Diane Swainson

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 Nurse, currently earning around 26.00 per hour.

I am a mother and a grandmother. My hourly rate is so poor I need to work weekends to support myself. I work three, 10 hour night shifts and I am 60 years old.

If penalty rates were abolished... I would have great difficulty meeting my financial demands and I know many other nurses in the same position. We would lose hundreds of dollars per week making it impossible to have any quality of life. If penalty rates were removed from the Nurses Award I would need to retrain and seek different employment which at my age would be very difficult.

Working weekends is not the ideal. I often miss out on special events or have to leave half way through. My children work during the week so there can be long periods when I hardly see them. My friends don't invite me anywhere anymore because they know I will be working. Why would anyone continue this lifestyle without being paid penalty rates.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Australia needs good nurses and cutting penalty rates is not going to encourage young Australians to enter this wonderful profession. Nurses need to pay bills and feed their families just like everyone else, take away our penalty rates and this just is not possible. Compare nurses wages to other professions and see how we fair.

Submitted by
Diane Swainson
Thursday 27th of September 2012