

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

Graeme Pearce

AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

*Workplace Relations Act 1996*

*Workplace Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1996*

S.113 Application to vary Graphic Arts General Award 2000, Re: Work and Family

**Automotive, Food, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Union**

(C No. of 2003)

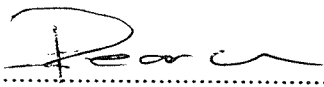
**WITNESS STATEMENT**

On 20 April 2004, I, Graeme Pearce, of [REDACTED], in the State of Victoria, state as follows:

1. I am an employee of Amcor Fibre Packaging. I work at the corrugated box making site at Scoresby, Victoria. My current classification is Machine Operator in the Coverting Department. I work permanent day shift.
2. My employment conditions are covered by the *Amcor Fibre Packaging National Enterprise Agreement 2001* and the *Graphic Arts - General - Interim Award 1995* I am a member of the Automotive, Food, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Union.
3. I started working for Amcor Fibre Packaging in 1993 in the role of a General Hand/Machine Operator at the Box Hill site. Between 1993-1998, I worked on the permanent afternoon shift. This shift was from 3pm-11:30 pm Monday to Friday with a rostered day off.
4. In 1998, after a Company request, I moved to the Scoresby site. I remained on the afternoon shift working 3pm -11pm Monday to Friday until January 2001. During this period I would often work overtime on Saturdays as well.
5. In January 1999, my wife gave birth to our son Liam.
6. In January 2001, my wife left me and my son. I immediately inherited sole parenting responsibilities for my two year old Liam.

7. In response to my new circumstances and responsibilities, I arranged to change from permanent afternoon shift to permanent day shift. The day shift hours are 7am -3pm Monday to Thursday and 7am - 12pm on Friday. In doing so I lost my shift allowance and took a significant pay cut. I also ceased working overtime on Saturdays to look after my child.
8. I organised for Liam to attend a creche in Bayswater that I could drop him off at 6:30am each working day. During this time I found it difficult to manage, but would do my best to ensure that Liam got to creche on time and I could be at work on time. With a two year old son this was often a challenge. Liam would often want to play in the mornings, or we would be delayed getting out of the house if he needed to go to the toilet.
9. I have made requests to the Company to start my shift later to allow for me to drop Liam off and work. These requests have been rejected. I heard that when the Production Manager Neil Wielden raised the issue of me starting at 7:15 with the Site Manager, the Site Manager said something along the lines of as if he was going to create a new shift just for Graeme Pearce. Consequently, my request was rejected.
10. About a year ago, the creche decided to change its operating hours. Instead of opening at 6:30am, the creche opening would be at 6:45am. This created significant problems for me as I am required to commence work at 7am. The traffic between the Creche in Bayswater and work in Scoresby is very heavy at this time of the morning.
11. This situation caused me and continues to cause me much stress and anxiety. I have been given counselling by Management and official warnings because of my so called 'time keeping' because I am late for work in the mornings. My 'time keeping' is not the problem, my starting time for work is. I physically cannot be in two places at once. It is not possible.
12. As a result of being late for work and receiving warnings, I feel that my work performance receives additional scrutiny from some members of the Management. I feel that I am constantly under surveillance. For example, one Manager often stands and watches me work with a note pad and pen, ready to record any mistake I make. The Site Manager has gone out of his way to focus on my attendance record.
13. Between 1993, when I started working for at Amcor Fibre Packaging, and 2001, when I took over sole responsibility for Liam, I was only once spoken to about being late for work. My family responsibilities are the only reason I have difficulties in getting to work on-time.

14. If I could to start work 30-45 minutes later, I do not believe that I would have a time keeping problem. I am prepared to make up the time at the end of the shift or forfeit that time, if making up the time would inconvenience the afternoon shift manning levels. My site Union Representative and work mates are supportive of my request to alter my working hours.
15. Under a previous Site Manager about 4-5 years ago, the Leading Hand in the Stereo Department who had child care responsibilities was allowed to start work half an hour later and work half an hour at the end of his shift to accommodate this. This did not disrupt the workplace or cause any great inconvenience for the Company or the rest of the shift crew. Prior to change occurring, the proposal was discussed with the site Union Representative and the necessary arrangements were agreed to. That employee now works at another Amcor Fibre Packaging site.
16. I want to keep my job at Amcor but I am not prepared to compromise my parenting responsibilities to Liam. I do not know if there is another creche in the area that opens earlier. Even if there was, I would be hesitant to move Liam out of his current creche environment as he has been attending the same centre for three years and I believe that it is very important that he has consistent carers and a stable environment when he is at creche. As he has been going to the same creche for so long, he also is comfortable with the other children who attend. I would worry that moving him would cause him great upset and be very unsettling and destabilising. Further, looking towards to the future, the creche in Bayswater has the added advantage of providing before school care and dropping Liam off to school at Bayswater Primary and picking him up from school and providing after school care.



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**Graeme Pearce**

20 April 2004