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What this decision means for employees

What is the Gender Undervaluation Decision?

In December 2025, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) handed down its final decision in the **Gender Undervaluation Priority Awards Review**, which included a review of the **Children's Services Award**.

The Commission found that wages and classifications under the Award had been historically undervalued due to gender-based factors and determined that changes were required to:

- the classification structure, and
- minimum wage rates.

The changes commence from **1 March 2026** and are **phased in through to 2029**.

You can view the Fair Work Commission's information about the Gender Undervaluation Priority Awards Review here: https://www.fwc.gov.au/hearings-decisions/major-cases/gender-undervaluation-priority-awards-review

Who this is for:

Employees of Approved Providers covered by the Children's Services Award

What this fact sheet is for:

To provide an overview of the Gender Undervaluation Decision

Does this apply to my role?

This decision applies to:

- employees covered by the **Children's Services Award**, and
- roles directly involved in the care and education of children.

It does **not** apply to:

- teachers covered by the Educational Services (Teachers) Award, or
- support staff such as administration, cleaning or maintenance staff.

What if I am already paid above the award?

For most employees receiving the WRP:

- no immediate pay changes are required from March 2026 unless an individual employee is below the new Award minimum, and
- current WRP-funded rates remain above the new Award minimums.
- The WRP absorbs these new rates

Important clarification – minimum rates set the floor

The Award sets **minimum pay rates**. It does not prescribe automatic pay increases for all employees.

At all times, your pay must be **at or above** the applicable Award minimum rate for your classification.

Employers are only required to increase your pay where the rate currently being paid is **below** the new minimum rate.

Where an employee is already paid at or above the new minimum rate:

- **no adjustment is required at that time.**

This includes employees receiving the **Worker Retention Payment**.

This fact sheet summarises classification and Award changes arising from the Fair Work Commission's Gender Undervaluation Decision. It is provided for general information only and does not constitute legal advice. Services and employees should refer to the Children's Services Award and seek independent advice where necessary.

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