

Statement of Katelin McNerney

I, Katelin McNerney, Director of the Media Section of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) make the following statement.

I conducted a survey of journalists from May to August 2016. 209 responses were received. Attached is a copy of the survey. The survey was directed at gaining insights into modern journalist work environments and was issued to journalists working at digital and print/digital workplaces.

Survey respondents worked at print publications, digital/online publications and in broadcast journalism (who have been removed for clarity).

We asked a range of questions regarding type of work, frequency, employment status, previous work history, whether they regularly worked overtime, public holidays or unsociable hours, whether they were compensated for that work, whether they would prefer payment for overtime and penalty shifts and whether they had considered leaving the industry due to lack of recognition for long hours and unpaid overtime.

Key findings:

- 164 reported regularly working overtime -
- 144 of those reported they were permanent full-time workers (not freelance, casual or other)
- Of those:
 - 20 reported working 10+ hours overtime every week
 - 28 reported working 5-8 hours overtime every week
 - 46 reported working 3-4 hours overtime
 - 31 reported doing 1-2 hours
 - 19 reported they did no overtime
- 65% of full-time workers regularly did more than 4 hours overtime a week.
- Only 11 of the 113 permanent full-time respondents who answered the question “would they prefer to be compensated for overtime and other shift penalties (if they weren’t already receiving them) said they were happy with the current TOIL arrangements and felt TOIL was an adequate compensation
- The majority of those who preferred to receive payment cited the reason as being the additional payment would boost their low income and would help them be more financially secure in an uncertain industry.

- Other reasons included:
 - They were not currently receiving all, or in some cases, any time off in lieu or recognition from their employer for their overtime worked
 - They wanted adequate financial compensation for missing out on social time with their families – many comments referred to TOIL not being adhered to in the workplace and so was further exacerbating that problem.
 - That payment would serve as a better deterrent to their employer to work them overtime.

Summary

The overwhelming majority of participants would prefer to be compensated for overtime through direct payment at overtime rates. The majority of workers felt that more fairly recognised the considerable overtime they work, and would greatly assist to bump up what they consider to be very low wages. In all four cases where yearly wages were disclosed, all four were under the National average.

Many also said they felt their employer was more likely to deal with excessive overtime if they were made to pay for it – and would better serve both the disincentive motivation of paid overtime and more adequately recognise the work MEAA members are putting in to get their respective publications out to their audiences.

15 November 2016

Let's Make our Award Relevant

The media industry is transforming as digital media rapidly replaces print – but working conditions for many journalists are locked in the analogue age.

The main industry award for journalists (the Journalists' Published Media Award 2010) provides online-only journalists fewer working protections than those in print media.

We have an opportunity to change that with a new review of the Award by the Fair Work Commission to take place this year.

MEAA will be seeking to modernise the Award to i. extend hours of work; ii. overtime; iii. shift penalty payments and other key conditions to employees engaged by online publications.

To do so, we need to provide evidence to the Commission about digital journalists' working arrangements.

By taking part in this confidential survey, you can help build a picture of what life is really like for the modern digital journalist so we can improve conditions for everyone.

ABOUT YOU

Name:

Mobile:

Email:

Gender: M / F / unidentified

Union member: Y / N

(please indicate whether you want your personal details to remain confidential)

MEAA wants everyone's feedback, but you ought to know that the Award only covers employees, *not* independent contractors / freelancers.

- x. How long have you worked in the media/publishing industry?
- x. Which news organisations/publishers/mastheads do you mainly work for?
- x. What is your current role? e.g. journalist, reporter, social media editor, columnist etc.
- x. Which applies to you? [Drop down]

Full time

Part time

Casual

Other [Please specify]

x. How many ordinary (contracted) hours do you work per week? (eg. 38 for full-time, 3 days per week for part-time)

x. Do you regularly work overtime above your usual hours?

x. If yes, how many hours per week? Drop box

1-2

3-4

5-8

10+

x. Are you compensated for working overtime (time off, payment, flexible hours, etc.) If yes, how?

x. Do you regularly work early mornings, evenings or on the weekend?

x. Are you compensated for unsociable hours, including through Time-off-in-lieu or other arrangement?

x. Do you feel that your rate of pay is adequate compensation for the hours that you work? Yes/no/don't know

x. Are you regularly required to work on public holidays?

x. Are you compensated for working public holidays (eg. additional annual leave, time off in lieu, penalty payment)? [Open question]

x. What impact would receiving overtime compensation, weekend rates and shift penalties have on you? [Open question]

x. Has the lack of overtime, shift penalty payments and other conditions led you to consider leaving the industry? [Open question]

x. Do you know how your working conditions are determined? [Drop down – Award/enterprise agreement, individual contract, don't know]

x. Can we contact you to seek further information? Y / N

x. Would you be prepared to tell your work story to the Fair Work Commission? Y / N / Tell me more