



## Minimum Standards of Employment (page 1 of 1)

### Under WorkChoices

Conditions of employment were axed to just 5 minimum conditions:

- Unpaid maternity leave.
- 4 weeks annual leave (although 2 could be traded away).
- 38 hours work averaged over the year (i.e., overtime rates slashed).
- Poverty line federal weekly wage.
- 10 days personal leave (sick and carers leave).

### Under the Fair Work Act

The Fair Work Act restores a fair and equitable safety net of minimum standards of employment for all workers. These new conditions raise living standards for working Australians and their families.

**The new safety net commences on 1 January 2010.**

The most important aspect of the new safety net for United Voice members is the National Employment Standards.

### The National Employment Standards

The National Employment Standards (NES) contained in the Fair Work Act apply to all national system workers (i.e., everyone not employed in the public sector).

**The NES are:**

- A standard 38-hour working week for full time workers and the right to refuse unreasonable overtime.
- An additional 24 months\* unpaid parental leave in addition to the new 18 weeks paid parental leave. (\* The new Paid Parental Leave scheme commences January 2011)
- A right for parents to request flexible working arrangements.
- 4 weeks paid annual leave each year, plus an additional week for shift workers.
- 10 days paid personal/carer's leave each year, 2 days paid compassionate leave and 2 days unpaid emergency leave.



- Community service leave.
- All national and state public holidays.
- Long service leave.
- Notice of termination and, if employed in a business with 15 or more workers, redundancy pay.
- A requirement that all employers provide new workers with information about their rights (a Fair Work Information Statement).

### How does the safety net get varied and updated?

The NES are legislated minimum standards that can only be varied by Parliament.

If you want to improve your entitlements above these, you will need to bargain. Being in a union means you have a better chance of winning.

### Minimum Wages

Minimum wages will be set by FWAs Minimum Wage Panel and contained in modern awards. For those employees not covered by an award or agreement, FWA will set minimum wages and casual loadings through national minimum wage orders. Most United Voice members are under union agreements that pay wages far in excess of the minimum wage.

### Equal Remuneration Orders

FWA will be able to make orders to ensure that there is equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal or comparable value.

