

Saskia Lawrence  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

26 July, 2018

**Committee Secretary  
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000**

Submission to Inquiry into Wage Theft in Queensland:

Following my recent email to not only my Local Member as well as to my State Member I would like to take this opportunity to make a submission for consideration to the inquiry.

I have been a resident of the Fraser Coast for some 10 months and have been actively pursuing employment opportunities. Before moving there, I was gainfully employed as a Room Attendant for some 2 ½ years by a reputable 5 star resort on the Sunshine Coast. I was also employed on a permanent part time basis as a bookkeeper having Cert IV qualifications for a wedding reception venue.

There have been a number of occasions where I have been trying for similar employment within housekeeping with various places of accommodation in the Fraser Coast region. Most of the businesses that I approached either through an advertised position or through an inquiry of interest indicated that their basis of employment, whilst defining it as casual, actually insisted on the use of an ABN. Despite my indicating to them that to apply for an ABN in order to obtain employment is not legal, the general attitude was one of indifference and needless to say I was unable to secure a job with them. Most recently, the prospective employer was in fact willing to offer employment on the basis of an employee but upon realising the rates of remuneration as set out under the Hospitality Award, the offer was withdrawn before even starting for reasons of not being able to afford the rate commensurate with the employment classifications of the Award. As to whether the position was then offered to another person who was prepared to work under an ABN is not known.

I pointed similar concerns out to the ATO about 6 months ago but never heard anything more. In the meantime, I keep trying to legitimately obtain gainful employment with no success to date. This, in turn, leads to a continued reliance on Jobsearch benefits through the Department of Human Resources whilst meeting their requirements also. I am 54 years of age; tertiary qualified (Bachelor of Economics with Monash University Melbourne) with additional qualifications of Cert IV in Financial Services (bookkeeping) as well as Cert IV in Accounting both funded by myself. I have been described by a previous Job Search Provider as 'a square peg in a round hole' – I'm sure there are many more people out there like myself who are not only qualified but also keen to find work. Centrelink seems to be unable to assist our category of unemployed despite making us jump through hoops and 'work for the dole'!!

It is a costly avenue for me to consider registration as a BAS Agent with the Tax Practitioners Board which therefore prevents me from setting out as a self-employed Bookkeeper although I have the qualifications recognised by the TPB but not the funds for professional indemnity insurance, registration itself and continuing professional education. This is before getting out there and securing clientele. It begs the question as to how many self-employed bookkeepers/BAS Agents there are out there that are not abiding by these requirements as set out by the Tax Agent Services Act 2009.

Not only is the Government faced with an ever increasing ageing population and deferring the retirement age, but what they seem to be ignoring is that there will be an ever increasing amount of people who, at my current age, continue to be unemployed despite all efforts to the contrary and remain on Jobsearch until retirement age. Allowing businesses to offer employment to people only with the use of an ABN makes the situation even more untenable for those that continue to abide by the law as it stands.

I welcome any constructive comments to this submission.

With regards,

Saskia Lawrence – [REDACTED]