



National Retail Association

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Young employees the victims of Fair Work minimum hours decision

Young and vulnerable employees across the country will be the victims of Fair Work Australia's decision today to maintain inflexible three hour minimum shifts.

The National Retail Association (NRA) said the decision would result in young and vulnerable staff being laid off and denied work.

"Fair Work Australia has ignored the pleas of small regional retailers and interests of young and vulnerable employees by maintaining an unworkable one size fits all approach," NRA Executive Director Gary Black said.

"Unfortunately jobs will now certainly be lost, particularly in regional areas. Low-margin retail businesses simply cannot afford to pay for three hours work when only one and a half hours is required."

The NRA had applied to Fair Work Australia to vary the minimum three-hour shift provisions of the retail award to a minimum of one and a half hours.

"Fair Work Australia acknowledged that the increase to a minimum three hours had led to less employment of school students, and yet we have a decision that flies in the face of commonsense.

"One in every two young Australians relies on retail for an income. The sector shoulders the burden of transitioning the nation's young from school to work, in delivering critical employability skills, and helping develop important life and social skills.

"This decision undermines these social imperatives and appears completely disconnected from the real life experiences of employers and young people," Mr Black said.

Mr Black said the modern retail award requirement was based on capital city considerations where workers travel long distances to work and deserve to be given a guarantee of minimum hours before they are called out.

"This is the whole problem with the new system. An employer and an employee can't make an agreement that works for both of them. We have a one size fits all system that is costing jobs."

The NRA is Australia's largest and most representative retail organisation with more than 3000 members and affiliates located across all states and territories. Its membership includes the majority of Australia's national retail chains and extends across the retail take-away food and fast food sectors.

Gary Black is available for interviews. Media contact: Brad Burke 0458 291 234