

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 employee, working as a Registered Nurse, currently earning around 33.00 per hour.

I am married with 3 children. I am a registered nurse and work shift work and some weekends. We live in our own home which is mortgaged.

If penalty rates were abolished...

I would lose \$150 to \$200 per week. This extra helps to pay for my children's sporting activities, school costs and unexpected bills. Without this my children would not be able to participate in healthy sporting activities. I work hard, long hours to provide my children with a healthy lifestyle.

My weekends are important to me because...

My children are very involved with weekend sport and so am I. I play sport myself, umpire and coach my daughters hockey team. I am a volunteer with our hockey association. I enjoy spending time with my family and value being able to do that. Weekend work would not be attractive at all if there was no reward for giving up precious family time, no one would choose to work weekends if there wasn't a bonus for doing it.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates.

I remember as a child going to the family owned corner store for essential groceries on weekends. All the shops in the main street would close from 12 midday on a Saturday and reopen on Monday morning. On weekends families and friends would socialise at sporting events, BBQs and picnics. Children were more closely supervised as their parents were around and social groups were supportive of family based activities. I feel saddened that the children of the present and the future are and will miss out on experiencing family weekends due to their parent's weekend work commitments. In my occupation as a nurse, the workers that choose to regularly work weekends and late/night shifts do so for the penalty rates that "compensate" for giving up their weekends, for staying up all night and having to sleep through the day. Weekend work and shift work is anti-social, disruptive to family life, and has been proven to be detrimental to the health and well being of shift workers.

A point to consider is who would chose to work the weekend or night shift if there was no benefit to the worker??? In occupations such as nurses, doctors, ambulance officers, firemen and police officers it is understood that our essential services do not close down for the weekend and workers in these occupations are required to work weekends and night shifts. What would happen if workers left these occupations because there was no incentive to stay and work shifts without penalty rates.

People making decisions about other people's lives should walk in their shoes, and experience their lifestyle. The decision to abolish penalty rates would affect the people

who are already doing it "tough" and need the penalty rates to support their families. Abolishing penalty rates will make the rich richer and the poor poorer, please consider looking after workers and their families who work to survive.

Submitted by

Michelle Constance

Wednesday 26th of September 2012