



AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Hotel industry rejects PM's 'unsociable' tag

The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) has rejected the Prime Minister's claim today that working outside standard business hours is "unsociable" and "irregular".

The Prime Minister reportedly made the comments in a speech to the ACTU Conference in Canberra.

AHA National CEO Des Crowe expressed disappointment that the Government maintains an antiquated view of penalty rates.

"It is no longer accurate to describe weekend and evening work as unsociable or irregular, as the Prime Minister has said today.

"More and more people are actively seeking work outside the traditional Monday to Friday, nine-to-five working week, including students, parents with young children and people seeking a second income."

Mr Crowe said the issue of penalty rates was particularly important to the hospitality and tourism sector, which operates according to customer demand, including evenings, weekends and public holidays.

"The majority of hours worked in hotels attract penalty rates in some form because this is when customer demand for hotels is greatest. Enshrining the antiquated current penalty rate structure in legislation condemns the hospitality and tourism industry to being permanently disadvantaged.

"The current penalty rates system is simply not sustainable. This amendment to the Act should not prevent a review by an independent industrial tribunal that considers the impact on both employees and employers.

"The AHA is not calling for penalty rates to be removed, we are simply saying that there needs to be a proper consideration of how penalty rates are impeding the hospitality and tourism industry.

"The requirement to pay public holiday rates of 275 per cent often forces hotels to reduce operations, meaning casual employees miss out on income they would otherwise have received."

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