



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 22 February 2010

RETAIL EMPLOYERS ASK FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA TO FIX MINIMUM ENGAGEMENT RULE

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) has today announced that retail industry employer organisations, supported by ACCI, have commenced action in Fair Work Australia to vary industrial relations awards applying in the retail and fast food industries to overcome the problem of young people being denied employment because of inflexible minimum hiring rules.

The National Retail Association, supported by the Australian Retailers Association and ACCI, will ask the new industrial relations tribunal Fair Work Australia to make two variations to these awards:

- a reduction in the minimum engagement of a casual or part time employee from 3 hours to 2 hours; and
- a right for an employer to employ after school employees for less than 3 hours where the employee agrees and where business circumstances require.

ACCI Chief Executive Peter Anderson said “The National Retail Association and the Australian Retailers Association are the established voice of retailers in our industrial relations tribunals, and are in daily communication with retailers on these award rules. The focus of ACCI and our retail industry members is not just on publicity about the problems created by the new awards, but on getting an outcome that works for retailers and staff.”

“The views of the Shop Assistants Union (SDA) and the government on these proposals are also important and will be sought, in the interests of securing the widest possible consensus before seeking a ruling by Fair Work Australia.”

National Retail Association Executive Director Gary Black said “While most daily rosters will continue to require more than two or three hours work to be done, the current three hour minimum is too inflexible given the very diverse circumstances faced by retailers and retail employees. More flexibility is needed so that retailers are not prevented from offering work, especially after-school work in country regions where shops close earlier.”

“Our application to Fair Work Australia is commonsense and designed to make sure that no person is refused work because of the minimum engagement rule.”

Australian Retailers Association Executive Director Russell Zimmerman said that “while retailers readily accept the need for a minimum engagement rule as part of the safety net, the new award had already caused practical problems in the industry that work against the best interests of both employers and employees.”

ACCI represents over 350,000 businesses in every State and Territory and all industries. Our network employs around 4 million employees, ranging from the top 100 companies to tens of thousands of small and medium businesses.



“While this is only one of the problems with the new retail award, fixing this one will make after-school work a viable option in stores that close around 5.30pm or 6.00pm weekdays.”

For further information:

Gary Black	NRA Executive Director	0413 046 614
Russell Zimmerman	ARA Executive Director (Contact Kath Christie)	0422 293 544
Peter Anderson	ACCI Chief Executive	02 6273 2311 / 0417 264 862
David Gregory	ACCI Director of Workplace Policy	03 9668 9950 / 0417 052 390
Brett Hogan	ACCI Director of Communications	03 9668 9950 / 0407 273 884

MR 023/10

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