



Aged Care Nurses Wages

Guidance for aged care providers on
the 6 December 2024 decision of the
Fair Work Commission Aged Care Work
Value Case

Better and fairer award wages for aged care employed nurses

The Australian Government is committed to supporting further increases in the minimum award wages for registered and enrolled nurses in the aged care sector, it is important that the registered and enrolled nurses covered by the 6 December 2024 decision under the Aged Care Work Value Case receive the full benefit of this funding and the aged care sector can attract and retain a skilled workforce.

This builds on the commitment to support the Fair Work Commission's previous decisions for the:

- 15% minimum award wage increases for many aged care employees, including for nurses, which commenced 30 June 2023 (Stage 2); and
- minimum award wage increases for many other aged care workers which commenced 1 January 2025 (Stage 3).

A valued workforce with the right skills and knowledge is critical to reform the aged care system. This starts with fair wages for workers, a supportive workplace and recognition of the complex, often undervalued work involved.

A more skilled and diverse workforce will deliver safe, consistent, high-quality aged care services for in-home care recipients and aged care residents. Building our aged care workforce will help the sector deliver 24/7 registered nurse care, increased care minutes for residents, culturally safe practices, and increased system transparency.

In addition, a valued and happy workforce means employees are more likely to stay in their workplace for longer. This helps to improve compliance results, including care minutes, 24/7 registered nurse care requirements and Star Ratings of residential aged care providers, and provide better outcomes, including meeting the needs and rights of older people.

Award increases and new classification structures

The Fair Work Commission's 6 December 2024 decision under the Aged Care Work Value Case includes:

- the increases in award wages to be phased-in across three, largely equal, tranches from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025, 1 October 2025 and 1 August 2026;
- new classification structures have been introduced into the *Nurses Award 2020* (Nurses Award). This will require many employees to be reclassified.
 - The Fair Work Commission has included instructions on how current employees are to be translated to the new classification structure.

- Providers are required to ensure employees are transitioned to the correct new award classifications when passing on pay increases, whether they are award-reliant or covered by enterprise agreements, from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.
- For advice and support on the awards and enterprise agreements, employers may also contact the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The first tranche of award wage increases for affected registered and enrolled nurses will occur from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.

These award wage increases will apply to registered and enrolled nurses employed in aged care under the *Nurses Award 2020*.

Minimum award rates

From the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025, minimum award wages will increase, and classifications will change for many enrolled and registered nurses employed in aged care who are paid under the Nurses Award.

Providers employing workers under this award must be aware of the changes to award wages and classifications to ensure they are meeting their legal obligations to comply with minimum award wages under the *Fair Work Act 2009*. This legal obligation means providers must ensure they have followed the Fair Work Commission's instructions in translating employees to the new award classification structures and that they are complying with the correct new award wages for each employee.

Utilisation of additional Government funding

This Guidance and the associated funding relate to the increases to the minimum award wages that will commence from 1 March 2025 for registered and enrolled nurses, as a result of the 6 December 2024 decision of the Fair Work Commission under the Aged Care Work Value Case.

The Government expects providers to work closely with employees and their representatives including unions, to implement these changes.

The Government expects providers of residential aged care and Home Care Packages to use the wages funding in support of the 6 December 2024 decision in the following way and consistent with the Guidance tables below:

- Providers to pass on all additional funding to support implementation of the 6 December 2024 decision to relevant registered and enrolled nurse employees through increases to wages and on-costs. On-costs associated

with these changes to wages include increases to superannuation, leave entitlements, penalties, and allowances.

- Relevant registered and enrolled nurse employees are those employed in aged care, under the Nurses Award, who will receive an award wage increase on the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.
 - Providers are expected to involve employees and employee representatives about the approach to passing on all additional funding and how the new classifications map back to providers' enterprise agreements. This will help to transition employees accurately to the new classifications and ensure they receive the appropriate wage increases.
- The usual enterprise bargaining should continue to occur, with periodic wage increases drawn from the provider's revenue. Providers are expected to provide periodic increases, including through enterprise agreements, separately to the additional funding to support the 6 December 2024 decision. The Government does not support absorbing these periodic increases under the funding provided in support of implementing the 6 December 2024 decision for these employees.
- State, territory and local government providers of residential aged care and Home Care Packages will receive funding to implement the 6 December 2024 decision through increased subsidies. The Government expects state/territory and local government providers that receive additional government funding for award wages to pass on all funding to aged care employees included in the 6 December 2024 decision. However, we recognise that the state-based industrial relations processes may take some time to update relevant awards and/or enterprise agreements in response to the Fair Work Commission decision.
- Funding should not be used for short-term localised incentives which apply to only some staff in a particular area/s of labour shortage. Any short-term incentives should be funded from the provider's own resources.

A provider that decides to increase employees' wages in response to the 6 December 2024 decision before 1 March 2025 does so at its own discretion. Providers that increase wages before 1 March 2025 should clearly document and communicate to employees and employee representatives that this increase is occurring and agree with relevant unions and/or employees that these claimed increases were in consideration of the Nurses Award wage increases.

Residential aged care funding

For residential aged care, the Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) price will increase from 1 March 2025 to support residential aged care providers to meet the increased costs of higher award wages for registered and enrolled nurses.

More information is available on the Department of Health and Aged Care's (Department) website on the ['Funding higher wages in residential aged care'](#) page.

Home Care Packages funding

The [Home Care Packages subsidy](#) will increase from 1 March 2025 to support Home Care Packages providers to meet the increased costs of higher award wages for registered and enrolled nurses providing home care services.

More information is available on the Department's website on the ['Subsidy increase in the Home Care Packages Program'](#) page.

Guidance Tables

The Guidance Tables below provide the difference in dollar terms between the current award rate (as of 1 July 2024) and the new award rate for each award classification (from 1 March 2025). The tables also set out the classification changes that will start from 1 March 2025 (from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025).

The additional amount payable (last column) is what the Government expects providers of residential aged care and Home Care Packages to pass on to employees due to the Fair Work Commission's 6 December 2024 decision. Employers are not limited to passing on these dollar amounts and may choose to pay over and above the amounts in the last column of the tables. Passing on funding allocated to support award wage increases will help address long-term work value issues, improve gender equity, and contribute to the delivery of quality aged care services.

Communications

The 1 March 2025 award wage increases are part of substantial changes in award classification structures for many registered and enrolled nurses employed in aged care. The Government expects providers to undertake workforce communications, in consultation with unions, to support these changes. Providers should inform employees of the award wage increases and any classification changes in writing, consistent with the following:

- Providers will involve employees and employee representatives to communicate how they are implementing the funding received for award wage increases and on-costs, including timing and any back pay arrangements.
- Providers to communicate with employees about their individual wage increase and new wage rate from the first full pay period on or after

1 March 2025 or from an earlier date if the increases were provided before 1 March 2025.

- Providers will engage with employees and employee representatives to communicate any resultant changes to existing workplace classification structures and how employees will transition to the new classifications.

Accountability for passing on funding

Residential aged care and Home Care Packages providers must continue attesting in the Quarterly Financial Report that all funding provided to support the 6 December 2024 decision is passed through to employees. The attestation confirms providers have passed on all funding for award wage increases to employees as increases in their wages and on-costs. The Department will continue to publish providers' quarterly attestation responses.

The Quarterly Financial Report also collects information on hourly wage rates, labour costs, and the primary way employees are engaged and paid (i.e. Award, Enterprise Agreement, Individual Agreement).

The Department will continue to analyse this information and closely monitor providers' expenditure on labour costs to identify trends in this spending over time. These trends will be published through the Quarterly Financial Snapshot. The Department will also continue to refer providers to the Fair Work Ombudsman where a provider reports hourly wage rates below the minimum pay points in the relevant awards. The accuracy of the submitted data will be checked with the provider before a referral is made.

Providers are required by law to provide accurate information to the Commonwealth.

Next steps and future increases

The Department has developed this Guidance for the first tranche of award wage increases in consultation with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the Health Services Union, the United Workers Union, and Ageing Australia.

The Department will work with Ageing Australia and unions to support implementing the second and third tranches (1 October 2025 and 1 August 2026) of the Fair Work Commission's 6 December 2024 decision.

The Department will also work with Ageing Australia and unions to follow up worker complaints about the implementation of Government funding related to the Aged Care Work Value Case award wage increases.

For advice and support on the awards and enterprise agreements, employees may also contact the Fair Work Ombudsman either by calling 13 13 94 between 8am – 5:30pm Monday to Friday, or by sending an [online enquiry](#).

Information on the award rates, including pay guides and a pay and conditions tool, is available on the Fair Work Ombudsman's [website](#).

Guidance for aged care providers: Fair Work Commission Aged Care Work Value Case 6 December 2024 decision

The information below is about changes in classifications and hourly award wage rates that will take effect from 1 March 2025 (the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025). It does not include the second or third tranche of increases from the 6 December 2024 decision for registered and enrolled nurses in aged care, which will take effect from 1 October 2025 and 1 August 2026 (the first full pay period on or after those dates). The Fair Work Ombudsman publishes current classifications and award hourly rates for nurses on its website ([MA000034](#)).

[Fair Work Commission Determination – PR782723 – Nurses Award](#)

Table 1: New minimum award rates – Registered Nurses

New Classification (from 1 March 2025)	Previous Classification (until 28 February 2025)	Previous Award Hourly Rate (until 28 February 2025)	New Award Hourly Rate (from 1 March 2025)¹	Additional amount payable from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.
Registered nurse—level 1 First year of employment classified at this level	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 1	\$34.04	\$35.41	\$1.37
Registered nurse—level 1 In excess of 1 year and up to 4 years of employment classified at this level	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 2	\$34.74	\$37.13	\$2.39
	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 3	\$35.59	\$37.13	\$1.54
	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 4	\$36.54	\$37.13	\$0.59

New Classification (from 1 March 2025)	Previous Classification (until 28 February 2025)	Previous Award Hourly Rate (until 28 February 2025)	New Award Hourly Rate (from 1 March 2025)¹	Additional amount payable from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.
Registered nurse—level 1 In excess of 4 years of employment classified at this level	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 5	\$37.66	\$40.77	\$3.11
	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 6	\$38.75	\$40.77	\$2.02
	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 7	\$39.87	\$40.77	\$0.90
	Registered nurse— level 1 – Pay point 8 and thereafter	\$40.91	\$40.77 ²	-
Registered nurse—level 2 First 3 years of employment classified at this level	Registered nurse— level 2 – Pay point 1	\$41.99	\$44.21	\$2.22
	Registered nurse— level 2 – Pay point 2	\$42.66	\$44.21	\$1.55
	Registered nurse— level 2 – Pay point 3	\$43.40	\$44.21	\$0.81
Registered nurse—level 2 In excess of 3 years of employment classified at this level	Registered nurse— level 2 – Pay point 4 and thereafter	\$44.11	\$45.96	\$1.85
Registered nurse—level 3	Registered nurse— level 3 – Pay point 1	\$45.53	\$48.12	\$2.59
	Registered nurse— level 3 – Pay point 2	\$46.37	\$48.12	\$1.75

New Classification (from 1 March 2025)	Previous Classification (until 28 February 2025)	Previous Award Hourly Rate (until 28 February 2025)	New Award Hourly Rate (from 1 March 2025)¹	Additional amount payable from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.
	Registered nurse— level 3 – Pay point 3	\$47.17	\$48.12	\$0.95
	Registered nurse— level 3 – Pay point 4 and thereafter	\$48.01	\$48.12	\$0.11
Registered nurse—level 4	Registered nurse— level 4 – Grade 1	\$51.97	\$56.36	\$4.39
	Registered nurse— level 4 – Grade 2	\$55.69	\$56.36	\$0.67
	Registered nurse— level 4 – Grade 3	\$58.94	\$56.36 ²	-
Registered nurse—level 5	Registered nurse— level 5 – Grade 1	\$52.44	\$63.48	\$11.04
	Registered nurse— level 5 – Grade 2	\$55.23	\$63.48	\$8.25
	Registered nurse— level 5 – Grade 3	\$58.94	\$63.48	\$4.54
	Registered nurse— level 5 – Grade 4	\$62.62	\$63.48	\$0.86
	Registered nurse— level 5 – Grade 5	\$69.06	\$63.48 ²	-
	Registered nurse— level 5 – Grade 6	\$75.56	\$63.48 ²	-

New Classification (from 1 March 2025)	Previous Classification (until 28 February 2025)	Previous Award Hourly Rate (until 28 February 2025)	New Award Hourly Rate (from 1 March 2025)¹	Additional amount payable from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025.
Nurse practitioner - 1st Year	Nurse practitioner - 1st Year	\$52.39	\$52.39	-
Nurse practitioner - 2nd Year	Nurse practitioner - 2nd Year	\$53.95	\$53.95	-

¹ In the Nurses Award, the hourly rate when multiplied by 38 (the ordinary hours of work per week for a full-time employee) may not equal the weekly rate, due to the rounding rules applied by the Fair Work Commission.

² Schedule F.3.2 applies to these classifications. Employees who are employed in the 'previous classification' on 28 February 2025 that are higher than the new rate will retain the minimum hourly wage rate that applied as at 28 February 2025.

Table 2: New minimum award wage rates – Enrolled Nurses

New Classification (from 1 March 2025)	Previous Classification (until 28 February 2025)	Previous Award Hourly Rate (until 28 February 2025)	New Award Hourly Rate (from 1 March 2025)¹	Additional amount payable from the first full pay period on or after 1 March 2025
Enrolled nurse supervising other direct care employees	Enrolled nurse—aged care employee Pay point 1	\$31.82	\$34.25	\$2.43
	Enrolled nurse—aged care employee Pay point 2	\$32.24	\$34.25	\$2.01
	Enrolled nurse—aged care employee Pay point 3	\$32.67	\$34.25	\$1.58
	Enrolled nurse—aged care employee Pay Point 4	\$33.14	\$34.25	\$1.11
	Enrolled nurse—aged care employee Pay point 5	\$33.47	\$34.25	\$0.78