Alena Ward

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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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 Registered Nurse, currently earning around $37 per hour.

I am a single mum who has worked fulltime for 33 years, with a mortgage, and I have a daughter in high school and my son has just finished university studing to become a policeman.

If penalty rates were abolished... my income would be reduced. Thank goodness I have been able to work the shifts with the penalty rates throughout the 33 years full time that I have worked. When I left my husband (domestic violence) I had two small children and I was financially embarrassed tring to keep the family together and grow them up with minamal assistance / maintance from my children's father.

My weekends are important to me because... my son ended up playing state basketball (he is now 23years old) and my daughter still is a state athlete (now 17 years) and I will need to find money and request the day off work to take her to a state competition in mid October. I was the sausage mum (managed the BBQ) at the local Little Athletics for 3 years on a Thursday evening. With working full time my time is very precious to my family.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Without penalty rates I would not have been able to take my children to their competitions from our rural town. I witnessed very capable and talented children miss out on these competitions as the families were unable to afford the cost of the travel and accomodation plus the specialised coaching. I managed to give my children such a great start in life with their confidence as I just managed the finances, often going out myself. I can remember wondering how I was going to pay for a new pair of work shoes for myself. Hopefully my son will make a good policeman soon and my daughter, year 12 this year, will go to university next year for four year doing a double degree.... and I will need to earn penalty rates to help her as she will get only a very small (a few dollars only) Youth Allowance.

Submitted by
Alena Ward
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