Bernhard Racz

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 casual employee, working as a registered intensive care nurse, currently earning around 34 dollars base rate per hour.

I have a mortgage, and 14 years ago lost my house (paid off) due to friends accessing my account, and had also injured my back at a resuscitation at work, resulting in being unable to work for years. I cancelled the court case due to 10 years of delays from trying to avoid paying me. I started life again, started buying another house, and despite pain in my back, work full-time as an agency nurse to provide for my family and create an income for retirement.

If penalty rates were abolished... it would result in increased hardship due to loss of earnings. Will wages be increased considerably before penalty rates are abolished, to cover the losses?

My weekends are important to me because...I spend 40 to 60 hours a week as is, saving lives in emergency and intensive care units. Having weekends with the family is a defusing and relaxation escape to allow me to recharge for the next run of the rollercoaster. I am 60 years of age, and know with the ever-increasing 'retirement age' it may eventuate that the government never allows me to cash in and retire on my superannuation, so penalty rates are essential

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Australia has had a great international standard. Penalty rates were one of the support pillars, and abolishing them will also indicate to the world that Australia is in trouble financially, and drop the expectations and belief in this country. The land of opportunity will simply fade away.

Submitted by
Bernhard Racz
Wednesday 3rd of October 2012