

Friday 19 August 2011

Australian Retail Industry
Public Inquiry Submission
Productivity Commission

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my outrage and deep concern over the recommendations the Productivity Commission has made about the wages and working conditions of employees in the retail sector. I do not work in retail, I'm a public servant, working within the Office for Environment and Heritage, however these proposed changes will affect all workers in NSW, not just those in the retail industry.

Public servants in NSW are also currently faced with job losses and pay cuts, thanks to the Liberal Government's agenda to attack workers' hard won rights and conditions. If penalty rates are stripped away from those in the retail sector how long before we see the same steps taken in other industries? My partner works in the maritime industry where penalty rates for casual workers are the only way many employees can make ends meet. The proposals of the Commission threaten not only retail workers but all workers in NSW that are paid penalty rates for working 'unsociable hours'.

I stand in solidarity with workers in the retail sector who are some of the lowest paid in the state – it sickens me that the Commission can seriously be suggesting that because the profit margins of big business have been reduced by the current global financial climate that workers paid a minimum of \$17.03 an hour (less than \$34,000 a year) have their pay cut and penalty rates taken away. It is even more disgusting when we remember that so many retail workers are young people and that junior workers earn as little as \$7.67 an hour.

Anyone with any decency would see how these recommendations are motivated by greed and complete disregard for the human beings that actually keep the shop and department store doors open and profits mounting up – let's not forget that 'reduced' profit margins are in fact still PROFITS.

Sincerely,

Fabienne Virago