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Reducing penalty rates will assist with job growth

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce supports today's landmark decision by the Fair Work Commission to reduce penalty rates for Sunday's and public holidays.

Geelong Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Bernadette Uzelac said the Chamber had long been an advocate for a consistent weekend penalty rates system and is pleased that the independent body has made its ruling after hearing from all sides of the discussion and months of deliberations.

"Around 97 per cent of the Chamber's membership base are small business operators," Ms Uzelac said.

"Many of those have expressed concerns to me about the impact paying weekend penalty rates has their ability to not only employ staff, but to be able to open their businesses on Sundays with enough staff without operating at a loss.

"This is also the case for public holidays.

"By reducing Sunday penalty rates, cafes, coffee shops, restaurants and retail businesses in Geelong will now have the capacity to employ more casual staff or offer more hours to their full-time or part-time employees.

"Geelong's youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in Australia so any steps that can be taken to assist small businesses in offering jobs to young people in our region will have significant socio-economic benefits.

"This decision will give business owners greater certainty towards future planning for their businesses, especially in the areas around hiring of staff and operations.

"We all want to see young people getting a start in the workforce and being rewarded for their efforts in creating a thriving and healthy business community."

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