**The Minimum Wage and Fitter (Trade) Rate Since 1906**

**Source: Basic Wage Table, Metal Industry Increases Table**

| **Year** | **Basic Wage/ Minimum Wage per week (s)(d) and ($)[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Real Basic Wage/ Minimum Wage**  **$2020[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Fitter Rate (Trades) per week (s)(d) and ($)** | **Fitter Rate Margin/ difference from basic wage (Real) $2020** | **Fitter Rate total per week (Real) $2020** | **Fitter rate total (Real) as % of basic wage (Real) & vice versa** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1906 | £8-£34 month |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1907 | 42s. | 323.06 | 60s total (60s-42s = 18s)  (2 CAR 1 at 19) | 138.46 | 461.52 | 142.86 / 70% |
| 1908 | 42s. | 304.06 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1913 | 42s. | 262.83 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1914 | 53s. | 320.79 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1915 | 53s | 279.55 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1916 | 53s | 275.61 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1917 | 53s | 260.91 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1918 | 53s | 244.60 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1919 | 69s | 279.95 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1920 | 69s | 247.34 | No fitter rate |  |  |  |
| 1921 | 84s | 344.60 | 120s total (15 CAR at 332) | 147.68 | 492.28 | 142.86 / 70% |
| 1922 | Feb: 79s | 343.75 (Nov) | £5.1.0 p/w (16 CAR 281 at 282) (22s margin) | 93.36 | 437.11 | 127.16 / 79% |
| May:[[3]](#footnote-3) 77 s 6d |  |
| Aug: 80s |  |
| Nov: 81s |  |
| 1923 | Feb: 80s 6d | 362.99 (Nov) | 22s margin | 91.27 | 454.26 | 125.14 / 80% |
| May: 80s 6d |  |
| Aug: 85s |  |
| Nov: 87s 6d |  |
| 1924 | Feb: 85s | 348.23 (Nov) | 24s margin (20 CAR at 983) | 100.70 | 448.93 | 128.92 / 78% |
| May: 84s 6d |  |
| Aug: 84s |  |
| Nov: 83s |  |
| 1925 | Feb: 83s 6 d | 360.82 (Nov) | 24s margin | 100.70 | 461.52 | 127.91 / 78% |
| May: 84s 6d |  |
| Aug: 85s 6d |  |
| Nov: 86s |  |
| 1926 | Feb: 86s 6 d | 363.06 (Nov) | 24s margin | 98.46 | 461.52 | 127.12 / 79% |
| May: 88s |  |
| Aug: 90s 6d |  |
| Nov: 88s 6d |  |
| 1927 | Feb: 88s | 365.06 (Nov) | 24s margin (25 CAR 389 at 190) | 99.57 | 464.63 | 127.27 / 79% |
| May: 87s 6d |  |
| Aug: 86s 6d |  |
| Nov: 88s |  |
| 1928 | Feb: 89s | 360.92 (Nov) | 24s margin | 99.56 | 460.48 | 127.59 / 78% |
| May: 88s |  |
| Aug: 88s |  |
| Nov: 87s |  |
| 1929 | Feb: 87s | 367.18 (Nov) | 24s margin | 97.38 | 464.56 | 126.52 / 79% |
| May: 90s 6d |  |
| Aug: 90s 6d |  |
| Nov: 90s 6d |  |
| 1930 | Feb: 90s 6d | 352.24 (Nov) | 24s margin (28 CAR 1024 at 1026) | 101.85 | 454.09 | 128.91 / 78% |
| May: 87s |  |
| Aug: 86s |  |
| Nov: 83s |  |
| 1931 | Feb: 71s 1d | 308.86 (Nov) | 24s margin  All wage rates reduced 10% (restored in 1934) | 71.35 | 380.21 (422.46-10%) | 123.10 / 81% |
| May: 69s 4d |  |
| Aug: 67s 6d |  |
| Nov: 65s 3d |  |
| 1932 | Feb: 64s 4d | 314.33 (Nov) | 24s margin  -10% of total wage | 76.33 | 390.66 (434.07-10%) | 124.28 / 80% |
| May: 64s 4d |  |
| Aug: 63s 11d |  |
| Nov: 63s |  |
| 1933 | Feb: 61s 8d | 329.34 (Nov) | 24s margin  -10% of total wage | 79.40 | 408.74 (454.15-10%) | 124.11 / 81% |
| May: 64s 2d |  |
| Aug: 63s 4d |  |
| Nov: 63s 4d |  |
| 1934 | Feb: 63s 9d | 333.81 (Dec) | 24s margin  10% cut of wages restored (33 CAR at 175) | 121.38 | 455.19 | 136.36 / 73% |
| May: 65s |  |
| Jun: 66s |  |
| Sep: 66s |  |
| Dec: 66s |  |
| 1935 | Mar: 66s | 339.28 (Dec) | 27s margin (34 CAR 462 at 465) | 134.71 | 473.99 | 139.70 / 72% |
| Jun: 66s |  |
| Sep: 66s |  |
| Dec: 68s |  |
| 1936 | Mar: 68s | 334.75 (Dec) | 27s margin | 132.92 | 467.67 | 139.71 / 72% |
| Jun: 68s |  |
| Sep: 68s |  |
| Dec: 68s |  |
| 1937 | Mar: 70s | 359.75 (Dec) | 30s margin (37 CAR at 186; confirmed in 38 CAR at 343) | 142.00 | 501.75 | 139.47 / 72% |
| Jun: 70s |  |
| Jul: 73s |  |
| Sep: 73s |  |
| Oct: 75s |  |
| Dec: 76s |  |
| 1938 | Mar: 77s | 359.98 (Dec) | 30s margin | 138.46 | 498.44 | 138.46 / 72% |
| Jun: 77s |  |  |
| Sep: 77s |  |  |
| Dec: 78s |  |  |
| 1939 | Mar: 78s | 355.70 (Dec) | 30s margin | 135.08 | 490.78 | 137.98 / 72% |
| Jun: 79s |  |  |
| Sep: 79s |  |  |
| Dec: 79s |  |  |
| 1940 | Feb: 80s | 360.53 (Nov) | 30s margin | 130.31 | 490.84 | 136.14 / 73% |
| May: 80s |  |  |
| Aug: 82s |  |  |
| Nov: 83s |  |  |
| 1941 | Feb: 85s | 360.92 (Nov) | 30s margin + additional 6s loading (44 CAR at 573) | 149.34 | 510.26 | 141.38 / 71% |
| May: 86s |  |
| Aug: 86s |  |
| Nov: 87s |  |
| 1942 | Feb: 88s | 361.60 (Nov) | 30s margin + 6s loading | 137.03 | 498.63 | 137.90 / 73% |
| May: 90s |  |
| Aug: 93s |  |
| Nov: 95s |  |
| 1943 | Feb: 96s | 354.59 (Nov) | 30s margin + 6s loading | 131.60 | 486.19 | 137.11 / 73% |
| May: 96s |  |
| Aug: 98s |  |
| Nov: 97s |  |
| 1944 | Feb: 96s | 354.44 (Nov) | 30s margin + 6s loading | 132.92 | 487.36 | 137.50 / 73% |
| May: 96s |  |
| Aug: 96s |  |
| Nov: 96s |  |
| 1945 | Feb: 96s | 354.44 (Nov) | 30s margin + 6s loading | 132.92 | 487.36 | 137.50 / 73% |
| May: 96s |  |
| Aug: 96s |  |
| Nov: 96s |  |
| 1946 | Feb: 96s | 380.07 (Dec) | 30s margin + 6s loading | 130.31 | 510.38 | 134.29 / 74% |
| May: 97s |  |
| Aug: 98s |  |
| Nov: 98s |  |
| Dec: 105s |  |
| 1947 | Feb: 106s | 379.66 (Nov) | 46s margin + 6s loading (58 CAR at 553, 1096; also 59 CAR at 1278) | 181.12 | 560.78 | 147.71 / 68% |
| May: 106s |  |
| Aug: 107s |  |
| Nov: 109s |  |
| 1948 | Feb: 111s | 375.52 (Nov) | 46s margin + 6s loading | 164.10 | 539.62 | 143.70 / 70% |
| May: 114s |  |
| Aug: 116s |  |
| Nov: 119s |  |
| 1949 | Feb: 122s | 372.10 (Nov) | 46s margin + 6s loading | 149.99 | 522.09 | 140.31 / 71% |
| May: 124s |  |
| Aug: 127s |  |
| Nov: 129s |  |
| 1950 | Feb: 133s | 429.90 (Dec) | 46s margin + 6s loading | 137.99 | 567.89 | 132.10 / 76% |
| May: 135s |  |
| Aug: 138s |  |
| Nov: 142s |  |
| Dec: 162s |  |
| 1951 | Feb: 169s | 444.40 (Nov) | 46s margin + 6s loading | 115.55 | 559.95 | 126.00 / 79% |
| May: 176s |  |
| Aug: 189s |  |
| Nov: 200s |  |
| 1952 | Feb: 210s | 437.86 (Nov) | 46s margin + 6s loading (confirmed 73 CAR at 418) | 98.57 | 536.43 | 122.51 / 82% |
| May: 216s |  |
| Aug: 227s |  |
| Nov: 231s |  |
| 1953 | Feb: 321s | 428.12 (Aug) | 46s margin + 6s loading | 94.33 | 522.45 | 122.03 / 82% |
| May: 234s |  |
| Aug: 236s |  |
| 1954 | 236s | 421.53 | 75s margin (80 CAR at 95) | 133.96 | 555.49 | 131.78 / 76% |
| 1955 | 236s | 415.15 | 75s margin | 131.93 | 547.08 | 131.78 / 76% |
| 1956 | Jun: 246s | 409.47 | 75s margin | 124.84 | 534.31 | 130.49 / 77% |
| 1957 | May: 256s | 414.24 | 75s margin | 121.36 | 535.60 | 129.30 / 77% |
| 1958 | May: 261s | 419.41 | 75s margin | 120.52 | 539.93 | 128.74 / 78% |
| 1959 | Jun: 276s | 434.49 | 96s margin (92 CAR at 813)  $9.60 | 151.13 | 585.62 | 134.78 / 74% |
| 1960 | 276s | 418.87 | 96s margin | 145.69 | 564.56 | 134.78 / 74% |
| 1961 | Jul: 288s | 427.31 | 96s margin | 142.43 | 569.74 | 133.33 / 75% |
| 1962 | 288s | 428.68 | 96s margin | 142.89 | 571.57 | 133.33 / 75% |
| 1963 | 288s | 425.95 | 106s margin (102 CAR at 155)  $10.60 | 156.77 | 582.72 | 136.80 / 73% |
| 1964 | Jun: 308s | 442.83 | 106s margin | 152.41 | 595.24 | 134.42 / 74% |
| 1965 | 308s | 428.25 | 112s margin (110 CAR at 178)  $11.20 | 155.73 | 583.98 | 136.36 / 73% |
| 1966 | Jul: $32.80 | 441.52 | $12.30 margin (116 CAR at 713)  $12.30 | 165.57 | 607.09 | 137.50 / 73% |
| 1967 | $32.80 | 426.68 | $53.40 total (118 CAR at 655 and Print B2916) [[4]](#footnote-4) | 267.97 (difference) | 694.65 | 162.80 / 61% |
| 1968 | $29.85[[5]](#footnote-5) | 378.75 | $54.75 total (Print B3554) | 315.95 (difference) | 694.70 | 183.42 / 55% |
| 1969 | $30.70 | 377.17 | $56.40 total (Print B4546) | 315.74 (difference) | 692.91 | 183.71 / 54% |
| 1970 | $39.50 | 469.15 | $59.80 total (Print B6060) | 241.11 (difference) | 710.26 | 151.39 / 66% |
| 1971 | $44 | 492.38 | $65.80 total (Print B6934) | 243.95 (difference) | 736.33 | 149.55 / 67% |
| 1972 | $46 | 485.51 | $67.80 total (Print B8626) | 230.09 (difference) | 715.60 | 147.39 / 68% |
| 1973 | $52.50 | 507.94 | $74.70 total | 214.78 (difference) | 722.72 | 142.28 / 70% |
| 1974 | $83.40 | 699.11 | $106.10 total | 190.29 (difference) | 889.40 | 127.22 / 79% |
| 1975 | $86.40 | 628.91 | $113.70 total | 198.71 (difference) | 827.62 | 131.60 / 76% |
| 1976 | $98 | 629.48 | $129.90 total | 204.90 (difference) | 834.38 | 132.55 / 75% |
| 1977 | $108.49 | 620.48 | $143.10 total | 197.94 (difference) | 818.42 | 131.90 / 76% |
| 1978 | $140.60 | 744.52 | $166.20 total | 135.56 (difference) | 880.08 | 118.21 / 85% |
| 1979 | $138.90 | 674.04 | $177.90 total | 189.25 (difference) | 863.29 | 128.08 / 78% |
| 1980 | $151.30 | 666.64 | $193.70 total | 186.82 (difference) | 853.46 | 128.02 / 78% |
| 1981 | $189.30 | 761.79 | $242.40 total | 213.69 (difference) | 975.48 | 128.05 / 78% |
| 1982 | $200.20 | 723.52 | $256.40 total | 203.11 (difference) | 926.63 | 128.07 / 78% |
| 1983 | $208.81 | 685.79 | $267.40 total | 192.43 (difference) | 878.22 | 128.06 / 78% |
| 1984 | $217.40 | 686.81 | $278.40 total | 192.72 (difference) | 879.52 | 128.06 / 78% |
| 1985 | $231.60 | 685.50 | $296.50 total | 192.09 (difference) | 877.59 | 128.02 / 78% |
| 1986 | $236.90 | 642.99 | $303.30 total | 180.23 (difference) | 823.22 | 128.03 / 78% |
| 1987 | $256.80 | 642.21 | $325.80 total | 172.55 (difference) | 814.76 | 126.87 / 79% |
| 1988 | $270.70 | 631.41 | $341.80 total | 165.84 (difference) | 797.25 | 126.27 / 79% |
| 1989 | $295.10 | 640.10 | $373.90 total | 170.92 (difference) | 811.02 | 126.70 / 79% |
| 1990 | $311.30 | 629.10 | $397.90 total | 175.01 (difference) | 804.11 | 127.82 / 78% |
| 1991 | $325.40 | 637.35 | $417.20 total | 179.81 (difference) | 817.16 | 128.21 / 78% |
| 1992 | $325.40 | 630.96 | $417.20 total | 178.01 (difference) | 808.97 | 128.21 / 78% |
| 1993 | $333.40 | 635.33 | $425.20 total | 174.94 (difference) | 810.27 | 127.54 / 78% |
| 1994 | $333.40 | 623.06 | $425.20 total | 171.56 (difference) | 794.62 | 127.54 / 78% |
| 1995 | $341.40 | 609.79 | $441.20 total | 178.26 (difference) | 788.05 | 129.23 / 77% |
| 1996 | $341.40 | 594.25 | $441.20 total | 173.72 (difference) | 767.97 | 129.23 / 77% |
| 1997 | $359.40 | 624.18 | $451.20 total | 159.43 (difference) | 783.61 | 125.54 / 80% |
| 1998 | $373.40 | 642.96 | $465.20 total | 158.07 (difference) | 801.03 | 124.58 / 80% |
| 1999 | $385.40 | 653.93 | $477.20 total | 155.76 (difference) | 809.69 | 123.82 / 81% |
| 2000 | $400.40 | 650.39 | $492.20 total | 149.11 (difference) | 799.50 | 122.93 / 81% |
| 2001 | $413.40 | 643.16 | $507.20 total | 145.93 (difference) | 789.09 | 122.69 / 82% |
| 2002 | $431.40 | 651.73 | $525.20 total | 141.71 (difference) | 793.44 | 121.74 / 82% |
| 2003 | $448.40 | 659.40 | $542.20 total | 137.93 (difference) | 797.33 | 120.92 / 83% |
| 2004 | $467.40 | 671.60 | $561.20 total | 134.78 (difference) | 806.38 | 120.07 / 83% |
| 2005 | $484.40 | 677.78 | $578.20 total | 131.25 (difference) | 809.03 | 119.36 / 84% |
| 2006 | $511.86 | 691.61 | $605.56 total | 126.61 (difference) | 818.22 | 118.31 / 85% |
| 2007 | $522.12 | 689.43 | $615.82 total | 123.73 (difference) | 813.16 | 117.95 / 85% |
| 2008 | $543.78 | 688.10 | $637.48 total | 118.56 (difference) | 806.66 | 117.23 / 85% |
| 2009 | $543.78 | 676.12 | $637.48 total | 116.51 (difference) | 792.63 | 117.23 / 85% |
| 2010 | $569.90 | 688.51 | $663.48 total | 113.05 (difference) | 801.56 | 116.42 / 86% |
| 2011 | $589.30 | 689.17 | $686.04 total | 113.14 (difference) | 802.31 | 116.42 / 86% |
| 2012 | $606.40 | 696.89 | $705.94 total | 114.39 (difference) | 811.28 | 116.41 / 86% |
| 2013 | $622.20 | 697.95 | $724.29 total | 114.51 (difference) | 812.46 | 116.41 / 86% |
| 2014 | $640.90 | 701.47 | $746.20 total | 115.25 (difference) | 816.72 | 116.43 / 86% |
| 2015 | $656.90 | 708.30 | $764.90 total | 116.45 (difference) | 824.75 | 116.44 / 86% |
| 2016 | $672.70 | 716.19 | $783.30 total | 117.75 (difference) | 833.94 | 116.44 / 86% |
| 2017 | $694.90 | 725.68 | $809.10 total  809.10 | 119.26 (difference) | 844.94 | 116.43 / 86% |
| 2018 | $719.20 | 736.97 | $837.40 total | 121.12 (difference) | $858.09 | 116.43 / 86% |
| 2019 | $740.80 | 747.07 | $862.50 total | 122.73 (difference) | $869.80 | 116.43 / 86% |
| 2020 | $753.80 | 753.80 | $877.60 total | 123.80 (difference) | $877.60 | 116.42 / 86% |

1. The History of the Australian Minimum Wage, the Hon. Reg Hamilton, Waltzing Matilda and the Sunshine Harvester Factory website. From 1907 to 1920 there was no one ‘minimum wage’ but rather rates were fixed in each case. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Converted in real terms using the RBA Inflation Calculator ([www.rba.gov.au/calculator/](http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/)) as at April 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Source: Federal Basic Wage, 1922-1950 (shillings per week), Professor Keith Hancock, The Hon. Reg Hamilton. From 1951-1966 the source is Federal Industrial Laws, Fourth Edition, Butterworths, p.161. From 1968 the Metal Industry Award Victoria males is used, and from 1998 the Federal Minimum Wage clause. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The fitter wage 1967 onwards is taken from the orders hyperlinked to ‘The History of the Australian Minimum Wage’, The Hon. Reg Hamilton. The 1966 amount is taken from ‘Six Wage Concepts’, J.Hutson, p.97. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. From 1968-1997 the Victorian Metal Industry minimum wage is used, which was influential but there were a range of rates, rates sometimes being lower. From 1998 onwards the new ‘Federal Minimum Wage’ is used and has application to all awards. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)