



**Media Release
April 13, 2005**

Catholic body calls for greater assistance to low paid families

The Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (ACCER) called today for an increase in the minimum wage at the 2005 Minimum Wage Case in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and for research into the needs of low paid workers and their families.

ACCER is seeking a \$26.60 a week increase in the Federal Minimum Wage, currently \$467.40 per week before tax.

ACCER represents the Catholic Church in national matters concerning industrial relations. The Catholic Church has a strong tradition of social teaching on the employment relationship. It employs approximately 100,000 workers and has numerous employers in health and aged care, community services, education and parish activities.

ACCER Executive Officer John Ryan says the \$26.60 a week increase is needed because “the Federal Minimum Wage must meet the needs of the worker and his or her family. It should be sufficient to enable one parent to be in the paid workforce and the other to work in the home and for them to be able to support two children and achieve an acceptable standard of living. They must be able to live with dignity.”

Mr Ryan also called for a less adversarial approach than that adopted by the parties in recent years.

He said “there is a need for research to identify the needs of low paid workers and their families to make ends meet, the industries and occupations in which they work, their longer term employment opportunities and the measures for assisting them to move beyond the trap of low skills, uncertain employment and taxation and welfare barriers.”