

Voluntary weekend work a family-friendly victory for bank workers

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Bank workers in NSW can no longer be forced to work weekend shifts after a campaign by the Finance Sector Union to promote family-friendly work practices.

The union has won a case on behalf of 1400 tellers in Commonwealth Bank branches, who have been obliged to work on weekends since the State Government relaxed the weekend trading rules.

The FSU argues that other banks such as Westpac and NAB have a voluntary approach and this works well. At a hearing on 18 December, the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal agreed with the FSU argument.

"We had some evidence that despite the rhetoric, people were being told to work weekends and had no choice," said Geoff Derrick, FSU state secretary.

He said the decision was a recognition that people need to have better work-life balance. "We have got members who want to work weekends and others that don't. What this decision means is that they will now be given the choice."

Of the 1400 CBA staff affected by the decision, around 300 are on Australian Workplace Agreements and get no penalty rates for weekend work, so there is little financial advantage in working weekends. Worse still, those on AWAs have no right to voluntary work.

"This decision protects all Commonwealth Bank workers, no matter what kind of contract they are employed under. We are not anti weekend work, we just want workers to have a say in the matter," said Mr Derrick.