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

I am a permanent employee, working as a Clinical Nurse Consultant, currently earning around 49.75 per hour.

I am in the final 3 years of my working life - single and still paying a mortgage. I do not now work hours that provide penalty rates but did for much of my career and without them would not have be able to meet my mortgage payments.

If penalty rates were abolished there would be a large reduction in income for many nurses who depend on these payments to meet their rents/mortgage and bills. I am very concerned that a reduction in income may see an exodus of nurses from the profession. As we know we have an ageing population, the need for nurses will only increase and we must not compromise the long term health of the nation by short sighted plans to cut wages to people we need and value.

My weekends are important to me because they are the time when most people are socialising and catching up with friends and family. Most important celebrations are organised for weekends and evenings and I have been in the position of not being able to go to important events because I had to work.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Nursing is a 24 hour day and a seven day week. If we accept the role we understand this is the case - patients cannot look after themselves, nurses must work round the clock. Penalty rates go some way to compensating for the loss of time with those we love. Also the potential to increase income by working unsocial hours encourages nurses back into nursing when they have family committments.

Submitted by
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