

WHAT'S AT RISK UNDER ABBOTT?

FACTSHEET: PENALTY RATES AND AWARD CONDITIONS UNDER THREAT

FACT

Tony Abbott will launch a Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Fair Work Act
(*The Coalition's Policy to Improve the Fair Work Laws*, May 2013, pp. 12-13).

This Inquiry will be a soap box for big business to revisit its wish-list to restore key elements of WorkChoices. The big ticket item for business is to cut and abolish penalty rates – our compensation for working

evenings, weekends and public holidays. We know this, because business groups have made more than 20 separate applications to the Fair Work Commission to get rid of penalty rates.

HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT BUSINESS IS EXPECTING TONY ABBOTT TO DELIVER

Leave it to bosses to decide whether employees get paid extra for weekends:

“There should be one pay rate regardless (of when people work), and then from there it'll be between the employer and employee on whether they pay them more than that pay rate.

Council of Small Business Australia head Peter Strong, 19 July 2012

Remove pay and conditions guaranteed by national awards:

“There are a number of reasons including our very high cost base flowing, for example, from the government-imposed so called Modern Award which in reality entrenched the most archaic provisions from the old state awards to create a system which is both inflexible and high cost.

Just Group CEO Mark McInnes, 22 July 2013

Abolish weekend and public holiday penalty rates entirely:

“The problem is that wages on public holidays and weekends greatly exceed the opportunity for profit. So our labour laws are something that need to be looked at.

Celebrity restaurateur George Calombaris, 10 January 2012

BUT THE PRESSURE IS NOT JUST COMING FROM BUSINESS.

MANY IN THE LIBERAL PARTY ALSO WANT TO SEE PENALTY RATES AND AWARD CONDITIONS CUT

“You should be able to negotiate with your employer the conditions of your work. If penalty rates are not productive, if they are not producing efficiency, they cannot be a good thing.

Liberal MHR for Bennelong, John Alexander, 15 August 2011

“I don't think it's fair that people working in a shop on a weekend, and often they're part-time, casual workers, get a higher hourly rate than people who work during the week.

WA Liberal Premier Colin Barnett, 23 February 2012

“There are cafes and restaurants closed on Sundays because the penalty rates are too high.

Liberal MHR for Bradfield, Paul Fletcher, 16 July 2012

SO, WHAT DOES ABBOTT HAVE TO SAY?



“Workplace relations changes over the last few years... are making it harder for you to stay open on Sundays, after hours, on public holidays... You do need more flexibility in your workplace arrangements.

Speech to Tourism and Transport Forum, 12 July 2012