:

- 41.7 per cent (47.2 per cent) had at least one parent working full time;
- 69.0 per cent (74.8 per cent) had at least one parent working full or part time;
- 260,659 individuals in low-income families are working full time or part time, with an additional 31,147 individuals away from work and 40,155 unemployed.

The figures also demonstrate that amongst low income families (those at risk of being below the Henderson poverty line), the most common household structure was single-earner families: with one parent working full or part time, and the other either away from work, unemployed, or out of the labour force:

- 47.9 per cent (48.5 per cent) of low income families were single-earner families.
- 21.0 per cent (26.1 per cent) of low income families were dual-earner families
- 30.6 per cent (24.9 per cent) of low income families had neither parent currently working.

The figures demonstrate single-earner families are by far the major category in the labour force profile of low income couple parent families, despite the inevitable economic pressure on the parents for both of them to be in employment. However, even with the extra income from the second parent working many families still find themselves living in or at the risk of poverty.

Table B4
Census 2021 Total number of children and adults in
low income couple parent families in or near poverty

	No. of families	Number of children	Individuals at risk of poverty
Couple and one child	81,343	81,343	244,029
Couple and two children	128,878	257,756	515,512
Couple and three children	53,444	160,332	267,220
Couple and four children	24,159	96,636	144,954
Couple and five children	7,871	39,355	55,097
Couple and six or more children	4,901	29,406	39,208
Total	90,375	664,828	1,266,020

Derived from Count of Dependent Children in Family (CDCF) and Total Family Income weekly (FINF). Low income brackets are calculated according to the method in B1.

These figures demonstrate that on top of the figure of 79,421 families with three or more children at risk of poverty provided in Table B2, need to be added at 10,954 families with four or more children.

Using this measure, the total number of dependent children in couple parent families can be deduced from Table B7, as 4,594,881, assuming that the maximum number of children per family is six.

Excluding, nil, negative, partially or unstated incomes, 15.8 per cent of children are at risk of poverty.

Table B5
Working patterns of low income sole parent families

	One child		Two children		Three or more children		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Employed, full time	6,074	5.9	8,674	9.5	5,588	9.4	20,336	8.0
Employed, part time	29,108	28.1	30,479	33.4	15,373	25.8	74,960	29.5
Employed, away from work	5,447	5.3	4,991	5.5	2,833	4.8	13,271	5.2
Unemployed	10,354	10.0	7,335	8.0	4,088	6.9	21,777	8.6
Not in labour force	52,151	50.3	39,465	43.3	31,474	52.9	123,090	48.4
Labour force status not stated	448	0.4	276	0.3	176	0.3	900	0.4
Total	103,587	100.0	91,225	100.0	59,544	100.1	254,356	100.1

Derived from Labour Force Status of Parents/Partners in Families (LFSF), Count of Dependent Children in Family (CDCF) and Total Family Income weekly (FINF). Low income families are those with income less than or equal to maximum income range in B1. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table B6
Census 2021 Total number of children and adults in
low income couple parent families in or near poverty

	No. of families	Number of children	Individuals at risk of poverty
Parent and one child	103,587	103,587	207,174
Parent and two children	91,225	182,450	273,675
Parent and three children	42,172	126,516	168,688
Parent and four children	14,065	56,260	70,325
Parent and five children	4,304	21,520	25,824
Parent and six or more children	1575	9,450	11,025
Total	256,928	499,783	756,711

Derived from Count of Dependent Children in Family (CDCF) and Total Family Income weekly (FINF). Low income brackets are calculated according to the method in B1.

The number of children in families with six or more children are calculated on the basis that there are only six children in the family.

From Table B8, we can see that the above 256,928 families comprise 44.1 per cent of all sole parent families with dependent children, and that these 499,783 comprise 50.9 per cent of all children in these families, where families with nil, negative, partially and non-stated income are excluded. That is, of families who reported a positive income to the census, a majority of children in sole parent families were at risk of poverty.

These figures are very troubling. While they raise important issues beyond the scope of the Commission's responsibilities, they provide important information about the workers and their families which should be of very great concern to the Commission when it sets safety net wage rates for low paid work classifications.

For these low paid sole parent families who rely on full time or part time work, the minimum wage decisions of the Commission are vitally important; and increasingly more important because of the cuts to, and freezing of, various family payments. The Commission should, we submit, accept that their poverty will not be alleviated unless it decides to substantially increase the wage rates for low paid workers.

Table B7**Count of Couple Parent Families by Number of Dependent Children and Total Family Income (weekly), 2021**

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
No dependent children	2,509	481	1,091	965	1,480	2,340	6,041	9,299	20,825	26,023	25,152	24,852	58,264	269,574	70,563	519,457
One dependent child	3,984	1,201	1,857	1,570	4,655	6,372	13,210	20,068	32,412	48,009	46,497	51,103	126,152	449,545	70,161	876,798
Two dependent children	3,677	1,010	1,579	1,350	4,012	5,957	12,615	18,574	32,506	51,279	52,875	60,539	151,144	601,111	73,583	1,071,816
Three dependent children	1,567	413	659	586	1,906	2,600	5,717	8,145	12,931	20,483	19,814	21,856	49,773	188,247	29,727	364,408
Four dependent children	628	144	205	208	795	1,077	2,157	2,992	4,433	6,413	5,743	5,898	11,630	34,314	8,582	85,212
Five dependent children	222	38	67	72	228	313	597	836	1,239	1,628	1,429	1,423	2,530	5,499	2,252	18,379
Six or more dependent children	130	15	40	45	103	191	309	408	617	799	638	615	1,115	2,030	1,020	8,076
Total	12,717	3,302	5,498	4,796	13,179	18,850	40,646	60,322	104,963	154,634	152,148	166,286	400,608	1,550,320	255,888	2,944,146

Table B8
Count of Sole Parent Families by Number of Dependent Children and Total Family Income (weekly), 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
No dependent children	4,409	1,470	2,620	2,713	7,677	9,280	18,913	41,846	44,116	43,802	30,911	27,469	47,984	71,120	39,877	394,202
One dependent child	9,200	2,828	7,130	12,235	19,413	32,221	29,755	31,660	36,234	30,887	24,604	19,782	31,412	31,507	22,747	341,623
Two dependent children	5,058	1,460	3,516	6,371	11,218	21,552	23,879	23,228	25,283	20,430	16,370	13,097	21,276	19,323	17,128	229,178
Three dependent children	1,745	432	1,065	2,135	3,984	7,294	9,589	9,282	8,386	6,350	4,569	3,382	5,267	5,045	6,777	75,300
Four dependent children	548	135	306	524	1,124	2,037	2,740	3,278	2,368	1,549	1,105	795	1,024	945	1,618	20,097
Five dependent children	175	32	75	171	285	591	702	955	800	429	264	173	253	229	509	5,633
Six or more dependent children	74	11	31	49	104	152	254	296	342	203	132	94	140	131	230	2,227
Total	21,209	6,368	14,743	24,198	43,805	73,127	85,832	110,545	117,529	103,650	77,955	64,792	107,356	128,300	88,886	1,068,260

Table B9

Labour Force Status of Parents in Couple Parent Families with One Dependent Child in Family, 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
Both employed, worked full- time	174	50	27	23	74	98	249	412	856	2,236	3,055	6,312	26,351	170,585	9,451	219,951
One employed full-time, other part-time	112	47	45	38	84	168	450	1,057	3,038	10,351	13,239	16,300	40,132	138,903	7,866	231,834
One employed full-time, other away from work	40	4	11	0	17	42	73	217	555	1,737	2,226	2,903	8,843	40,147	1,698	58,532
One employed full-time, other unemployed	26	7	13	20	38	84	284	750	1,637	2,004	1,991	1,874	4,015	6,498	551	19,776
One employed full-time, other not in the labour force	171	71	78	91	216	561	1,669	4,595	9,730	12,264	11,507	10,586	22,253	42,016	3,499	119,281
One employed full-time, other labour force status not stated	0	0	4	0	5	5	8	34	35	57	44	62	110	310	13,078	13,745
Both employed, worked part- time	58	48	47	39	164	245	685	1,398	2,905	5,004	3,814	3,957	7,804	16,942	1,539	44,639
One employed part-time, other	15	6	11	12	41	66	158	306	719	1,383	1,359	1,466	3,339	8,704	834	18,440

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
away from work																
One employed part-time, other unemployed	21	28	67	78	173	325	583	758	928	931	620	452	832	1,350	226	7,379
One employed part-time, other not in the labour force	130	103	271	290	739	1,461	2,658	3,856	4,889	4,848	3,361	2,618	4,404	7,503	1,530	38,666
One employed part-time, other labour force status not stated	0	4	0	4	6	3	13	17	32	40	28	16	51	74	10,143	10,444
Both employed, away from work	47	10	22	6	24	38	103	200	371	768	754	820	2,084	6,663	1,531	13,443
One away from work, other unemployed	13	6	15	11	26	66	112	147	209	211	160	156	235	464	131	1,947
One away from work, other not in the labour force	116	39	68	70	160	305	612	953	1,426	1,558	1,257	1,013	1,836	3,037	1,136	13,590
One away from work, other labour force status not stated	5	0	0	3	3	7	9	12	30	43	39	41	59	140	3,792	4,193
Both unemployed	189	46	88	55	276	196	307	282	209	219	130	93	158	228	94	2,564

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
One unemployed, other not in the labour force	478	149	258	169	540	582	901	794	765	651	399	307	467	720	250	7,446
One unemployed, other labour force status not stated	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	9	12	0	4	4	12	7	977	1,034
Both not in the labour force	2,333	572	808	653	2,040	2,074	4,291	4,196	3,980	3,628	2,456	2,070	3,081	5,086	2,459	39,737
One not in the labour force, other labour force status not stated	16	4	0	9	19	22	30	46	52	40	30	28	33	55	6,711	7,092
Both labour force status not stated	25	0	0	0	12	19	17	31	35	35	25	25	55	97	2,669	3,063
Total	3,969	1,194	1,833	1,571	4,660	6,371	13,216	20,070	32,413	48,008	46,498	51,103	126,154	449,529	70,165	876,796

Table B10

Labour Force Status of Parents in Couple Parent Families with Two Dependent Children in Family, 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
Both employed, worked full- time	231	55	40	25	104	101	282	482	1,048	2,551	3,319	6,858	29,516	228,633	8,850	282,103
One employed full-time, other part-time	191	58	66	43	154	267	680	1,356	3,751	12,061	16,590	21,805	56,590	225,651	7,935	347,196
One employed full-time, other away from work	35	13	12	12	17	31	81	222	588	1,704	2,394	3,164	8,777	36,631	1,727	55,406
One employed full-time, other unemployed	28	6	12	17	32	69	221	700	1,456	2,113	2,125	2,114	4,663	8,202	496	22,242
One employed full-time, other not in the labour force	203	64	84	77	209	569	1,691	4,236	9,614	13,701	13,856	13,001	26,840	49,979	3,183	137,312
One employed full-time, other labour force status not stated	4	0	0	0	0	12	13	20	35	57	51	56	132	402	14,319	15,096
Both employed, worked part- time	51	39	55	23	140	227	672	1,389	2,791	5,212	4,196	4,564	9,052	21,355	1,290	51,050
One employed part-time, other	30	9	23	12	28	73	177	318	758	1,460	1,399	1,613	3,652	9,108	936	19,584

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
away from work																
One employed part-time, other unemployed	32	27	50	76	126	311	554	698	943	974	635	458	807	1,449	204	7,323
One employed part-time, other not in the labour force	116	116	254	297	644	1,404	2,499	3,448	4,782	4,858	3,446	2,711	4,157	6,541	1,076	36,367
One employed part-time, other labour force status not stated	4	3	0	0	6	15	11	20	27	31	37	23	60	134	13,897	14,263
Both employed, away from work	86	10	11	8	35	34	107	216	453	799	730	876	1,912	5,687	1,571	12,535
One away from work, other unemployed	14	0	15	11	24	44	84	127	170	199	171	144	216	367	117	1,699
One away from work, other not in the labour force	114	38	85	63	160	310	653	884	1,442	1,601	1,312	1,114	1,894	2,734	1,045	13,449
One away from work, other labour force status not stated	11	0	0	4	4	8	17	17	28	41	33	41	70	149	3,898	4,308
Both unemployed	192	36	66	52	206	189	286	236	266	194	134	97	134	202	84	2,360

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
One unemployed, other not in the labour force	364	99	183	137	455	542	941	741	761	601	394	285	409	561	190	6,663
One unemployed, other labour force status not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	5	5	0	0	6	3	1,020	1,065
Both not in the labour force	1,959	405	618	484	1,647	1,716	3,586	3,409	3,499	3,016	1,992	1,571	2,194	3,246	1,508	30,843
One not in the labour force, other labour force status not stated	24	6	3	4	10	11	26	24	39	58	23	26	26	28	7,781	8,095
Both labour force status not stated	23	5	3	0	17	10	29	27	31	40	23	28	40	100	2,496	2,857
Total	3,712	989	1,580	1,345	4,018	5,943	12,616	18,570	32,487	51,276	52,860	60,549	151,147	601,162	73,623	1,071,816

Table B11

Labour Force Status of Parents in Couple Parent Families with Three or more Dependent Children in Family, 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
Both employed, worked full- time	116	28	22	12	54	55	106	264	486	1,146	1,301	2,485	9,433	72,991	5,460	93,957
One employed full-time, other part-time	81	37	36	22	68	148	341	707	1,794	5,239	6,775	9,035	22,606	91,240	5,323	143,451
One employed full-time, other away from work	15	9	4	3	8	19	62	110	262	746	978	1,354	3,328	13,696	1,017	21,612
One employed full-time, other unemployed	12	6	5	5	14	38	112	289	542	890	861	807	1,657	2,814	342	8,404
One employed full-time, other not in the labour force	125	38	55	77	149	370	1,063	2,686	5,270	8,837	9,065	8,586	15,630	26,798	2,600	81,360
One employed full-time, other labour force status not stated	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	19	20	42	19	29	38	138	5,236	5,549
Both employed, worked part- time	26	12	19	19	52	117	276	587	1,152	2,011	1,719	1,789	3,494	8,176	855	20,299
One employed part-time, other	7	5	5	9	28	32	79	140	316	615	644	662	1,496	3,605	519	8,155

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
away from work																
One employed part-time, other unemployed	14	13	24	26	62	136	247	318	424	465	315	263	337	567	141	3,351
One employed part-time, other not in the labour force	80	65	159	225	416	823	1,706	2,253	3,075	3,595	2,269	1,789	2,473	3,395	931	23,250
One employed part-time, other labour force status not stated	4	0	0	0	10	8	13	15	15	21	22	15	8	63	6,146	6,335
Both employed, away from work	29	3	5	3	14	20	36	75	185	392	352	372	918	2,161	838	5,398
One away from work, other unemployed	7	6	6	6	19	32	43	78	80	89	77	66	132	160	72	875
One away from work, other not in the labour force	81	23	49	56	117	205	408	590	972	1,313	980	855	1,291	1,542	862	9,347
One away from work, other labour force status not stated	13	0	0	0	5	6	14	14	24	29	22	17	28	68	1,811	2,043
Both unemployed	93	10	41	13	115	117	192	162	160	164	82	55	93	80	81	1,472

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
One unemployed, other not in the labour force	284	62	130	91	409	394	786	816	783	633	302	262	317	381	247	5,917
One unemployed, other labour force status not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	6	4	0	0	0	548	584
Both not in the labour force	1,536	282	405	344	1,463	1,638	3,237	3,207	3,599	3,046	1,805	1,335	1,732	2,087	1,583	27,287
One not in the labour force, other labour force status not stated	11	8	3	4	12	21	18	26	42	38	15	14	20	28	5,434	5,707
Both labour force status not stated	3	4	4	0	9	5	22	21	19	13	16	17	17	52	1,519	1,720
Total	2,537	611	972	915	3,024	4,188	8,773	12,377	19,224	29,330	27,623	29,807	65,048	230,042	41,565	476,073

Table B12

Labour Force Status of Parents in Sole Parent Families with One Dependent Child in Family, 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
Employed, worked full- time	199	93	132	238	468	1,387	3,752	8,932	15,026	15,007	14,245	12,327	21,612	22,094	8,127	123,644
Employed, worked part- time	234	442	1,132	2,173	3,833	9,069	12,460	12,975	11,839	8,642	5,889	4,137	5,317	4,836	4,289	87,265
Employed, away from work	171	96	267	462	751	1,703	2,162	1,964	1,921	1,595	1,207	964	1,397	1,298	1,785	17,757
Unemployed	1,035	377	1,120	1,885	2,267	3,148	1,559	1,155	1,012	742	465	320	437	525	778	16,837
Not in the labour force	7,459	1,805	4,414	7,403	11,992	16,811	9,739	6,542	6,352	4,846	2,756	2,003	2,617	2,701	5,195	92,614
Labour force status not stated	102	20	53	72	99	114	83	88	75	55	44	30	35	48	2,580	3,506
Total	9,200	2,833	7,118	12,233	19,410	32,232	29,755	31,656	36,225	30,887	24,606	19,781	31,415	31,502	22,754	341,623

Table B13

Labour Force Status of Parents in Sole Parent Families with Two Dependent Children in Family, 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
Employed, worked full- time	140	59	92	153	257	750	2,105	5,259	9,412	9,589	9,351	8,509	15,288	13,860	7,098	81,920
Employed, worked part- time	138	231	709	1,278	2,299	6,125	9,462	10,370	9,967	6,545	4,335	2,772	3,459	2,942	3,620	64,257
Employed, away from work	123	64	144	261	504	1,174	1,482	1,372	1,228	981	702	483	823	597	1,177	11,108
Unemployed	593	181	482	889	1,209	2,173	1,561	845	651	427	262	183	246	295	604	10,601
Not in the labour force	4,017	916	2,069	3,752	6,910	11,268	9,226	5,326	3,996	2,850	1,701	1,144	1,426	1,580	3,203	59,379
Labour force status not stated	45	7	29	41	50	57	39	51	30	36	20	15	22	39	1,425	1,915
Total	5,056	1,458	3,525	6,374	11,229	21,547	23,875	23,223	25,284	20,428	16,371	13,106	21,264	19,313	17,127	229,180

Table B14

Labour Force Status of Parents in Sole Parent Families with Three or more Dependent Children in Family, 2021

	Negative and nil income	\$1- \$149	\$150- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$649	\$650- \$799	\$800- \$999	\$1,000- \$1,249	\$1,250- \$1,499	\$1,500- \$1,749	\$1,750- \$1,999	\$2,000- \$2,499	\$2,500 or more	Partial and not stated	Total
Employed, worked full- time	38	13	23	33	94	283	718	1,589	2,835	2,766	2,630	2,259	3,817	3,807	2,794	23,697
Employed, worked part- time	70	109	258	439	787	2,019	3,398	4,143	4,220	2,799	1,697	1,027	1,320	1,123	1,813	25,224
Employed, away from work	57	23	61	94	192	440	697	707	623	392	261	181	286	233	564	4,811
Unemployed	232	55	198	318	458	871	1,010	728	440	251	148	105	158	152	406	5,546
Not in the labour force	2,115	412	921	1,959	3,942	6,438	7,419	6,624	3,757	2,301	1,310	862	1,089	1,017	2,653	42,833
Labour force status not stated	24	4	9	21	25	24	42	24	23	18	13	7	6	15	894	1,151
Total	2,536	616	1,470	2,864	5,498	10,075	13,284	13,815	11,898	8,527	6,059	4,441	6,676	6,347	9,124	103,262

Table B15
Working patterns of couple parent families with one child, August 2021

	Total income less than \$1,250 per week		Total income \$1,250 or more		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Both employed, worked full-time	1,789	2.2	208,539	28.9	210,328	26.2
One employed full-time, other part-time	4,927	6.1	218,925	30.4	223,852	27.9
One employed full-time, other away from work	919	1.1	55,856	7.7	56,775	7.1
One employed full-time, other unemployed	2,833	3.5	16,382	2.3	19,215	2.4
One employed full-time, other not in the labour force	17,011	20.9	98,626	13.7	115,637	14.4
Both employed, worked part-time	5,531	6.8	37,521	5.2	43,052	5.4
One employed part-time, other away from work	1,319	1.6	16,251	2.3	17,570	2.2
One employed part-time, other unemployed	2,940	3.6	4,185	0.6	7,125	0.9
One employed part-time, other not in the labour force	14,267	17.5	22,734	3.2	37,001	4.6
Both employed, away from work	774	1.0	11,089	1.5	11,863	1.5
One away from work, other unemployed	592	0.7	1,226	0.2	1,818	0.2
One away from work, other not in the labour force	3,633	4.5	8,701	1.2	12,334	1.5
Both unemployed	1,459	1.8	828	0.1	2,287	0.3
One unemployed, other not in the labour force	4,158	5.1	2,544	0.4	6,702	0.8
Both not in the labour force	18,614	22.9	16,321	2.3	34,935	4.4
One or both labour force status not stated	562	0.7	1,564	0.2	2,126	0.3
Total	81,328	100.0	721,292	100.2	802,620	100.1

Excludes negative income, nil income, and income partially or not stated.

Table B16
Working patterns of couple parent families with two children, August 2021

	Total income less than \$1,500 per week		Total income \$1,500 or more		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Both employed, worked full-time	4,688	3.6	268,326	31.0	273,014	27.5
One employed full-time, other part-time	18,436	14.3	320,636	37.0	339,072	34.1
One employed full-time, other away from work	2,680	2.1	50,966	5.9	53,646	5.4
One employed full-time, other unemployed	4,626	3.6	17,104	2.0	21,730	2.2
One employed full-time, other not in the labour force	30,245	23.5	103,676	12.0	133,921	13.5
Both employed, worked part-time	10,548	8.2	39,167	4.5	49,715	5.0
One employed part-time, other away from work	2,858	2.2	15,772	1.8	18,630	1.9
One employed part-time, other unemployed	3,759	2.9	3,349	0.4	7,108	0.7
One employed part-time, other not in the labour force	18,302	14.2	16,855	1.9	35,157	3.5
Both employed, away from work	1,673	1.3	9,205	1.1	10,878	1.1
One away from work, other unemployed	674	0.5	898	0.1	1,572	0.2
One away from work, other not in the labour force	5,236	4.1	7,054	0.8	12,290	1.2
Both unemployed	1,531	1.2	567	0.1	2,098	0.2
One unemployed, other not in the labour force	4,460	3.5	1,649	0.2	6,109	0.6
Both not in the labour force	18,380	14.3	9,003	1.0	27,383	2.8
One or both labour force status not stated	728	0.6	1,491	0.2	2,219	0.2
Total	128,824	100.1	865,718	100.0	994,542	100.1

Excludes negative income, nil income, and income partially or not stated.

Table B17
Working patterns of couple parent families with three or more children, August 2021

	Total income less than \$1,500 per week		Total income \$1,500 or more		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Both employed, worked full-time	2,173	2.7	86,210	24.5	88,383	20.5
One employed full-time, other part-time	8,392	10.6	129,656	36.8	138,048	32.0
One employed full-time, other away from work	1,223	1.5	19,356	5.5	20,579	4.8
One employed full-time, other unemployed	1,901	2.4	6,139	1.7	8,040	1.9
One employed full-time, other not in the labour force	18,545	23.4	60,079	17.0	78,624	18.2
Both employed, worked part-time	4,245	5.3	15,178	4.3	19,423	4.5
One employed part-time, other away from work	1,229	1.5	6,407	1.8	7,636	1.8
One employed part-time, other unemployed	1,715	2.2	1,482	0.4	3,197	0.7
One employed part-time, other not in the labour force	12,317	15.5	9,926	2.8	22,243	5.1
Both employed, away from work	733	0.9	3,803	1.1	4,536	1.1
One away from work, other unemployed	359	0.5	435	0.1	794	0.2
One away from work, other not in the labour force	3,733	4.7	4,668	1.3	8,401	1.9
Both unemployed	974	1.2	310	0.1	1,284	0.3
One unemployed, other not in the labour force	4,104	5.2	1,262	0.4	5,366	1.2
Both not in the labour force	17,221	21.7	6,959	2.0	24,180	5.6
One or both labour force status not stated	550	0.7	650	0.2	1,200	0.3
Total	2,173	3.0	86,210	24.5	88,383	20.5

Excludes negative income, nil income, and income partially or not stated.

Table B18
Working patterns of sole parent families with one child, August 2021

	Total income less than \$800 per week		Total income \$800 or more		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Employed, worked full-time	6,070	5.9	109,243	53.0	115,313	37.2
Employed, worked part-time	29,109	28.1	53,635	26.0	82,744	26.7
Employed, away from work	5,441	5.3	10,346	5.0	15,787	5.1
Unemployed	10,356	10.0	4,656	2.3	15,012	4.8
Not in the labour force	52,164	50.4	27,817	13.5	79,981	25.8
Labour force status not stated	441	0.4	375	0.2	816	0.3
Total	103,581	100.1	206,072	100.0	309,653	99.9

Table B19
Working patterns of sole parent families with two children, August 2021

	Total income less than \$1,000 per week		Total income \$1,000 or more		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Employed, worked full-time	8,675	9.5	66,009	57.0	74,684	36.1
Employed, worked part-time	30,474	33.4	30,020	25.9	60,494	29.2
Employed, away from work	5,001	5.5	4,814	4.2	9,815	4.7
Unemployed	7,340	8.0	2,064	1.8	9,404	4.5
Not in the labour force	39,467	43.3	12,697	11.0	52,164	25.2
Labour force status not stated	274	0.3	162	0.1	436	0.2
Total	91,231	100.0	115,766	100.0	206,997	99.9

Excludes negative income, nil income, and income partially or not stated.

Table B20
Working patterns of sole parent families with three or more children, August 2021

	Total income less than \$1,250 per week		Total income \$1,250 or more		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Employed, worked full-time	5,588	9.4	15,279	47.7	20,867	22.8
Employed, worked part-time	15,373	25.8	7,966	24.9	23,339	25.5
Employed, away from work	2,837	4.8	1,353	4.2	4,190	4.6
Unemployed	4,078	6.9	814	2.5	4,892	5.3
Not in the labour force	31,472	52.9	6,579	20.5	38,051	41.6
Labour force status not stated	172	0.3	59	0.2	231	0.3
Total	59,520	100.1	32,050	100.0	91,570	100.1

Excludes negative income, nil income, and income partially or not stated.

Table B21
2021 Census Labour Force Status of 15-19 year olds

	Employed			Unemployed		Not in the labour force	Not stated	Total
	Full time	Part time	Away from work	Looking for full time work	Looking for part time work			
Preschool and all primary school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary - Government	665	131,032	20,959	1,228	31,912	290,660	432	476,892
Secondary - Catholic	191	65,220	11,264	223	11,780	100,563	75	189,301
Secondary - other non-Government	198	40,522	8,611	161	9,185	109,337	73	168,088
Secondary - not further defined	3	129	40	4	43	666	17	902
Tertiary - Vocational education (including TAFE and private training providers)	31,851	21,683	6,590	1,584	4,484	20,064	262	86,512
Tertiary - University or other higher education	5,293	94,589	19,815	780	14,961	55,201	91	190,727
Tertiary - not further defined	55	112	35	0	29	199	18	446
Other	1,629	3,291	607	269	926	8,783	72	15,575
Not stated	478	1,608	703	137	331	9,043	66,008	78,293
Not applicable	70,611	71,033	16,311	19,600	10,067	60,640	2,817	251,066
Total	110,967	429,233	84,918	23,972	83,711	655,150	69,856	1,457,812

Obtained from Type of Educational Institution Attending (TYPP), Labour Force Status (LFSP), and Age in Five Year Groups (AGE5P)

