



GLENN HUTCHINSON  
Champion and Advocate for Small Business  
Because there's nothing 'SMALL' about Small Business

## New way needed to kill zombie agreements, says advisor

A veteran IR advisor to small business has told a Senate inquiry that a new mechanism is needed to terminate "zombie" agreements that are giving those that hold them an unfair competitive advantage, while he also argues foreign students should be banned from working, unless an ironclad system to protect their rights can be assured.

Glenn Hutchinson, in a [submission](#) to the Senate Economics References Committee's [inquiry into underpayments](#), says that instead of the current arrangement under which agreements continue to apply beyond their nominal expiry dates, there should be a requirement to seek an extension or make a new deal within six months of the deal's term ending.

If neither event happens, then the award would apply.

He says that when Labor decided in 2007 to permit existing agreements to "continue on", it created a "two-tiered wage system".

"I find it difficult to believe that anyone could be so stupid [as to] create a situation like this", he says.

But "I expect the legislators expected that as agreements met their nominal expiry date they would be renegotiated and moved to the new system".

However, he says, the opposite has occurred, as the Queensland Parliament highlighted in its wage theft inquiry (see [Related Article](#)).

"This created the problem of one employer, within a single industry, having better rates and conditions than another" he said, adding that it makes it difficult for new players to enter when their competitor has an agreement that doesn't meet the BOOT, as "they simply cannot compete".

Hutchinson says that international students should be banned from working in Australia, "unless it can be proven there is a system in place that can unequivocally track" their hours and ensure they receive lawful rates of pay.

"In the meantime, they should not be issued a Tax File Number, an ABN, or any licence that is required for a specific type of employment such as a security licence, or a working with children licence," he says.

[Submission by Glenn Hutchinson to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics' inquiry into unlawful underpayment of employees' remuneration, March 2020](#)

Source: Workplace Express