Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PO Box 6100

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 Senior Correctional Officer, currently earning around $34 per hour.

I have a mortgage and family which I must keep payments up to by working shift work, any of seven days; even though I am 62 years of age.

As a 7 day shift worker, if penalty rates were abolished, I would be in dire straights as I would not be able to cover my mortgage commitments and well as meet my familty responsibilities. My income would be $10-15,000pa less than I am currently earning.

I swap to other peoples shifts to earn extra income to meet my needs. If the option of swapping shifts was no available to Staff, because there is no incentive of extra money, I am sure that there would be a higher incidence of sick leave amongs those

who do not want or are unable to work shifts.

If they lose weekend penalties; any person who works their weekends, instead of having some sort of leisure time with family and friends, will not be rewarded as they should be, according to many past precidents.

My weekends are important to me because it is time with my children/grandchildren who are not subject to work or school commitments. However without the incentive of working weekends to earn extra money, I would not be interested in forgoing the family contact, as I do now.

Many of my colleagues have younger children and take the weekend off to participate in sports either by referee or playing themselves or watching their children play.

There is a move within our society to denegate the "Sabbath", which historically is a day of rest, so that it becomes just an ordinary day.

As a Christian I object to the rampant commercialism with which we are subjected.

Perhaps we should take a step back and start closing our commercial centres so that all Australians have a day off without frenetic materialism which is often portaited as the object of our lives.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates.

Our Australia Industrial relations system had evolved over 100 years to give entitlements to worker who have fought many industrial battles to receive these benefits.

In most situations much effort has been put into the agruments to gain the entitlements; these arguments are still valid today. The entitlements need to be maintained and NO political whim should be able to take them away; however, in some circumstances, perhaps they could be traded by mutual agreement, for other benefits by individuals or unions.

We are Australian, with enough difficulties within our society, without aping the American system where people have to depend upon the goodwill of customers, in order to have a reasonble income, in such industries as service industries, from tips etc.

We should be proud that we have a society which values and recognises its employees.

However all employees should be in the mindset to give their all and maintain best practice in whatever endeavour with they are employed.

It may take confidence building and training for employees to meet whatever objectives are desired.

Employers should also employ best practice in their enterprises so that the most effective/efficient means of production is undertaken in order for industry to stay competitative in Australian and world markets.

Governments should be providing whatever assistance necessary to ensure a proactive/productive IR system remains in our society for the common wealth and benefit of all Australians.

Our industrial relations system has withstood the test of time for many years now and provides to workers wages and conditions which are the envy of the world.

Most wages and condition have been won by the determination of unions and workers not through the goodwill of employers who usually resist increases in costs; perhaps with their own good intentions.

It is a matter of history that basic conditions such as meal breaks and eating areas, as well as safe working conditions were required to be supplied by employers after a period where these things did not exist ie employers generally think of their bottom line before their employees!

Submitted by
Ian Robinson
Friday 14th of September 2012