

Opening hours of the Melbourne wholesale market and their impact on the sustainability of the market

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Abstract

Night shifts and the early opening hours of Melbourne Wholesale Market (MWM) have negative social, physiological and managerial consequences. This paper presents the findings of an extensive literature review and interviews conducted within the scope of a research project. The investigation suggests that social impacts range from social marginalisation to increased family related problems. Physiological issues include fatigue that threatened stakeholders' safety at work and substance abuse. Commercial complications allow the Sydney and Brisbane market to attract more suppliers and better produce as the MWM opened hours earlier. According to respondents, other wholesale markets adjusted their prices once they know MWM prices. Because of the skilled labour scarcity in Australia and early opening hours, MWM struggles to find quality labour. Furthermore, MWM's competitive position is threatened by large supermarkets approaching growers directly, wholesale markets in other states seducing their growers, MWM staff poached internally and externally across different organisations and industries and increasing operational costs. This raises sustainability questions and endangers the long-term viability of MWM. These undesirable aspects of MWM operations may be mitigated by securing later opening hours.