



13/2/2015

Wage and Award Review

Dear Sirs/Madam,

I'm the owner of a small Independent retail business in country NSW which competes against Woolworths/Coles and Aldi for business. We also sell fuel and liquor, a one stop top up store! I operate 365 days a year with a staff of approximately 20. The majority of the staff is casual with the majority students.

Why do we operate 365 including Christmas day because we have to make ends meet. With increased electricity charges (\$80,000 & thanks to the Carbon tax being removed-it helped heaps), workers compensation annual payments breaking the \$10,000 pa threshold and \$14,000 per month rent as well as business loan repayments there usually isn't very much in the monthly kitty to be paid.

This business is getting harder as people only look to buy when items are on special. Once you could sell milk/bread etc. and make a dollar profit, now you're lucky to make 20c.

WAGE INCREASES

In 2014 after the wage rises the only way as a small business I could try and keep ahead was to reduce casual hours to make up. Students and senior casuals loss time, finished early and I picked up more shifts, so rather than getting more they received less, not because I felt like it BUT because I had to keep a reign on costs and reduce.... I can't put up prices as I would lose customers to the big chains. **When you take into account wage rises think about small businesses like mine, we are not a Coles or Woolworths making millions a year profit we are a mum and dad business employing local mums and dads as well as school kids, giving them a chance**

SUNDAY:

In 2015, the 21st century people/families etc. expect to be able to shop on Sundays. Sunday is just another day, like Saturday and should be treated as such. 10 years ago YES...Sunday was a day of rest and relaxation BUT in the retail world it's a day the boss has to work or close the store as wages are far too high to make the day worthwhile. In our store no senior person works only juniors 14-15 and an 18 year old. I have adult casuals who would like to work but unfortunately I just cant afford to give them the work. I know many store owners around me who do a similar thing or simply close. The two local newsagents no longer open Sundays at all, we have no newsagent open near us. I feel that we need to move away from this Sunday is a special day, it's the 21st century.

To bring down the rates to a Saturday equivalent would be a godsend for my business. It would open up putting more senior members on as well as more junior students who would love to work.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Once again no senior casual person works on a public holidays, it's just me and 2 or 3 students 14-15 years old. When we get multiple holidays eg Easter: Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday it can be a long haul by the owner.

I have one staff member, very senior (and senior in years) who normally works Friday, Saturday and Mondays. When we get long weekends like this he does not work at all, three days loss of wages. I would love to have him work, but unfortunately at \$50 per hour its out of the question. Even large majors like Coles don't open on some public holidays and most of the small businesses don't open at all over long weekends or even one day public holidays.

AWARD:

Overall I'm happy with the award BUT items like not being able to work 6 days in a row makes it very hard for a young person who wants to work 6 days from working. Im aware they can but paying incredibly high hourly wages does not allow it. I have two young people who want to work. They work 3-4 hours on some days but can't work the extra day due to the "restriction"

5 Hours and a Break

From my reading of the award currently if you work 5 hours you are supposed to have a break of 30 minutes, so I have staff working 5 and a half hour days so they can receive a 30 minutes unpaid meal break. Retail is not a job that is labour heavy..... this rule annoys people and they hate having to "hang around" for an extra 30 minutes.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE

When I took over the business I had one member of staff (Casual) who had been there for 8 years. I made the fatal mistake of not getting her paid out. Now I have had to find an extra \$6000 to pay her 8 weeks of leave. The leave calculator does not take into account what hours she use to do only what she was doing now. Like another larger business in our town, the new owner took no one on and got rid of every staff member and started again, no long service to look after and now only employs casuals.... Ruthless yes BUT desperately we try and keep our businesses above water.

There is a place for Unions in our society BUT they need to move away from it's a US and Them attack. Their demands have killed business, just look at the car industry. Im sure Toyota would of thought "you beaut" we are out of here.... Some of the unions wants help kill that industry. There should be common sense used by Unions BUT unfortunately its all about the employee and not about the impact on the business and owner

When taking into account wage rises and awards for weekends and public holidays DON'T lump the majority of REAL small business in with the likes of the bigger chains like Coles and Woolworths. We are just looking to survive, provide a service for locals and employ locals, and yes make a profit so we can make our businesses better and continue to give local a go and be good citizens, contribute to the tax system and not take.

I apologise about my ramblings but sometimes it comes from the heart as I try and do what's best for the business and community by giving people a go.

Best wishes in your deliberations

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