

[ [Previous](#) ] [ [Major News - ACTU Mentions](#) ] [ [Next](#) ]

**Friday 16 June 2006**

---

# THE AGE

## **Don't like a \$160 a week pay cut? Well, there's the door**

Author: MEAGHAN SHAW

Publication: The Age (6,Fri 16 Jun 2006)

Edition: First

Keywords: **ACTU (1),Greg (1),Combet (1)**

---

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

A GOLD Coast printing worker was sacked for contacting his union over roster changes that would have cut his pay by \$160 a week and forced his partner to quit her job.

Leigh Vanroon said his boss told him he could "f--- off out the door" after he discovered the print manager had sought union help to keep his family-friendly working hours.

Mr Vanroon was employed on an Australian Workplace Agreement and worked a 12-hour shift three days a week with Penfold Buscombe, a national printing company, whose head office is in Melbourne.

He discovered while on holidays that the company wanted him to work five 7.5-hour days a week on a rotating roster.

The change would have cut his pay by \$160 a week and meant his partner would lose her \$30,000 a year part-time job to look after their two-year-old son.

Mr Vanroon told his boss he would consider working a regular afternoon shift but wanted the proposed changes put in writing as required by his AWA.

But he claimed at a later meeting his manager, who was incensed by him contacting the union, said: "You're either with us or against us . . . You can get out the door - you're sacked!"

That night, Mr Vanroon discovered a couriered letter slipped under his front door telling him he had been made redundant for "operational reasons". Mr Vanroon rejects that explanation. "It was a personal attack on me, rather than a business decision," he said.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union is lodging an unfair and unlawful dismissal claim on his behalf.

"I'm absolutely disgusted," Mr Vanroon said. "Up until that point in time, I thought my job was safe. I was a good operator. I'd been promoted to shift supervisor so they obviously thought I was a valuable employee. And in 24 hours I was out the door."

The company did not return The Age's calls last night, but disputed Mr Vanroon's claims on ABC's 7.30 Report, saying the changed hours that would have increased his pay. It pleaded heavy losses in the past two years and a need to restructure.

**ACTU** secretary **Greg Combet** said the case encapsulated everything that was bad about the new laws and AWAs.

Meanwhile, a Wangaratta textiles company that supplies fabric to Spotlight has offered workers a one-year non-union collective agreement removing protected award conditions.

Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union state secretary Michele O'Neil said Bruck Textiles was following Spotlight, which offered workers contracts that removed penalty rates and overtime for an extra two cents an hour.

Ms O'Neil said the workers could be asked to work any hour of the day or night from Monday to Friday on ordinary hours' pay, and there was no guarantee that workers would receive shift penalties or overtime pay.

Ms O'Neil said workers were concerned for their job security and she feared the company would cut their pay and conditions once the agreement expired.

But Bruck chief executive Alan Williamson said the workers requested a two-party agreement as they had "had enough of the union". He said the deal protected conditions and the union claims were "rubbish".

Caption :PHOTO: Leigh Vanroon says printing company Penfold Buscombe wanted him to work a new roster, which meant a big pay cut and his partner quitting her job to look after their child, Boston. PICTURE: PAUL HARRIS

Headline: Don't like a \$160 a week pay cut? Well, there's the door

Author: MEAGHAN SHAW

Edition: First

Section: News

[ [Previous](#) ] [ [Major News - ACTU Mentions](#) ] [ [Next](#) ]

Copyright © Fairfax