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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 may not work in the restaurant and catering or retail industry but I am a parent and believe in family and the future. We dont know what the workforce will be in 5 to 10 years, the rate of casual employment is increasing, job security is decreasing, we seem to be chipping away at our own lifestyles for the sake of a few dollars. I appreciate that small businesses do it tough sometimes, but lets remember that they chose to start a small business for reasons such as:

To be their own boss

All profits returned to the owner

Long hours, hard work and a risk yes, but surely they should realise that before they begin?

Im not sure why the employee has to be required to give up penalties? If the employer wants to operate then they should understand all that is involved including resourcing

expenditure. Why does, in hindsight, the employee now have to take the cut? Perhaps the profit of the business needs to be appreciated for what it is PROFIT or else the questions of how much profit is enough? should be asked of the operator before penalties are slashed. Why shouldn't the employee receive due compensation for working when others don't?

My main concern here is about the idea that weekends no longer exist, it seems this gets rolled out occasionally when politicians want to remove something from the worker. The weekend definitely exists and should be upheld to ensure that family can continue. Our lives shouldn't be all about work and one way to protect family is to protect the sanctity of the weekend.

As the parents of three children, we have very busy weekends with activities such as sport, parties, general catch up with friends, homework groups and family gatherings. Schools and work operate Monday to Friday so we need weekends to be family.

It seems to me politicians and society want us to have kids, want us to return to work, want us to make sure our kids become valued members of society and don't go around, vandalising the neighbourhood, etc. How are we to do that if we don't protect the family and togetherness? For some families it's all about the weekend.

Why should a person not receive penalty rates on weekends or any other time? I couldn't imagine being somewhere while someone serves me on a Saturday or Sunday, while not being with their family because they need the work and the person not receiving penalties for this.

Let's take a minute and ponder what could happen if the weekend no longer existed. What impact would this have on weekend operations, accommodation, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, small towns that thrive on weekends? If you reduce the

amount of income from the worker and the time they have what impact on their finances and on what they can spend their money on. Soon, there's only enough for the bills, you cant afford extras, the movies become too expensive. All the weekend activities are reduced because weekends dont exist, no netball, Auskick, Milo cricket. Local sports club reduce because theres no-one to coach or play, my local netball club is already struggling to get volunteers because everyone works full time and the weekend is all they have together. Then what happens to the children, teenagers, where do they channel their energies?

The rush to remove penalties and the impact on weekends should be binned.

Be careful what you wish for as the on flow impact to who we are as Australians could be worse than a few penalty rates. Protect our weekends, Protect our workers penalty rates, Protect our future.

Submitted by

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