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# New Spotlight deal worse than two cents offer

Author: Phillip Coorey Political Correspondent

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WORKERS at the new Spotlight store in Mount Druitt are being offered pay and conditions worse than those available to their counterparts in Coffs Harbour.

They are being offered an Australian **workplace** agreement that does not include the two cents an hour pay rise offered to the Coffs Harbour workers in return for surrendering award entitlements, such as penalty rates, overtime and leave loading. An agreement offered to a part-time worker at Mount Druitt also guarantees only four hours' work a week.

The equivalent NSW award guarantees a minimum of 12 hours a week for part-timers.

The agreement provides no guaranteed pay rise, saying "your wage rate will be reviewed annually and any increase in rate shall remain at the sole discretion of Spotlight". Non-salaried employees may be required to work "reasonable" additional hours and on public holidays but there would be no overtime or penalty rates: "Additional hours will be paid at your base rate of pay."

The Opposition Leader, **Kim Beazley**, said the Spotlight agreement was further proof "**John Howard's** AWAs slash wages and conditions".

"**John Howard's** wages race to the bottom started at two cents an hour; it's now at zero and we know where it's going next," he said.

The federal Minister for **Workplace** Relations, **Kevin Andrews**, said 38 of the 40 new employees at the Mount Druitt store had been on **unemployment** benefits and were now \$350 a week better off.

"The bottom line is you're better off with a job than being on the dole and that's what **Kim Beazley** doesn't get," he said.

Mr Beazley said the laws enabled exploitation. "These workers are young people first entering the workforce and have no bargaining power. The only choice they have is a wage-slashing AWA or no job."

A spokeswoman for Spotlight said the company was not commenting on the matter. The Mount Druitt workers are being offered the award equivalent of \$14.28 an hour. The Coffs Harbour workers were offered \$14.30 an hour.

The Coffs Harbour Spotlight store shot to the forefront of the **industrial** relations debate when management made the two cents pay rise offer in return for abolishing a number of entitlements. Mr Beazley cited it as a basis for his pledge to abolish the contracts.

Under the new laws, **workplace** agreements were stripped of the no-disadvantage test that previously ensured a worker could be no worse off whether on an award or a collective agreement.

Mr Beazley said his **industrial** relations campaign would take a while to have an effect.

"This isn't a sort of overnight cataclysm. This is a crumbling away that occurs with an infestation of termites," he said.

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