# General comment

The following table lists submissions that were lodged via the online tool but not structured in the suggested question format.

| Line | Location | State | Response |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 313 | Bateau Bay | NSW | Unemployed in September after 4 years of bullying, violent & infectious behaviour from within our work group. Mid 2013 the behaviour become noticeably more intimidating & morale faded & I felt I had to make a conscious decision to move along or aside if things didn't change for my health.. After using the EAP it became clear that the only advice I was getting was get away from my team leader (ganger), March 2014 my manager & I discussed the situation & was promised a transfer closer to home, safe from bullying. In July last year following continuously following up the arrangements agreed on & a personal bereavement, my medical consultants, GP & specialist felt I was not getting any support & suffering so was to become medically unfit. After this I received a date on which my transfer would be take place, this however became a non-event & found myself back in volatile surroundings & after returning to work my following pay was in minus category? How do you owe payroll money when you haven't been receiving pay & have been at work? Then to the workplace psychiatrist I'm sent & to my amusement found this specialist to have taken a worry to my increasingly depressed mental state & wanted me into immediate treatment. Also of note was the doctors recommendations; following the same approach as my medical team, my employer was advised for everyone's benefit I should not go back to my old position but be accommodated on the medical experts advice & have me move 10 mins from home at Gosford. Still no procedure or action taking into my even being contacted or asked if I would like a roster? So a letter is in front of me at the table I notice one Sunday morning in September I open it realising it should have been done a week ago, it advises me to ring my GM. Finally I'm going to be able to get to speak with someone who can make things happen, no, his words were to stop waiting his time "f\*\*k off" , called me a charity case , said I'm not getting any leave paid out & said I wasn't suffering mental illness, followed with he has no idea of any behaviour other than myself who was in breach of the code of conduct. So days later another letter I sign for reads; abandonment from employment clause has been issued & was reasonable under circumstances? Under false & misleading circumstances cultured by middle & executive staff? Not one step was implemented discussed or even thought to know whether my employer even has a guide or support advice on how to treat mental illness within the workplace? Seriously I was terminated from employment while on leave with full documentation to produce & prove I needed to be, not attending work while suffering from mental illness, agreed upon by all that my depression was linked to the over exposure to unruly misconduct towards not really always him but his work mates & general population. To the point of being physically sick when in the present vicinity of my senior staff member. On unpaid sick leave so I wouldn't have to be subject to workers compensation, doing what was advised & have all the right documents, some ethical committee supposedly terminated that individuals employment on mental health month? RTBU called me to ask for my member fees, told them my story & still nothing except letters of threat to proceed with expense compensation by Transport to recover their property? If I'd been paid properly, or at all since July 2014 or approved my application for voluntary separation instead of handed back to me or a payslip or even a phone call from a staff member in any capacity? I feel the integrity & accountability of 2 particular colleagues in direct senior roles to my position have a lot to answer. |
| 313 | Bateau Bay | NSW | I also believe civil action of some degree needs ongoing push in general community groups as this situation I find myself in as truly unable to understand or comprehend how individuals within the public service sector can be a law of their own & get away with sweeping me or anyone else under the carpet. What policies procedures & support action does my employer wish to explain or provide to take proactive response to the biggest community topic the last 6 months? Mental health .. I'm only just mentally strong enough to be able to attempt to work through this & try to move on. Healing takes time but not as much as trust lost & damaged by unresponsive Union groups & delegates not fulfilling their promised commitment to all members welfare & represent the employees basic rights. |
| 380 | Charlestown | NSW | Hello, I am disabled and my husband works full time in supermarket nightfill for over 20 years. His wage is $ 740 net including weekend penalties. We live in modest one bed apartment with study, the rent is $ 360 a week. Next to pay is electricity, gas, phone, internet, car insurance, registration, service, tyres, fuel, car loan, some clothes and shoes, groceries, medical expenses,... there is nothing left, we haven't been to dentist for many years. Penalty for Saturday is almost nothing (he gets only $ 5 extra per shift). Sunday pays for 8 hour shift extra $ 85, if we were to lose that much money every week how could we pay our bills??? Our budget is getting squeezed more and more every year. Pay rises over many years have not covered even increase in rent. We are going backward as it is! My husband works every single weekend and public holiday just so we can pay our bills. He never refuses over time, but it is rarely offered because the company doesn't want to pay it. Thank god for unions, without their advice and help with negotiations we would be most likely homeless. Please, please do not reduce any penalties or workplace rights for already struggling low income workers. We need higher minimum wage and stronger representation by unions. Companies should look for improvement in productivity at management level. |
| 139 | Dee Why | NSW | I have been working for a nationwide menswear chain for nearly three years, the first eight months as a casual now I am fulltime. Under the Fair Work Act I am entitled to two consecutive days off, but for months I would get one day midweek and one day on the weekend because it would often depend upon when our casuals who were uni students were available which was wrong and unfair, the rosters were done weekly so it made it hard to make appointments and any plans until I jumped up and down, I rang the union who confirmed it and then rang HR which caused my manager to get into trouble which made me feel guilty but he was obeying the Area Manager's orders and he did realise I was in the right. I was having to stand up for what I am legally entitled to. Our Area Manager likes to move people around, never mind that they might be happy where they are, get on well with their co-workers and are at the store closest to home, he just chops and changes people, some have been shifted too far from home so they have had to resign. Complaints to HR regarding this Area Manager I have been told have sometimes fallen on deaf ears but that is another story. Due to the fact I do not have children I have to work one day of each weekend which I hate and if I did not get a bit extra for working Saturday I would be telling them I cannot possibly work on weekends at all due to other commitments. I did work on Sundays which I hated, even though I earned penalty rates I still missed out on family gatherings which seem to take place on Sundays in my family and I did not have enough notice to swap my day off. We had a new manager who tried to change my day off even though I said I had a commitment (once a week I am a voluntary literacy tutor), I had to cancel that lesson which was wrong, I rang the union and found they have no right to change my days off without two weeks’ notice in case of medical appointments, the next time it happened I stood my ground and said I would not cancel again. I never had a problem after that. I have been in the workforce for 30 years, I am tired of having to fight for my legal rights. I do not like being bullied and I do not like seeing others being bullied by those in senior positions who abuse their power. |
| 85 | Elderslie | NSW | I have worked my 50 years in both the building and the underground coal industry retiring in 2008 (self-funded) I have been a trade unionist all that time. It is so typical of Conservative Governments to attack the workers’ rights whenever in power. Little thought is given to big business raising prices, Government charges escalating, but always attempting to attack wages and conditions previously agreed to. How do they expect the workers and their families to make ends meet. They just don't care and never have. |
| 382 | Eumungerie | NSW | I am a registered nurse and have been working in the hospital system for over 35 years. For the first time in all those years l do not feel secure in nursing. While I respect those I work with it is a disgrace that so many of our new grads missed out on positions only to bring overseas nurses to Australia and employ them. And I am sorry but they do NOT have the expertise of the Australian trained nurses. In rural hospitals nursing hours have been cut with no thought of consequences. The National Standards have been set which is a great thing but having the time to complete the paperwork is extremely difficult with these cuts. Most nurses, police ambulance and fire officer's give up family time and special occasions for their duty to work. Penalty rates are the only thing that helps make this bearable and allows families to keep afloat with rising costs. Tony Abbott says if you don't want to work weekends don't. Well that may be right for shops. We survived many years with the shops closing at lunch time on Saturdays and we could again they are not essential. Unfortunately we can't just close hospitals for the weekend and have no ambulance or police. But if business owners say they can't afford to pay penalty rates, don't, don't open or do it themselves but leave the essential services alone. |
| 171 | Old Bar | NSW | I am currently employed permanent part time in Pharmacy, under the Pharmacy award. I am a level 3 pharmacist assistant, and have been working at my place of employment for 7 years. This work involves a high level of responsibility, constant product knowledge study, good communication skills and confidentiality. This industry is also poorly paid, with an hourly rate less than persons working at a supermarket checkout. Work hours are cut back on a regular basis, with no consultation with employees. Roster changes are made at short notice, meeting are expected to be attended outside of work hours, without payment. Most travel costs to attend work related events are expected to be met by the employee. Over all work conditions are undesirable, and any appreciation from management and owners is rare. So why do it you may ask?, because helping the many valued and wonderful members of the public is rewarding. Working with some of the most caring, amazing co-workers and friends is a pleasure . The constant learning and challenges are exciting. It would be a better place to work, if our ideas were requested, and our skills appreciated. It would probably also help to improve sales, harmony and build a better productive environment. Sadly this is not the case, but it is not from lack of trying on behalf of staff. Unfortunately for some job change is not an option with limited opportunities in small rural communities. |
| 5 | Tintenbar | NSW | A recent international study into wealth showed that 1% of the world’s population owns 99% of worlds wealth. I think about 5 or 8 years ago it was 5% of world’s population owned 99% of worlds wealth. This is immoral and insane. Imagine if this wealth was more equitably distributed. The world could go great places particularly no wars and misery for people who have only one life to live. Please consider that if workers’ wages are reduced more misery and division is inflicted on the poorest. Simply not fair in this time of world history. Please do what is right and imagine living a life on a minimum wage with the high prices in living. "I’m alright Jack" is no longer acceptable. |
| 431 | Warners Bay | NSW | I am a Disability Support Worker. My employment consists of supporting individuals that have challenging behaviours and multiple other health and medical problems. We work on a 24hr /7 day roster. Our shifts demand us come in early to work as there is no crossover of shifts and often staying longer than our rostered hours often due to crisis situations. We have no set patterns to our work schedule and as you can imagine personal/private life comes second, as does our health. Every weekend/ often split shifts and Christmas days, Friday/Saturday nights and so much more. Social and Family life are second priority to work demands. Most staff are constantly fatigued due to lack of sleep and any quality down time. Sleep deprivation, metabolic disorders and a stressful environment are a constant detriment to our health. Support staff are often living a life for work to survive. Many independent research over years has shown that shift work can lessen your longevity by up to ten years. Our health will suffer well before we expire! As I had worked for 8 years as casual to finally get a permanent part-time position of 3 shifts per week and then add extra shifts to try to make a standard working week. Without penalty rates to take us up to an average income and our constant sacrifices, (that politicians have never had to experience), we would find it financially impossible to survive. Please use common sense and do not attack an already overburdened workforce with an attack on wages and conditions.  "A labourer is worthy of their wages!" |
| 432 | Babinda | QLD | Lets Care for the Caregivers! In Australia nursing staff are the back-bone of health care. The role description of the nurse cannot encompass the actual tasks of caring performed. From the patient who returns to the ward late from the operating theatre and requires a meal to be made by the nurse, to liaising with families about an unwell patient, to cleaning the floor late at night after a patient is incontinent. Nurses from all levels of training including TAFE and University are the glue of healthcare. Communication ensures efficient and effective healthcare and nurses fill this role as communicators between medical, allied health and families joining the dots for patients for quality healthcare. Protecting and improving nursing staffs working conditions including improving patient ratios, retaining penalty rates for shift work which is family unfriendly and wage increases which are congruent with cost of living rises is essential to provide care to the caregivers and their families. Please carefully consider the enormous scope of healthcare service delivered by Australian professional caregivers within the productivity commission inquiry. |
| 422 | Nerang | QLD | I’m 61 and I’ve worked in the gas industry for many years. I have been part of the process of gaining better pay & conditions. I will not stand by & let this Abbott government take away our hard fought conditions! They have no plan to make things better!! Their sole aim is driven by lobbying from the IPA & big business. They would be the winners if this ambiguous pursuit is successful! |
| 444 | Parkwood | QLD | I am a nearly full time nurse working in the health industry with Qld Health. I have been in this industry for 10 years. It was a second career for me. Having trained very hard to be where I am today, sacrificing a lot of time and money to attain this qualification. In studying my family and I have given up a lot including incurring a huge debt to be able to start this new career of mine. In the last ten years I have seen many personal sacrifice not seeing my kids much over the weekends and giving up my health to work night shifts on a regular basis. I speak for most nurses that we have given up a lot of our years and toiled through difficult situations in order to serve the public and country. The only real recognition of our toil is the penalty rates. If your are this away from us I can assure you many of us will quit our current position and retrain or look elsewhere for work. It will no doubt contribute to much chaos. We deserve the penalty rates for the sacrifices we have made and continue to make. Don't take it away from us. |
| 346 | Robina | QLD | In my 32 years as a chef I have never seen the industry in such crisis. The level of skilled workers leaving the industry due to its many levels of abuse and the intake of workers having a low skill set placing extra pressures on the industry with its new mantra of just good enough. With the flow on effect of business owners exploiting their workers, taking advantage of their vulnerabilities and have a total disregard to the Industry award and the repercussions if any effecting them. I have been a chef for 32 years working in Europe and Australia I have seen more than most but one thing has always been true the exploitation of this work force but no more so then NOW. The constant pressure and demands from the industry is rarely understood even with the current flow of cooking shows with their contrived view, unless you have experienced it you will never truly understand the abuse the bullying the intense pressure and then the physical demands it has on the work force. The employer has also great pressures on them with so many varieties of outlets for the consumer to experience the business options are obvious. 1) Increase profit margins 2) Reduce costs It has become increasingly clear which one has been adopted and the facts would speak for themselves and the outcome being: An increase of turnover of the work force. Added pressure to employees with lower skill levels. Higher work place injuries. Higher workplace psychological injuries. Lower payments of penalty rates paid. Intimidation of job loss or reduced hours The award is a poor reflection of our demands and is rarely met or understood by employee and employer, it’s over complicated and easily subjected to abuse. Employees as the business make most of its money on the weekends. The employee has already been disadvantage with casual and part time rates and then for them to lose weekend penalty rates would be a disgrace throwing the industry into another spin and the work force way below the poverty line. Frankly some employers should not be able to employ people and should make way for good operators with an understanding of their respected industry. This would reduce the issues at hand for the employee and the employer given that business would flourish in a less populated environment. The client would now regain confidence with greater service and product and it would eventuate a greater spend initially and over a pacific period. |
| 346 | Robina | QLD | Simply I have never got penalties rates that the award states for weekend work long hours (regular days of over 16 hrs) or most of all no breaks. The opportunity rarely presents itself but there is a provision in the award to compensate for this sacrifice but I have never been offered or accepted for this. In my experience employers meet any discussion on these matters with aggression be it passive or blatant and the possibility of the authorities being involved brings little to no fear. Just imagine how bad it would get if penalties were not in place? The employers mostly are knowingly taken advantage as they themselves are struggling but for good reasons I have seen so many with little to no knowledge of the industry and this is where the seasoned establishment with problems lie. Without these players in the industry it would only benefit professional operators and their employees. Simply people should not be treated this way and some employers should not be allowed workers! Greater penalties for abuse of rights and frequent evaluation of the business, all complaints should be investigated for all that business employees. |
| 368 | Yeronga | QLD | I am retired. My whole working life was shift work...I loved my job...Once family came penalty rates was a justification to continue but I and family did miss out on "togetherness". |
| 366 | Clearview | SA | Due to the recent pay slash to the modern award rate for hospitality I have now fallen two weeks behind in rent, diminished my savings and am now stricken with anxiety and stress as I have no say in my workplace, working 40 hours a week, earning less than $650 p/w, supporting my partner who get a job, my puppy, quarterly bills on the way while struggling to finish my uni degree as I have no time to study due to increased hours to make money that I can barely support myself with. I give up. I'm 22 and I give up. How long will it take for the government to see that we are all human, NOT robots. Where have our rights gone that our grandparents, and their grandparents fought so go damn hard for. We are not numbers, the day your rights are taken away gives us our rights back. |
| 144 | Beaumaris | VIC | I've been working since I was a young teenager at most levels in the workforce. I'm fortunate to have a reasonable job and sufficient investments to secure my partner's and my future. It distresses me to see my younger family and others struggling with employers who are immoral, lairs, cheats and thieves. My son who has worked extremely long hours to pay for two houses has had several employers default on paying his wages, steal his superannuation and exploit his inability to change jobs while sorting out disputes with these employers. My son has walked away from tens of thousands of dollars of superannuation and salaries not paid as employers disappear or go bankrupt or threaten to have him killed (knife to throat) if he tells the workplace authorities. He has witnessed an employer bash employees caught stealing and still fears that person who was a retired policeman. I also know poorer Australians trapped in unemployment in country towns and unable to get work as labourers because overseas visa workers and backpackers take the work. It’s frustrating to see the scumbag employers treat these overseas worked poorly. With these overseas employees its simple, if the tax payments for workers’ salaries get more than 4 weeks in arrears, deport the worker which would quickly shutdown the scumbags. And the taxation department can make sure the proper salaries and taxes are paid. I would prefer full employment for country workers before overseas workers take jobs. Where is the productivity in paying Centrelink benefits to a family while a job is wasted on overseas workers who are exploited and abused by scumbags that steal from the Government (Australia). Younger Australians are being abused in the name of business efficiency. This is not efficient, its very inefficient. And don't believe we need to lower our standards to compete with third world countries, they are whipping us because they are improving their efficiencies and improving their standards. In my experience Asia is making better long term plans and will continue to beat Australia to success. Australia has lowered its professional standards and cannot hope to match Asia's rates of development with dumb business managers and dumber technologists. And while talking management, lets lock politicians salaries with economic health and unemployment. |
| 238 | Elwood | VIC | I think children are exploited and given under award wages. I am retired but concerned for all young people's future. |