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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 50 per hour.

I am a single mother of two adult children, paying off a mortgage and working full time. I sought my current poistion as I could no longer cope with shift work for health reasons and family committments. I have been a registered nurse for 34 years, a certified midwife for 32 year and am currnetly employed as a clinical nurse consultant /genetic counsellor for the past 7 years, working Mondays-Fridays.

Although I am not currently a shift worker, I did work shift work (weekends, evenings, night shift) for 27 years and know the sacrifices that you have to make to do these hours. You lose precious time with your children whilst they are growing up and cannot attended many functions that are important to them eg sport, parties etc. There is also

the impact on your relationships with your partner where you have little time to spend together . I regard this as a major contributing factor in the demise of my relationship with my children's father. There is also little time for socialising with family and friends, and often found it difficult to attend important events like weddings, christenings and birthday celebrations.
My 25 year old daughter works in hospitality and is currenting paid $18 an hour. If her penalities were removed she could not live independently, and would need to move home as would need my finiacial support. She is currently living with a partner who supports her because of her low income. They would like to save for a home and have children soon but feel they cannot as they have no money.

Up to 7 years ago, I worked shift work for most of my 34 years of working and understand the toll that it takes on your health, family, social and personal life. If I had my time again, I would not choose nursing for a profession but would choose another career path that is not so demanding and dependent on personal sacrifices (like working shift work).

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates in nursing as it would become a poorly paid profession if there were no penalty rates and will become a less attractive profession for young people to consider as an career option. The average age of a midwife is 46 years ...who will relace us when we retire and who will be caring for the sick in the future. If there were no penalties what would be the incentive to work shift work...who would cover the unpopular shifts eg night work.
Penalty rates for hospitalty should not be discarded. It would push people into poverty as it is one on the most undervalued and underpaid industry in Australia and needs urgent reform not a further reduction in pay

Submitted by

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