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 casual employee, working as a Chef, currently earning around $25 per hour.

I am a trade Qualified Chef with a Bachelor of Business degree who has worked in the hospitality industry for the best part of 25 years. I am currently studying towards a Graduate Diploma of Teaching and Learning in order that I may teach the trade that I love.

My income will not fall because of the abolition of penalty rates. My workload will increase however, because my employers will not be able to find anybody else to work on weekends with me. I have seen this experiment before, and it doesnt work.

My weekends are important to me because... This would be the time I would allocate for family and socialising.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. If penalty rates were abolished... This will lower the financial attractiveness of the Cookery trade, which will then lead to a further exodus of apprentices and tradesman, lower standards of workmanship and decimate the Cookery Trade even further.

I will not lose income if penalty rates are abolished, I will simply leave the industry if I am not paid what I deserve.

This experiment was done during the workchoices era, and it broke my heart to see young people being exploited, and permanently leaving the industry because of bad experiences (Chief among them low pay).

There has not been to my knowledge any labour market research in the last 20 years that states there is not a shortage of skilled Cookery tradespeople in Australia.

Whilst I understand abolishing penalty rates lowers labour costs for business (in the short term), over the long term this does nothing but provide short term finance to entrepeneurs who simply do not have the skill to manage a business efficiently and who shouldnt be in business in the first place. Managing people in a high pressure, highly skilled environment requires experience and training that many small business operators in the hospitality industry do not have. This push to lower pay rates is just their latest scheme to cut costs. If you pay peanuts you get monkeys working for you.

Many of the employer lobby groups opposing penalty rates represent management practices, systems and social policies that are simply out of sync with modern society. These lobby groups have themselves in the past complained of labour shortages for Chefs and have suggested all sorts of solutions except those solutions that are sustainable and mutually beneficial over the long run for all involved. This proves their

lack of foresight.

For example, recent measures to bridge the labour shortage gap by bringing in migrant labour, have not worked, instead they have simply provided an avenue for migration via a short term Cookery career. The Cookery trade has not benefitted at all.

The hospitality industry has already become home to the lowest paid Tradesman in this country, abolition of penalty rates will simply make it the new working poor.

Submitted by
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