



**PUBLISHED: 31 JANUARY 2012**

### **SDA continues to defend rights of retail workers**

The Shop Distributive and Allied Employees' (SDA) Union will tomorrow begin its appeal to the Federal Court, against Fair Work Australia's recent decision to let retailers employ secondary school students for less than three hours.

National Secretary Joe de Bruyn said today the appeal was part of an ongoing battle to defend the three hour casual minimum payment for all retail employees.

"This appeal is about defending a fundamental entitlement of all employees." Mr de Bruyn said.

"The National Retail Association and employer groups would have the public believe that the SDA's appeal will take shifts away from secondary school students. The assertion is both without merit and misleading; throughout all the proceedings to date, our evidence, expert research and witnesses have proven that the level of employment among full-time students is in fact very healthy."

"What the SDA is in fact trying to prevent is a reduction in minimum shift hours for those students currently working – some 90,000 to 130,000 across Australia - as well as protect other more vulnerable workers, including those young people not in school, who face a very real threat of reduced hours or job loss if the new minimum shift regulation is permitted."

"Employers are grimly pursuing these reduced shifts for secondary school students as the only remaining part of their unsuccessful and long-running bid to slash the current minimum engagement for all casuals from three to two hours." Mr de Bruyn said.

"Since the Modern Retail Award was established in January 2010, employers have attacked the casual minimum engagement on four separate occasions. They have provided little evidence in support of their submissions and continue to rely upon rhetoric and misinformation about promoting jobs for young people and increasing flexibility in the workplace."

"The SDA will continue to vigorously appeal against the stealthy chipping away of the fundamental entitlement for all workers, regardless of age, to be guaranteed three hours of pay for the time and cost of travelling to and from work." Mr de Bruyn said.

The SDA is the largest union in Australia, representing over 230,000 employees nationally.

Media contact: Joe de Bruyn 0410 524 579; [joe@sda.org.au](mailto:joe@sda.org.au)

<http://www.sda.org.au/>