



# **Private Sector Clerical & Administrative Workers Survey Results**

**October 2008**

## ***Overview & Demographics***

- Survey conducted between 7 – 28 October 2008
- 435 respondents
- From all States and Northern Territory
- 73% Female
- 5% 24 years or under
- 32% 25-39 years old
- 45% 40-45 years old
- 18% 55-69 years old
- Private Sector industries represented include Business Services, Retail/Wholesale, Manufacturing & Metal Industry, Hospitality, Newspapers, Professional & Technical Services, Call Centres, IT and Health
- Occupations were wide and varied including Personal Assistants, Account & Finance Clerks, Supervisors, Customer Service Officers, Receptionists, Data Entry Clerks, Payroll Clerks, Call Centre Operators and many more specific job titles

## ***Working on Saturday Mornings***

- 58.5% of respondents said they never work Saturday mornings
- 19.4% of respondents said they rarely worked on Saturday mornings (once per year)
- 12.9% of respondents said they Occasionally (less than once a month but a number of times a year) worked on Saturday mornings
- Of those who work on Saturday mornings:
  - 68% said they had a choice as to whether to work on Saturdays or not
  - 62% said they received a penalty of loading for the hours worked on Saturday
  - 64% said if they didn't get a penalty rate on Saturday they took time in lieu
- Those who work on Saturdays in the private sector were evenly split in opinion as to whether their employer would ask them to do more work on Saturdays if there was no penalty or loaded rate for their work (see selected comments at Appendix A)
- Of those who never work on Saturday 34% thought their employer would ask them to work on weekdays if weekend work did not attract a penalty or loaded rate (see selected comments at Appendix B)

## ***How do you feel about doing Saturday work?***

- 386 respondents provided a written answer to this question. Overwhelmingly the respondents expressed negative views about the impact of Saturday work on their personal and family lives. A snapshot of comments is at Appendix C.

## ***In the Award modernisation process some employers are arguing that Saturday morning work should not attract a penalty or loading. What do you think?***

- Respondents said as follows:
  - 95.5% thought this was unfair
  - 1% thought it was fair
  - 3.5% were not sure

***If Saturday morning work did not attract a penalty or loaded rate, do you think your employer would ask you to do more of it?***

***If yes, why?***

### **Selected comments**

1. They force and threaten us to work all the time. Turnover is high, we have no union representation.
2. Cost saving & avoid hiring new staff.
3. Costs them nothing to less!!!
4. Cheaper for employer... I am on a salary - so don't attract penalties...but the non-salaried staff would be asked to work more often if no penalties applied.
5. We are an American company so would be more in fitting with their working week.
6. My employers are in to the greed game.
7. Without penalty rates people would not be so willing to work Saturdays and others would have to take up the slack. At the moment the penalty rates make working more attractive.
8. It wouldn't cost them anymore to roster me on Saturday.
9. Because they would be able to get work done out of standard business hours for cheaper.
10. It would cost them nothing, so there is no incentive not to ask people to work on weekends.
11. Staff costs are always the major cost - more work for less pay is obviously attractive to employers.
12. Employers are always looking to squeeze more out of you.
13. The employer would not have to pay penalty or overtime rates to their employees. I think this type of employer would take advantage of the situation. It shows a lack of respect for the worker and the worker's family and there should be recognition for what the employee does for business. Having the overtime and penalty rates are there to protect the worker and what they do.
14. Why not....it's cheaper and destroys quality of time life for families.
15. They may ask for more Saturday morning work to make my services more accessible to the public at the expense of my own family life.
16. The use of their assets more frequently instead of sitting idle.
17. Cheap weekend labour.
18. Because in my industry we are required to work on the weekends to be available to our customers. My employer would definitely get more to staff to work weekends and more often as we are very short staffed but employers do not want to pay out too many penalty rates.

***If Saturday morning work did not attract a penalty or loaded rate, do you think your employer would ask you to work on Saturday mornings?***

***If yes, why?***

### **Selected comments**

1. I think if ordinary hours of work for admin workers included time that is out of business hours (sat) then this time might be perceived as an ideal time to perform the multitude of non-immediate secretarial tasks such as filing etc.
2. Because he wouldn't have to pay more and he would also ask other duties that would not normally be in my employment in the manufacturing industry as he would not ask the workers that do attract a penalty rate to work.
3. At the moment Administrative staff (myself) do not work Saturday due to penalties, if this is taken away they would implement a roster and have you work.
4. The Saturday would be considered another work day.
5. They won't have to pay casual staff to come in.
6. Because it does not cost the company anymore – would not be considered overtime.
7. The employer would not have to pay penalty or overtime rate. This would disadvantage the worker and the worker's family in a way of compensation of some description. Most employers do not want to pay overtime to employees, so this is out. Not to pay the employee is showing a form of disrespect and not acknowledging time they are giving up away from the family.
8. Because the 'Not for Profit' Aged Care Industry seems to prey on the good nature of workers to extract more than their pound of flesh already without blinking an eye lid to the fact that the workers underpaid for what they contribute already.
9. Greater productivity and more profit for them.
10. They want to exploit their workforce and effectively pay less wages.
11. It is unlikely to happen in policy areas. But I could see it happening in retail - no additional cost to the business other than ordinary hours wages - but potential boost to revenue.
12. Extra hours worked but at a flat Mon-Friday rate. Bonus for the boss - bad luck for the worker!

***How do you feel about doing Saturday work (eg. would it positively or negatively impact your personal/family life, etc)?***

### **Selected comments**

1. Saturday morning work would have a definite negative impact on my life.
2. Would refuse to work Saturdays as it would impact heavily on personal/family life.
3. It would have a huge impact on my children being able to participate in weekend sport. No one available to take them, therefore missing out on a vital part of their life.
4. Working with a family is difficult enough without taking further time out on the weekends. The stress of working full time makes it very hard to complete all other necessary tasks around the house, garden, children activities as it is.
5. Negative impact as we have life saving on weekends and only one day or half a day to do house work and visit the rels on.
6. Don't agree with it unless penalties applied.
7. Without a doubt. If i wanted to work Saturday i would become a shift worker.
8. It would negatively impact on my personal/family life. We already work long hours to complete tasks which takes us away from family etc.
9. I don't have children, but value my own time on weekends & time with my partner. I would be extremely angry & resentful if I had to work Saturdays!!
10. I'm not interested in weekend work (walked away from a high paying Telemarketing role due to interference in family commitments) Only interested in occasional Weekend work if the pay justified time away I'm not willing to sacrifice time with family for free. If I wanted to work Saturdays I would look for a casual job.
11. Detrimental impact upon family life & relationships.
12. I believe weekend work negatively impacts my personal life as I'm not able to catch up with friends, have regular meetings for personal interests - it generally causes disruption to anything outside work.
13. I spend Saturdays with my family and catching up house work. Having less time when family are all available to catch up would be detrimental to the amount and quality of time spent together.
14. It would negatively impact on my family life. The unions fought for a 5 day working week years ago, why do we need now to fight for it again??? Do CEO's/Managers/Employers forget we have a life & we work to live, not live to work???
15. Negatively. I work full time to support a career in the visual arts, and if I did not have full weekends I would not be able to further my career in the arts. It would further and severely impact on my relationship with my partner and family.
16. It would further detract from the family/work balance. Family life seems to be increasing forced to take the back seat when it comes to the employer's needs and whim. Employee's give, give, give of their time, yet the flexibility is not there when we need to give back to our families.

17. I would not appreciate being expected to work weekends on a routine basis and/or without additional pay. This proposed change would adversely effect my ability to interact with my local community, attend community group meetings, local markets, sporting and cultural events.
18. It will start with Saturday and then they'll take our whole weekend away. Soon we'll be back in the dark ages with no workers rights left.
19. For our organisation, it is not required. If it were it would have a negative impact on my personal life as I have a second job that I work at nights and on weekends.
20. I am on casual rates .I do not want to work on Saturday mornings. Especially not without loadings
21. It would be a definite negative, we have elderly parents who we look after and growing family, eg. grandchildren
22. At present it is optional - wouldn't like it to become a regular occurrence as that could have a negative impact as we often go away on weekends.
23. It would not only impact on my family life but my health as well. I work full time but I have a condition where I need to rest and elevate my legs as much as possible and Saturday and Sunday is my only opportunity to do that.
24. I'm happy to do it occasionally, but only with penalty rates.
25. It would remove a little bit more of my private time that has been steadily eroded through unpaid overtime.
26. I would not work weekends at ordinary rate of pay. If I was forced to then I would work to rule and use all my sick leave etc.
27. I don't want to work Saturdays. I need to have them off to be with my children as i am a single parent without other support.
28. If I was asked to work on Saturday morning on a regular basis this would severely reduce the time I spend with my family, and the time I spend getting to medical appointments I can't get to during the week. I do work around the house on Saturday morning and give my dogs and I much needed exercise. I fit a lot of life into that time and if I worked instead, I wouldn't be able to do a lot of these things.
29. 6 days work a week is awful.
30. Saturday morning is a part of the weekend! It is necessary to have a complete break from work to ensure the quality of work continues, rather than have employees burn out from overwork. Having lived in the UK, where this is common, I have seen many employees very quickly become sick of work and move jobs as a result.
31. Impact very definitely negatively, my husband has to work Saturday's in the construction industry this would mean that I could not as there would be no one to look after the kids. Let's face it family time is very important to all.
32. I work full time as it is and can only get to some shops to do my shopping on Saturday morning, therefore, by working I would not be able to do this. Furthermore, I am the only family support my sister can rely on and at time I also need to do this on a Saturday. Once again if I were working this would also impact negatively on my sister who has two children and a husband on Shiftwork!
33. It would most definitely affect me negative impact – I have two small children and a disabled husband!!!! – My family comes first.

34. Don't mind now because it's voluntary and I get time in lieu which is useful for appointments etc. If it was mandatory and I got nothing for it I wouldn't be happy and if I have kids in future I wouldn't want to work weekends at all.
35. It will affect negatively my personal/family life and my work performance as well. The proposed changes are behind all European law standards. The Australian Government works against own citizens.
36. I'm happy to do it if there is a lot of work built up which needs doing, and I'm not too worried about my bosses screwing me over. But the idea that Saturday morning work could become 'normal hours' is disgusting. There should always be penalty rates for this kind of work being done on weekends and employers shouldn't be able to force people to work, with or without penalties (if they're employed under a contract with fixed weekly hours). People who work hard during the week need a good Saturday morning, this proposal could have a hugely negative impact on many people's personal and family lives.
37. I think it would have a damaging effect on both OHS and family responsibilities. It would mean people are spending less time with friends and family and away from the work station. The great thing about weekends is that everyone has them off and you have the time to spend it with people outside of the workplace. It would mean I would resent coming to work.
38. I feel terrified at the possibility. This is the time I run errands for my father who is elderly and ill, and the main reason why I moved into my current job was precisely so I did not have to work weekends.
39. It would have a negative impact on my personal life and if I had to do Saturday work, I would seriously consider changing jobs.
40. Have worked many Saturdays in other jobs, and the loading was certainly an encouragement. My partner often works Saturdays but in return gets an extra week's holiday per year.
41. As a consumer I want to access services on a Saturday. As a worker, I would find Saturday work an imposition. It would belong to those unsociable hours for which a penalty should apply: - Firstly to compensate for the having to work unsociable hours. - Secondly to give the employer an incentive to find a more sociable solution.
42. If it is on top of my normal working week I would certainly want a penalty or loading. I am very used to a 5 day week and I currently attend a gym on Saturday morning as it is closed for the rest of the weekend so I would lose that which I would not like.
43. I left Retail because of the Weekend Work and the late hours. I took a 50% drop in wages to improve my homelife as the weekend work and the after office hours work was basically tearing my family apart. I feel very strongly that Weekend work if it is needed should be voluntary only and paid at a penalty rate.
44. It is difficult to work Saturday as my husband is in retail and works Saturday every week. I have to get family member to look after my children because there is no day care on the few Saturdays I actually have to work. If my family is not available for some reason I can't work Saturday and I am scared I could lose my job.
45. Very big negative affect on my life style and family commitments.
46. I would hate it. I did hospitality work for 10 years - split shifts, night work, weekend work. I cherish my weekends. It's the only time I can catch up with family.
47. Would not do Saturday work under any circumstances. As a divorced father I only see my children on Saturdays & Sundays.

48. I do not think it is reasonable to extend the working week and make it any longer than necessary. I would hate to think what would happen to families, especially single parent families who would need to arrange childcare on the weekend and for those children who would lose precious family time.
49. Having spent many years working weekends in the retail industry, I would never want to lose my weekends again. I appreciate having a job where my days off coincide with my friends. If I were asked to work on a weekend I would expect to be offered enough incentive that it would be worth my while giving up my weekend. I would expect an employer to manage time and workloads to minimise the need for clerical staff to work on weekends.