

Sent: Tuesday, 23 August 2011 10:20 PM

To: retail (ex email)

Subject: Proposal to Reduce Retail Workers' Wages by 10% and Other Proposals which Affect Retail Workers' Working Conditions

Dear Productivity Commission,

I am a mature aged retail worker. I have worked as a casual sales assistant in the area of retail footwear for the last 5 years.

I am alarmed and frightened that Joe Hockey and the Australian Retailers Association should propose to reduce retail wages by 10%, to eliminate or substantially reduce penalty rates and to remove workers' rights against unfair dismissal.

As a casual, my hours vary from week to week. Recently, due to the retail downturn my hours (and therefore my pay) have been reduced. Yet my fares, food and mortgage repayments remain the same. Each week I worry that I will not earn enough to pay my basic living expenses. I am forced to live frugally. I bring my lunch to work each day from home and cannot even afford to buy a cup of coffee. I do not drink, smoke or gamble and could not afford to do so, even if I was disposed to take up these activities.

My basic pay rate is \$21.60 per hour. In order to get enough shifts to pay for my living expenses it is necessary for me to work until 9pm on Thursday nights and until 6.30pm on Saturday nights. However, where I live there is no public transport when I finish work at these times. I have to catch a taxi home, which is expensive, as the award does not cover the cost of my transport. Some days when I do not have the taxi fare, I walk the 7.5 km from the railway station to my home, at some risk to my personal safety. This is very tiring after standing on my feet all day. (We are not allowed to sit down during our shifts, except during a meal break.)

The penalty rates for working Sundays and Public Holidays are absolutely essential for me to make ends meet.

I have never been offered permanent full time work although I have requested it in writing.

Instead of reducing workers' pay and conditions, retail employers should consider ways in which they could improve the products which they sell. At the company where I work, the shoes are imported and often are made in a way that they do not fit the feet of its Australian and Asian customers. If the shoes fitted the foot type of the customers then the business would make more sales and would be more profitable. This would improve productivity.

If you would like any more information, please telephone me.

Yours respectfully,

Marion McInnes