

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

I am a permanent employee, working as a nurse, currently earning around \$45,000 per year.

I have worked as a nurse for a long time to support my family & this includes missing out on my children's sporting events & attending family gatherings if they fell on a weekend which mostly they did of course. My husband actually works in another state & is only home for 5 days a fortnight. We have a mortgage, a car loan & other various bills that need paying.

If penalty rates were abolished I would get out of nursing. I work in mental health & it's not unusual for me to be at least verbally abused if not physically abused on pretty much every shift, If I was expected to put up with this on a weekend or an evening or night shift for less pay, there's no way I'd turn up for work. I continue nursing because I

love it, but I don't & won't do it for less money

My weekends are important to me because I get to see my children & husband when he's home from work & socialise with my friends & other family. I have missed so many family events over the years because I've had to work, but evening, night & shift work is unavoidable when you're a nurse & ultimately the only thing that makes it worthwhile is the shift & weekend penalties.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. I actually can't believe this is even an issue in Australia. We are not a third world country & can afford to pay shift workers their rightful earnings. Surely some of the committee have family members who work weekends & shifts other than day shifts & know how much we, as shift workers miss out on. The money is the only reason any person would work these shifts, missing out on family & friend time. I really hope the committee are aware how many workers, particularly nurses, would find another job & leave their vocation, creating many vacancies & increasing the unemployment rate.

Submitted by

Maree Backhouse

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