

**SPYNS YOUNG PEOPLE –
CASE STUDIES OF EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES**

1. Ben is employed by a local car dealership. He was presented with an AWA which he took home for his parents to look over. His parents pointed out aspects of the AWA which were not beneficial to their son. Ben decided not to sign the AWA. The employer told Ben that while he would not be dismissed he would also not be able to gain promotion in the firm.

2. Louise works for a large supermarket chain in Penrith. She started as a casual 4 years ago. Recently she was presented by her supervisor with an AWA which she had to sign on the spot. She asked if she could take the contract home for her parents to look over but was told if she did that she would not have a job to come back to. She signed the AWA but was angry as she had a very good work record over the past 4 years and had shown her loyalty and punctuality to her employer.

Louise was then put on a 3 months probation period under her AWA. Her hourly rate decreased as she was moved from casual to permanent part time. This she did not mind because she was told she would be compensated by having sick leave and holiday pay. Her probation period passed. She had a bout of illness caused by influenza and she advised her workplace of this and obtained a doctor's certificate verifying her days absent from work. Her next pay was docked the sick days. When enquiring about why this was so she was told that sick pay is only paid if the worker personally requests it.

3. Rebecca and Julia work for a local fast food outlet. They are both high school students. Often they are called on at the last minute to take up shifts or asked to remain on after their shift has finished to fill up for someone else. This often means that they are working well into the night to accommodate the needs of their workplace. These last minute requests interfere with their ability to study, prepare their homework for school and enjoy a social life. When they would have preferred to decline these last minute requests they have been told that they will get no shifts at all if they can't be responsive to the requests of the workplace.

4. John is a young lad with a mild intellectual disability he has low literacy and numeracy skills. John works for a Restaurant in Penrith. Recently he was offered an AWA. This was given to him at the end of the shift and he was told to sign it on the spot. It took away all of his penalty rates and he was offered a flat \$10.00 per hour no matter what time of day he worked or what day of the week he worked. John signed his AWA without being aware of

the consequences of what he was signing or fully understanding the concepts contained therein.

5. Jane got a job with an employer who owns a play venue for young children with a café attached for the parents. The employer asked Jane to sign an AWA. Jane took it home to show her parent. Her mother was concerned because it said I would be working on a part time basis without penalty rates or overtime and that all holiday, sick leave etc was built into the flat rate of \$8 per hour. They also said that they could call her into work at any time and could send her home after two hours if things were not busy. When questioned about the conditions they said the position was not covered by an award and that Jane could either sign or let someone else do the job. Although Jane's mother advised her not to sign Jane did because she needed the money. In the first few weeks Jane was offered shifts of two hours per week. The work was exhausting supervising children, cleaning duties and working in the café. Jane felt like she was being used. Jane hated working there and after a short while found another job where she felt valued as an employee, she is on \$2 more an hour base rate and has the possibility of bonuses. Jane says to other young people just keep looking until you find a job with someone who cares.

Maree McDermott

Laura Williams