

FAIR WORK COMMISSION

4 Yearly Review of Modern Awards

Applicants: Australian Business Industrial and the NSW Business Chamber Ltd

Matter: AM2014/196 (Part Time Employment)

Amended Witness statement of Fran Howell

I, Fran Howell, of [REDACTED] in the state of New South Wales state as follows:

Background

1. I am engaged as a part time Residential Support Worker with Samaritans Foundation Newcastle (Samaritans). My qualifications include a Certificate III in Community Services (Disability Work) and ongoing professional development.
2. My early employment history included work in the banking industry and work as a part-time clerical assistant in small business. From 1998 I worked for six years as a part-time activity officer at a day respite centre funded by what was then Home and Community Care (HACC)

My work with Samaritans

3. I have worked with Samaritans since 2003. On a day-to-day basis my work involves some meal preparation, personal care, preparation and administration of medicines, cleaning, some ironing and house work. I also support with social and community outings and complete progress notes, other documentation and perform administration work.
4. I am a key worker for one person I support. This involves organising social events and birthdays, planning, holidays and other activities. I also liaise with a range of other organisations such as the supported holidays service, doctors, pharmacists. These activities are all usually planned through liaison with the person's family.
5. From time to time I provide support with community and church attendances and am in regular contact with local church ministers. Presently none of the persons I support require assistance with church attendances.
6. I work 48 part time regular hours per fortnight which are rostered over four weeks and includes weekends and sleepovers. Initially I began working 15 hours per fortnight as I then held another part-time job. I later increased this to 64 hours per fortnight. I then reduced my hours to 56 hours per fortnight and thereafter to my current arrangement of 48 hours per fortnight. Each time this has occurred I have had regular hours over a four-week roster and these arrangements have been made by agreement. This roster has changed from time to

time over my 13 years in employment with Samaritans, however on each occasion this has occurred, it has occurred through consultation with myself and all staff on the roster.

Planning and balancing my work and family arrangements

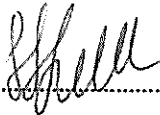
7. The regularity in my working hours enables me to plan and balance my work and family arrangements and let others know when I am available for things such as weekends away, social events and babysitting grandchildren.
8. My partner works Monday to Friday days with a rostered day off each fortnight. My regular hours allow us to plan time that we need to have together to maintain a healthy relationship. We have four adult daughters between us, all of whom have either relationships, children, mortgages or rent payments of their own.
9. I babysit grandchildren three days per fortnight. The days I babysit are arranged around my regular hours. My daughter, Lauren, works full time and has arranged a mixture of day care and other sitters, including myself, for her sons Jack and William. On the days I have Jack and William I drop Lauren's daughter Charli off at school.
10. My other daughter, Alicia, is a single mother and works from home. Alicia's daughter Bonnie is enrolled in preschool for some of the days that I am unable to mind her. This allows Alicia to get her work done in a timely manner. On the days I mind Bonnie I also drop Alicia's eldest daughter, Mia, off at school.
11. The children's day care and preschool placements are permanent and occur on the same days each week. It would become an impossible arrangement if my hours became subject to substantial change from time to time. The security of my part-time work agreement is what enables me to balance these work and family arrangements.
12. Amongst our extended family those other grandparents and aunts who carry out babysitting duties also have other commitments. Should my agreed working hours be regularly altered it would become extremely difficult for these other members of the extended family to change the days they support the children. Should I become unavailable to provide this assistance my daughters would have real difficulty and have to take time off work themselves and would suffer financially. Alternatively paid caring arrangements would need to be made which would impact financially and also affect family relationships.
13. My parents-in-law, Marg and Ken, are now ageing and at times rely on me for transport to specialist appointments and other commitments or help with shopping and at home. It is important for me to be able to reassure my parents-in-law that I am available to provide this support, the security of my part-time work arrangement enables me to do that.

Impact of the proposed changes to part-time work

14. I have read the part time employment clause sought by Australian Business Industrial and the NSW Business Chamber Ltd. I have serious concerns that, if successful, this application

could see a reduction in the number of core employment hours made available to employees and erode the structured approach to part-time work that currently exists in my job.

15. If my position became split into core and less secure, or non-core hours this would impact significantly on my ability to balance my work and family commitments. While I have a strong commitment to my employment and value the contribution that I make each day to the people we support, should there be a significant shift towards the nature of my part-time employment becoming casualised I simply may not be able to commit to the hours that I am currently able to work.
16. Having well-structured predictable part-time work arrangements is also beneficial for the people I support. They do not all find it easy to have changes in staff, and like to know the people who will be supporting them in their living arrangements on a daily basis.
17. Usually Samaritans make use of casual staff or part time staff who want more work to fill vacant shifts. Generally I prefer not to perform additional work, however occasionally if there is an urgent need I can make myself available by working some additional hours depending on other commitments.



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Fran Howell

Date: 6/7/16