

BEFORE THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION

AG2022/5615

Application by Justin Gusset - Application to terminate the *Apple Retail Enterprise Agreement 2014*

WITNESS STATEMENT OF BRENDA HARRIS

I, **Brenda Harris**, make the following statement based on my knowledge and belief, unless otherwise indicated.

1. I have been employed part-time by Apple as a Technical Specialist at the Brisbane store since August 2022. Prior to that, I was employed by Apple as a Specialist, which I began in September 2019.
2. My duties involve working at the Genius Bar by helping trouble shoot customer devices, usually by appointment but sometimes with occasional walk ins. I also do 'on point', which is greeting customers at the door and helping them with their repair or shopping appointments, help make sales, and assist with the pick up of repaired devices.

Hour cuts

3. Until about Christmas 2022, I was regularly rostered about 70 hours a fortnight. Since that time, I began to notice a steep drop off in my hours. I now am regularly rostered around 46 hours per fortnight.
4. Apple never asked me if it could or should cut my hours down. I just noticed it one day that I wasn't getting the same hours I was used to.
5. I am scrounging for any work I can get now. Workers can try and give away hours to others on Apple's scheduling app "Workjam", but in my experience this doesn't work that well, as sometimes hours might be taken up by others but they still appear available, for example. In any event I am not normally fast enough to pick up available hours, and they are usually snapped up by others first.
6. Around January 2023, my colleague Wilda told me that we could call our manager directly to ask for our shifts that day to be extended. Sometimes I can pick up extra hours that way, but it's not guaranteed.

7. Money is tight at the moment. My family and I watch every penny we spend. My husband is currently on a military disabled pension and does not work. We don't take any holidays, go out to dinner, and are restricted to the essentials when we go grocery shopping, so getting as I can is important.
8. My son is also living with us at the moment, because he broke his neck in January 2023. I assist him with showering, helping him take his medication and cooking for him and my husband, so I have a lot to do when I'm not working. We also pay for specialist appointments for him, which can be between \$200 and \$500 each, which is another cost concern for us.

Days off

9. For the first 18 months of my employment with Apple, I don't recall a single instance where I had two days off in a row. I can only think of two times where I not rostered on a weekend through that time. And that was by sheer luck, I think.
10. Around the end of 2021, a colleague of mine showed me how to change my availability on Apple's website 'mypage'. I didn't know I could do this until they showed me how. On that page, I changed my work preferences to Wednesday – Sunday, so I would have two days off in a row on Monday and Tuesday. On 'mypage' we are required to leave at least four days available, and two of those days on the weekend, otherwise you can't confirm your preferences.
11. Unfortunately, that change took about a four to six weeks to be effected. By that time, I was what I would consider 'burnt out'. Everything was an effort for me, and I was tired all the time.
12. Having two consecutive days off means everything to me. I can get everything I need to do done on one day, such as take my son to his specialist, and have at least one day to relax.
13. If it were possible, I would be okay with a rotating weekend roster, so I could see friends on weekends now and again. My best friend lives in Gympie, which is a few hours drive from Brisbane, and I rarely get to see her unless I book annual leave for a weekend off more than four weeks in advance, or I request a day off.

Breaks between shifts

14. While it is good to have two days off in a row, sometimes the schedule at Apple can still be quite difficult on my body when we have a late finish the evening before, and early

start the next day. For example, I can be rostered to work on a Friday night with a 9.30pm finish. It will take me another hour to get home. By the time I am in bed, it is midnight. Following this, I might be rostered to work an 8.30am Saturday shift. I will usually wake up at 6am to catch a 7am train to be on work on time, but in those circumstances, it means only getting six hours of sleep. This used to happen more frequently when I was a Specialist, but when it does happen once every 2 or 3 months, I still find it very difficult to cope with.

15. Usually when I get home from work after these kinds of days, I am too tired to do anything on the Saturday night with my family. It would be great to go to dinner, or see a movie, but coupled with the hour cuts recently it doesn't really happen these days. I find that the amount of time I get between shifts has a real impact on how I feel during the day. Eleven hours between shifts is simply not long enough for me to recover.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Harris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brenda Harris

21 March 2023