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Committee Secretary

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

I am a casual employee, working as a barista, currently earning around $12 per hour.

I'm also a hardworking student achieving top marks and come from a family with a low income.

If penalty rates were abolished, my already meagre - and honestly, illegally low - income would be slashed, my family would lose what little power and self-respect it has left and the government would have declared, openly, that it has no understanding of or regard for the principles of basic human decency, equity and the right to work that are the basis for our miniumum wage, penalty rates and other workers' rights legislation.

My weekends are important to me because it is the only time I have to help my family -

either by doing chores for my elderly grandparents, helping my single mother with work on the house or trying to earn a living to contribute to our currently low income. And yes, I've missed out on special events including Father's Day and Christmas celebrations on Boxing Day because I was working to help my family.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. This is one of the most fundamental aspects of working humans' rights - the very simple idea that people should be paid in accordance with the social and economic value of the work undertaken, compensated for the sacrifices made in going to work and selling their labour, and paid a wage that can reasonably support a family on a single income. These fundamental rights are, for purely selfish and inhumane reasons, currently being whittled away, not by people struggling to feed their families, but by people running small to large businesses and wanting to increase their profit so they can be in the office on only one day a week instead of two, or so that they can add a gym to their double garage, or to buy another Lexus. The removal of penalty rates does nothing to support equality and the rights of people who work. It does everything to promote social and economic inequality, and is, quite obviously, a shameless attempt to buy the votes of the already secure and wealthy people who are, apparently, the only electors this government cares about. Please understand that, not only is the removal of penalty rates a shameful attack on the rights of people who work, it is also an invitation for those people to publicly protest this government's failure to represent its electors, and an invitation for all people who work to vote against this government at the next election.

Submitted by
Rosanna Kellett
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