

GAME JOURNALIST WAGES & CONDITIONS

A GUIDE BY GAME WORKERS AUSTRALIA



INTRODUCTION

Every worker in Australia is entitled to minimum wages and conditions - even game journalists!

All journalism work in Australia is covered by the *Journalists Published Media Award 2020*.

In addition, all Australians are entitled to the protections of the National Employment Standards (NES).

This document will help you understand how both the *Award* and the NES apply to you as a game journalist.

The wage table to the right, and the entitlements on the next page, apply to anybody working in game journalism who is an **employee** (that is, *not* an independent contractor/freelancer). This information is specific to digital only publications (with no print edition).

If you *are* an independent contractor, this data might be helpful when it comes to setting your rates.

DISCLAIMER

This is intended to be a short, readable summary. This means some details have been excluded for readability. If you would like more information, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

If you are in trouble at work, **join the MEAA immediately.**

Level	Minimum Annual Salary (full time)	Minimum Hourly Wage (full time)	Minimum Hourly Wage (casual)
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BAND ONE - ENTRY LEVEL JOURNALISTS

Every journalist begins here and works their way up.

1	\$ 53,383.20	\$ 27.02	\$ 33.78
2	\$ 54,880.80	\$ 27.77	\$ 34.71
3	\$ 57,241.60	\$ 28.97	\$ 36.21
4	\$ 58,775.60	\$ 29.74	\$ 37.18
5	\$ 60,304.40	\$ 30.52	\$ 38.15
6	\$ 63,398.40	\$ 32.08	\$ 40.10
7	\$ 66,170.00	\$ 33.49	\$ 41.86

BAND TWO - EXPERIENCED JOURNALISTS

Journalists with wide practical experience and advanced skills.

8	\$ 69,258.80	\$ 35.05	\$ 43.81
9	\$ 73,855.60	\$ 37.38	\$ 46.73
10	\$ 78,473.20	\$ 39.71	\$ 49.64

BAND THREE - SENIOR JOURNALISTS

This final band is for very experienced journalists with high skill levels.

11	\$ 80,787.20	\$ 40.88	\$ 51.10
12	\$ 90,781.60	\$ 45.94	\$ 57.43
13	\$ 101,535.20	\$ 51.38	\$ 64.23

Figures are current as of 1 July 2022. Figures may change on 1 July 2023.

EXPERIENCE HAS VALUE. YOUR WAGE SHOULD INCREASE EVERY YEAR!

DO I HAVE TO RECEIVE THESE WAGES?

Yes, *or better!* If you are an employee (not a contractor) you cannot be paid less than this, *even if you agreed to it.*

If you have signed an employment agreement with wages lower than this, that agreement is unlawful. **If this is happening to you, speak to your union (the MEAA).**

ENTITLEMENTS & ALLOWANCES

It's worth thinking about more than just your salary when looking at your job.

You are also entitled to:

- Minimum superannuation of 10% (even for casuals)
- Four weeks paid annual leave per year (paid at an additional 17.5% of your base rate)
- Ten days paid personal leave (sick leave) per year
- Ten days unpaid personal leave per year
- Unpaid community service leave (on agreement with your employer)

- Protection from unfair dismissal
- Severance pay and redundancy pay
- Twelve months of unpaid parental leave, once you have been working for your employer for a year

The Award may also entitle you to paid allowances around costs like evening wear, transport to and from events, prescription glasses or even air travel insurance!

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

Contractors (or "freelancers") are not employees. There are no minimum wages or conditions for contractors, and importantly no entitlements either.

Contractors set their own pay rates and invoice (with an ABN) for the work done.

When thinking about your pay rate:

- Start with an ideal annual after-tax figure (use the wage table overleaf as a guide)
- Make sure to include business costs such as gear, web hosting, reference material, or other subscriptions
- Break that down into an hourly rate based on 150-200 working days a year, at 7.5 hours a day

Then, increase that hourly rate by:

- 25% to put aside for sick and holiday pay
- 9.5% to pay into your own superannuation fund

As a contractor you may need to spend at least one day a week networking or looking for more work opportunities, as well as have enough saved up so that you can attend industry conferences.

PRO TIP: JUST LIKE WAGES, YOU CAN NEGOTIATE FOR BETTER ENTITLEMENTS THAN THESE - JUST NOT WORSE

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE UNSAFE WORK!

You have the legal right to refuse overtime if it's "unsafe, unreasonable or excessive". You can not be fired for doing so.

This includes when you are required to care for family members who need you, or if it would be unsafe for you to continue to work.

ARE YOU IN A SHAM CONTRACT?

Sham contracting is when you are treated like an employee but paid like a contractor. This lets your employer get more out of you, and avoid paying entitlements.

This is illegal. We can help you determine if you are in a sham contracting situation. Visit our website for more information.

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