



UNIFORMS MADE HERE FOR YOU

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To: Australian Competition & Consumer Commission

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Homeworker Code Committee.

We have had our business since 1986 and started it in our garage at home. As we grew, we moved into a commercial unit as our machinery, equipment and employees did not fit in our garage. This is how most businesses start!!

We manufacture school uniforms which is a very seasonal product and are the busiest from September to April. At these times, I need help to do the sewing and when I advertise, people that sew from home will contact me. They usually do work for a number of factories, and as the fashion industries are usually quieter during this period, they are free to do our work. Also they work as a business from home, usually husband and wife or other family members. This is most suitable for these people as they have young families and can work the hours convenient for them.

Our business was steadily growing but in the last few years has been steadily declining, which I think is due to imported goods being introduced after the tariffs were reduced and our \$ being higher. We cannot compete with imported goods. Most of our big clothing companies have 'gone overseas' and their redundant staff have found alternative employment, therefore, it is very difficult to find suitable staff. I haven't had home sewers apply either. (I require 3 people at the moment and have not been able to find anyone).

I have seen on TV and read comments in the newspapers for a number of years now from the Union suggesting that some people are being paid \$3.00 or thereabouts per hour. I have not had anyone tell me this. The Code of Practice was designed to stop this supposed 'exploitation'.



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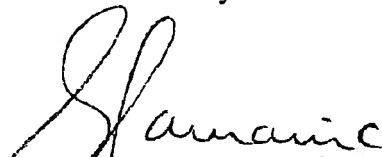
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There was a Code of Practice for outworkers implemented in Queensland a few years ago, and as no one was prosecuted it was repealed earlier this year. I do believe that anyone that is not being paid the appropriate wage have avenues and ways to complain i.e. via FWA and the Award. And in that way only the guilty party would be brought to task and not the whole industry having to comply with all the paperwork etc. required for all the 'unnecessary' reporting. If all these people were contractors, they would have to abide by the laws governing any business and it would be easier for us.

As far as the Code of Practice is concerned, it has been around for quite a few years and we are still being told by the Union that people are underpaid, obviously the Code is not doing what it was implemented for. It is not working so why bother introducing another version and again we have so much unnecessary paperwork

As I stated previously, I think a good way of having control of the industry working from home would be to have them as contractors, and for them to provide us with their ABN no. and TFN., and then we would forward this to the relevant government department. This makes all parties have a responsibility for the way they are working.

I am beginning to think that the Government is wanting to close this industry as it has been declining. If this is the case it would be appropriate to let us know so that we don't invest any more time or money in it.

  
GLORIA GAVRANIĆ  
Director.