

Re: 1. Enshrinement of a minimum living wage
2. Maintaining penalty rates

PROLOGUE

Consideration of the author's personal circumstances may render the submission especially compelling as it advocated policy which is contrary to her self-interest.

The author and her children live in poverty and are very frugal in their outlays. the sole indulgence of the author is the consumption of a hot drink and snack at a cafe. She is also looking forward to her birthday for when she may dine at a small inexpensive pizza restaurant. For this, long term planning is underway.

In view of these factors, one would expect the author to recommend the minimization of service costs and to dread the higher remuneration which she proposes.

At times, they can be caught in the dilemma of maintaining hygiene standards and the employer's demand for economizing.

Wider Consideration of Business Expenses:

The challenges of the hospitality industry must be recognized. I suspect that many businesses operate on small margins.

Since electricity, gas and rental costs are exorbitant, it is highly inappropriate to target the minimum wage and penalty rates. Why is this occurring? Consider the old riddle: Where does a 500 pound gorilla sit? Anywhere he likes.

The wealthiest and most powerful interests are the most formidable adversaries of restaurateurs. Whereas the lowest remunerated, who work as individuals or in small teams, unlike corporate structures are exposed, directly approachable and answerable to the employer. The employer however is subject to the landlord and utility company. Micro reform by targeting the employee, the weakest link in the chain of business overheads will not circumvent the need for reform of the utility sector and rental market.

As wage growth is currently very low, increased wages may well ameliorate the contracting economy.

Actual Events:

- A cook, killed in the wee hours by a motoring offender in Carlton.
- Luke Mitchell dies when trying to stop a fight.
- Most horrific of all, Renea Lau is killed by a grotesque low life. Police Commissioner advises women to be careful. Had she been a policewomen going to work, she would have been killed in the line of duty.

At the same time, Jeff Kennett and Federal Parliamentarians urge workers to “flexibly” avail themselves to employers without penalty rates.

- Tori Johnson killed in his café.
- Josie Edden died hurrying to work early one morning.
- A spate of attacks on Indians mythologized as racist, attracting the attention of Indian politicians. In actuality, the motives and modus operandi were purely economical: the criminal sought highest ‘reward’ for the least risk by targeting shift workers amongst whom Indians were highly represented.
- Two weeks ago restaurant kitchen catches fire
- Today (approx. 7.30 am) restaurant catches fire.

Observation:

Penalty rates are aptly named as businesses should be obliged to pay danger money

Social Values and Heritage Protection

Whilst too much of Australia’s history is lamentable and ought to be acknowledged, there is much to treasure. There is a form of history denial which seeks to suppress the reality that many of the benefits enjoyed here have resulted from our Judeo-Christian heritage (and forebears such as Federal Court Judge, His Honour, Henry Higgins). This is irrespective of how secular or multicultural we are now.

People throughout the world, whatever their creed, have also benefited from our heritage.

Multiculturalism discourages the sweeping aside of a newcomer’s heritage. Likewise, we must resist the sweeping aside of Aboriginal and Judeo/Christian heritage.

World Health Organisation Findings:

Medical Scientists including those involved with mental health have confirmed the wisdom of the ancients: that the 24/7 milieu is deleterious to our physical, mental and spiritual health.

I would reiterate that the term “penalty rates” is apt as it recognizes that disregard for natural cycles is insalubrious.

Other factors which warrant an appropriate base rate:

- Cleaning products are invariably hazardous. Even household grade detergents are allergenic and immunosuppressant, never mind spray-on solvents and disinfectants.
- Often hospitality workers are expected to clean toilets.
- They are usually required to obtain their own food handling safety certificates

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