

Fair Work Act 2009
FAIR WORK COMMISSION

s. 156 - 4 yearly review of modern awards

AM2017/40

**4 YEARLY REVIEW OF MODERN AWARDS – HAIR AND BEAUTY
INDUSTRY AWARD 2010 – PENALTY RATES**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF DONNA MAGUIRE

I, Donna Maguire, of Paeroma, [REDACTED],
hairdresser, STATE as follows:

Qualification

1. I commenced a hairdressing apprenticeship at the Gold Coast in 1980. This was a four-year apprenticeship which involved one day of coursework per week and the rest of the time working at a salon.
2. I moved from Emerald to the Gold Coast to undertake the apprenticeship and boarded with a family paying \$30 per week in rent. I remember earning \$63 per week during my apprenticeship.
3. I had significant financial support from my family and also received some government support during my apprenticeship. I don't think I could have met my living costs without this support.

Employment history

4. After completing my apprenticeship and working for a short period I opened my own salon. I operated the salon from around 1985 to 1993.
5. I then stopping regular paid employment to start a family. I continued performing some freelance hairdressing work during this period.
6. I returned to working as a hairdresser in April 2017 when I commenced casual employment with Jodi's Salon in Emerald. I am employed as a Senior Stylist.
7. I currently usually work on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I work two to three Saturdays per month and occasionally on Sundays.

Impact of penalty rate reductions

8. I am very strongly opposed to the proposed penalty rate cuts because I care about the industry and am concerned about their impact on an already low-paid workforce.
9. I have personally seen many young hairdressers leave the industry after completing their apprenticeship because the wages are too low. ~~They can earn more being a waitress or a cleaner and these occupations don't have the same stress and responsibility as a hairdresser.~~
10. Hairdressing requires the working of difficult hours. Most hairdressers have to work on Thursday night and on at least one day of the weekend.
11. Hairdressing work is tough. You are on your feet all day and have to listen to customers who are regularly complaining about various aspects of their life. This can become emotionally and physically draining as the customers expect some sympathy and almost guidance from us in addition to getting their hair cut. I have heard customers complain about domestic violence issues at times. Hairdressing is a bit like being a semi-psychologist.
12. I consider hairdressing to be a significantly underpaid profession. I regularly pay around \$100 per hour for the labour of a plumber or electrician. These people are trade qualified but so are hairdressers. This situation seems grossly unfair. Hairdressers endure the difficulties associated with undertaking an apprenticeship ~~and then when they finish they end up earning the same wages as retail and hospitality workers who are not trade qualified.~~
13. ~~The reduction of Sunday and public holiday penalty rates would be a huge setback for the industry. From my experience no hairdressers actually want to work on a Sunday or even a Saturday. They do it because it is expected by employers and because the extra pay helps to make it financially worthwhile. That all changes if the current rates are reduced. Those that can are likely to leave the industry and people without that option will just have to tough it out on an even worse income.~~
14. Hairdressing apprenticeships used to be highly sought after and valued in the past including when I undertook mine. ~~That has changed dramatically as the wages have failed to move at anywhere near the same rate as cost of living increases.~~ It ^{now} is not attractive to undertake ^{this} a trade qualification ~~and then spend your working life earning around the same as an unqualified cleaner.~~
15. ~~I urge the Fair Work Commission to focus on improving conditions in this important industry and not to entertain any reduction to the current conditions.~~

DONNA MAGUIRE

DATE: 20 JUNE 2018