

To the Parliamentary Inquiry into Contracting

My name is _____, until August of 2004 I was employed as a worker with a smallgoods company in the northern suburbs of Hobart. I was aware that another Company operating in a separate facility, on the same worksite, was producing product for a large national company. The workers were all engaged as independent contractors.

I was offered the opportunity to join the team and did not hesitate. I resigned my employment and signed on with the contract agency involved with the operation.

I was provided with access to income protection insurance and public liability insurance cover by the contract agency. Soon after commencing we negotiated a piecework system of payment. My weekly payment increased considerably when the piecework system started. I have subsequently negotiated an alternate income protection cover with an insurer of my choice, and am saving further money.

We take our work very seriously. We are producing a food product and our quality assurance compliance system is vital to our continued patronage by the national company we supply. We know our jobs depend upon the continued patronage of that company.

We are all focussed on our future, and on the future of our business. We are a small team of nine workers, (swelling to eleven during peak periods), and we are all enjoying the opportunity of hard work for fair reward in our own business.

I can only guess the owners are happy with our production process, timing and volume, as we never see them! In the past, when we were paid on an hourly basis, there were on site visits each week. Now we just get on and do the work, because we are paid on the basis of the product produced.

The State Secretary of the union visits the employees in the other business on the site. He considers us "scabs" and does not talk to us. He has a couple of "stooges" in that factory that help him to hold those workers under the State Award and the draconian "average" conditions that apply - thus not rewarding individual, or team, effort.

Of course, contracting is not for everyone. Those that don't want to take responsibility for their own livelihood & future and be rewarded for their effort, should not apply. Those that want protection, from a system lost in antiquity, should not apply. Those that are prepared to have a go and get on with the job, will love contracting as it rewards those prepared to work.

As a result of our work ethic, and our savings, my wife and I will be travelling to Europe this year for our first overseas trip. I will come home to a contract position, and I will start saving for our next overseas trip or we may purchase another property. Contracting is my way of life, and my family and I will reap the benefits of my efforts now, in the future.

If I can be of any assistance to the Enquiry, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

CONTRACTOR ENQUIRY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am an independent contractor engaged through an Odco Contract Agency in Tasmania.

I suffered a serious shoulder injury in my previous long term employment in November of 1999 and had difficulty finding regular work for 2 years. This followed 12 months of physio & injections. My rotator cuff injury means I cannot perform work that requires me to lift my arm above shoulder height. Employers are reticent to employ workers who have had previous injuries - The risk of re-injury and the threat to their workers compensation premiums is too great and I was rejected for such work on many occasions.

I first became involved with agency contracting during a fruit picking season. A contract agency was involved and I was required to provide my own income protection insurance rather than being covered by an employer's workers comp cover. The Agency assisted with the provision of such insurance. Under the Tasmanian Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act a contractor is required to have "accident insurance".

Subsequent to that initial fruit picking position the Agency offered me the opportunity to work on a more regular basis for one of their clients. I have now been with that client for 12 months and work a regular 40 hours per week constructing pallets for zinc export.

I became an agency contractor by necessity. Agency contracting has provided me with regular work in a field where I could never hope to be employed with my injury. I am good at my work, and I have every confidence that I will continue in this position for some considerable time. If this position was to end for some reason, I am now confident I could find alternate work through contracting because of the flexibility of the insurance arrangements.

I am 52 years old and not prepared to retire on a disability pension. I have skills and experience to offer and I find I can do this through contracting.

I hope this has been of some assistance to the Inquiry.

Independent Contractor

Parliamentary Inquiry into Contracting

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am 42 years of age. I have a wife and young family. I also have children with my previous partner and pay child support. One of my sons from my previous marriage lives with me.

My previous employment had been terminated due to my redundancy and the closure of the concrete block manufacturing factory. I had been seeking work for several months before I was introduced to an Odco Contracting Agency. The Agency gave me a go and I was engaged to work in a sausage manufacturing factory in Glenorchy, Tasmania. My son, who lives with me, also gained work at the same site through the Contract Agency.

I have now been working with an agency for 3.5 years and have become the works supervisor, still engaged through the Contract Agency. I have assisted to introduce a piecework system of payment for all the contractors on the site that has resulted in the average hourly paid rate rising from \$17 to \$20 - \$23 per hour. We are now paid on a *“per kg basis for all product produced ready for sale”*. This is a very fair system and pays all the contractors according to the team effort, leaving the owner to focus on his market development, sales and product development, without having to worry about labour cost runouts.

I have negotiated a payment arrangement for myself, and one other key worker, that sees us compensated for the extra duties and responsibilities we accept in our more senior roles. The rate of pay I am now receiving far exceeds that of my previous employment and far exceeded my expectations from any new position when I was made redundant in 2000.

I can commend contracting for people who are prepared to have a go and are not seeking false security with permanent employment.

With contracting you are either good enough to do the work, or you are out of work.

I love this method of work and would like to see it adopted throughout all workplaces. It provides both business owners and workers with advantages and opportunities that far outstrip the traditional employer/employee relationship.

Proud Contractor