

## New Retail Award for Australia

The Federal Government has ordered that Australian awards are to be made simpler and easier to apply in the workplace. It is hoped that new modern awards will reduce the regulatory burden on businesses and provide more flexibility for Australian employers and employees.

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) has been proactive in the last few weeks in paving the way for a new award system. The AIRC provided employers with a new flexibility clause that is to be included in all new awards. This clause will enable employers and employees to agree that certain provisions in the award will not apply to them. However, employees must not be disadvantaged if certain clauses are altered to suit their needs.

There are retail awards in each of the States and they all contain different penalties and rates of pay. As part of the modernisation process the AIRC has prioritised the retail industry as one that requires a new award to cover all retail employees under the Federal industrial relations system. Employers and unions have been invited by the AIRC to submit sample awards. MGA has submitted a draft model award for the AIRC to consider. It intended that a new award will be in place in 2009. MGA will advise members when the new award becomes operational.



## Employee Wages Increase

The Australian Fair Pay Commission (AFPC) has increased pay scales in Federal awards by \$21.66 per week. These increases affect employers who are Pty. Ltd. Companies.

The Federal minimum wage has also been increased from \$13.74 to \$14.31 per hour. The decision will take effect from 1 October 2008. The increases will flow on to junior employees, employees who are under training arrangements, employees with a disability and casual employees.

Wage rates in some Collective agreements will be increased, if the agreement provides for the AFPC increase. Many pre- WorkChoices agreements do not provide for the AFPC increase. If you have any doubts about whether the increases apply to your employees contact the MGA Workplace Relations team for advice.

There are also wage rates increases for Western Australian and New South Wales employers who employ employees under State awards and who are not Pty. Ltd Companies. These rates are as follows:

- In Western Australia, the W.A. Industrial Relations Commission has increased State award wages by \$29 per week as from 1 July 2008.
- In NSW the NSW Industrial Relations Commission has increased State award wages by 4% per week. The date from which this increase will commence has not yet been finalised but, it is anticipated that it will be backdated to 1 July 2008

Members are advised that new wage tables will be posted on the MGA website in the next few weeks.

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