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The Hon. Justice Ian Ross
President
Fair Work Commission
11 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Via email: amod@fwc.gov.au

Dear President

AM2014/305 – Four Yearly Review of Modern Awards

I am writing to the Commission to express the Northern Territory Government position on penalty rates in the hospitality and retail sectors.

The NT Government absolutely opposes any proposals to reduce penalty rates. We understand that penalty rates not only provide compensation for those who work unsociable hours, but they also form a necessary part of the take-home pay for hundreds of thousands of workers. Any reduction in penalty rates will also reduce the pay and living conditions for the Territorians who rely on them to makes ends meet.

Workers in our service industries work evenings, weekends, and public holidays. They work during times when many of us are relaxing and recreating. The existing penalty rates regime provides some monetary compensation for these workers in lieu of them being able to spend this time with family and friends.

Due to the wind-down of the construction phase on the INPEX LNG Project the Northern Territory economy is in dire need of workers who are fairly paid. By taking money out of the pockets of workers, we would also be reducing the ability for these workers to spend this money with local businesses.

Many workers in the Northern Territory, whether local, migrant, or temporary, rely on the safety net afforded by their modern award both directly and indirectly. It is the Government's opinion that the erosion of award conditions will negatively affect workers, and undermine faith in the Modern Award safety net.

I respectfully urge the Commission to reject all proposals to reduce penalty rates.

Yours sincerely

MICHAEL GUNNER

27/3/17

