

Do you want to sign away your teenager's working life ?



As parents, we expect that teenagers will experience being at the bottom of the ladder when entering into their first job and learning the value of a days work. We do, however, want our children to be treated and paid fairly for the work they do.

Under the government's new workplace legislation young workers are especially vulnerable to being exploited and pressured into accepting unfair wages and hours of work.

Young workers under the age of 18 will need to have a parent agree to any individual contract (AWA) they are offered by the employer. This puts parents in a very difficult position of having to either agree to an unfair contract or see their child forgo the job they have been offered.

Worklife wants decent wages and working conditions for all workers, particularly young workers who do not have the skills or experience to negotiate a fair deal. All young workers deserve a chance to gain experience, skills and confidence at work so that they can learn to contribute to society. The award system offers certainty and fairness to both young workers and good employers. Under the new laws, unscrupulous operators can drive young workers away from industries that rely on them.

Young workers being exploited and mistreated at work is not the way to build a decent future for our community.

**Tell your Federal MP
how you feel about your children's right to a
decent future at work.**

A NORTHERN beaches schoolgirl lost her weekend job when she refused to sign a new contract which would have slashed her Sunday pay by 35 per cent. Isobella Buda, 15, sold gelato at Gelatissimo in Manly until a new owner demanded she sign a new contract last August.

"Isobella was terminated after she refused to sign a new contract that would have undercut both her hourly rate of pay and her existing entitlement to penalty rates for working on Sundays," Buda's mother, Kate Lester, told the Senate inquiry into the new workplace laws. Under the contract the franchisee gave her, Buda would have been paid a flat rate of \$6.76 an hour rather than \$7.12 on Saturdays and \$10.41 on Sundays, which is what she had been paid over the previous seven months. She would have also lost a \$3.90 loading on Saturdays.

Lester told the Senate committee in a written submission that new workplace laws "will leave all parents in an invidious position" since those under 18 will not be able to sign workplace agreements without the consent of their parents. "Either I sign the AWA to enable my child to get the job working on less than the award conditions or I refuse to sign the AWA and my child is not offered the job. This is not choice."

Lester, who was an employer herself when she ran a restaurant, was able to speak more generally about the impact she feels the new workplace laws will have on young workers like her daughter.

"They can be sacked without due process, and the idea of someone Bella's age having the negotiating skills to determine a fair outcome for a workplace agreement is ridiculous," she said. "They understand the removal of penalty rates but they don't know how to negotiate with employers who have years of business experience."

Author: Lisa Pryor and Debra Jopson.
Publication: Sydney Morning Herald (10, Tue 25 Apr 2006)

Changes that will affect young workers

Current Award conditions that can be taken away:

Public Holiday Pay

Rest Breaks

Overtime and Shift Loadings

Annual Leave loadings

Incentive bonuses and payments

Penalty rates

Minimum daily hours

Paid Training leave run by unions such as OHS



WHAT THE SURVEYS SAY

Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT) 2005

Surveyed: 5262 people in NSW aged 12 to 25, of whom 72 per cent were in paid work.

78 per cent were casuals

60 per cent were in retail or restaurants/hospitality

One in seven working as casuals were asked to work unpaid overtime

12 per cent had worked an unpaid work trial

23 per cent had been bullied at work

Jobwatch Victoria

Surveyed: 670 fast food industry workers aged under 25.

Ten per cent were not being paid the legal minimum

More than 43 per cent did not know whether they were paid the legal minimum

More than a quarter were not paid or only sometimes paid for overtime

More than 35 per cent had experienced workplace violence or bullying. Of these 68 per cent did not report it in the workplace

Minimum standards in the new legislation (called the Australian Fair Pay & Conditions Standard) provide for:

A minimum wage – currently \$12.75 per hour for adults, less for young workers on junior wages

Hours of work – 38 hours a week averaged over 12 months

Annual leave – 4 weeks per year, an extra week for 24/7 shiftworkers

Parental Leave – 52 weeks unpaid leave

Personal Leave – 10 days per year for sick and/or carers leave plus 2 days unpaid carers and 2 days compassionate leave.

Casual workers - 20% loading in lieu of annual and personal leave

That's it – these are the only five conditions that have to be included in an agreement or individual contract.

Young people deserve better.

Fair standards protect young workers

WorkLife:

An alliance of community and social action groups, trade unionists and concerned individuals campaigning to raise awareness in the community about our rights to a fair, just and dignified life at work (whether currently employed or out of work) and after work in leisure and family time.

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