

Appendix D: Statement of Dorthe Dideriksen (excerpt)

My name is Dorthe Dideriksen, I am 35 years old. I have worked in Johannes Bodega for 2 years now as a kitchen assistant.

My job is to prepare all the different food items with my colleagues in the kitchen. We share the work between us, so we get to participate in the various tasks involved in running a good, solid food business. In periods the work is repetitive, but the menu changes with the seasons, so the work is never boring.

Depending on the season and the menu, the work in the kitchen can be more or less varied. Generally, you have to have quite a sturdy physique, as lifting, moving, stirring, and chopping all day long can be demanding. Some days of course, the kitchen work is lighter.

Another element that influences the work is the number of customers. On busy days, we easily walk in excess of 25,000 steps.

In order to work professionally in a kitchen that sells food to the public, you must have a two-year kitchen assistant education. Part of the education is a 6 months' educational internship to get hands on experience with the operation of a professional kitchen.

We also follow short upskilling courses to learn new machinery or new food preparation techniques. I expect this to happen more often now after the transfer to DAMA, as DAMA is well-known for their experimental and novel take on food preparation and presentation. I look forward to that.

I really love working with the whole food concept – providing excellent taste, texture and looks, as well as the hands-on processes. And of course, having a good laugh with my colleagues and meeting customers and families from all over the world makes it an interesting place to work.

But of course, the joy of cooking is not enough. It is after all a job and everything has to add up. Being paid less simply because we are women steals away the joy of cooking.

I see no reason for the outdoor group being paid more than us in the kitchen. All work is important to make the visitor centre a good experience for the customers. In my view, food and nature and art keep us alive. But more so food. You can go a week without visiting the park, but not a week without eating. And good food is central. If the food experience is average and boring, the visitors will leave with a so-so impression – even if everything else is spick and span. The central role of the Bodega should, in my view, be reflected in the wages. After all, we are the persons responsible for ensuring the top class experience.

I have heard somebody say that the kitchen group should just find a better negotiator, and that the wage difference has nothing to do with who works in the indoor or the outdoor group. In my view, that is rubbish. The end result is what matters.