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Goldstein MP Tim Wilson Calls for More Small Business Input on Penalty Rate Ban

July 24, 2025

— Categories: Politics & Government



Tim Wilson, re-elected as the Liberal MP for Goldstein in 2025 and serving as Shadow Minister for Small Business, Industrial Relations, and Employment, has called for extensive consultation with small-business owners before considering the removal of penalty rates—added wages for weekend and holiday work.

Wilson told *Sky News Australia* that “small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and any changes to penalty rates must reflect their realities, not just union demands.” His appeal comes amid industrial relations debates across the Coalition, with concerns that

abrupt changes to penalty rates could impose untenable cost pressures on small enterprises already grappling with rising expenses and staffing shortages—issues highlighted in a recent Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) report.

Penalty rates are determined by the Fair Work Commission and add approximately 20–25% to weekend labour costs in retail and hospitality, disproportionately affecting smaller operators. Wilson supports a balanced outcome that maintains worker protections while introducing flexibility tailored to small businesses. He points to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' data showing that small and medium-sized enterprises employ around 44% of Australia's workforce, urging reforms that support, rather than undermine, their capacity to thrive.

While union advocates argue that removing penalty rates could erode equitable outcomes for low-paid workers, Wilson notes that small businesses need policy frameworks grounded in evidence. He advocates for inclusive processes, including impact assessments and stakeholder input. To that end, he has backed calls for a Senate inquiry into proposed legislation that could alter penalty-rate arrangements.

Wilson's credentials include a background in strategy consulting and ongoing doctoral research in economics. He told the *Australian Financial Review*, "We can't just steamroll changes without listening to those on the ground." His stance underscores a broader concern that workplace reforms must balance protecting employees with avoiding undue burdens on small employers within Australia's economic structure.