

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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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 permanent employee, working as a academic, currently earning around \$50 per hour.

I have a partner who has had casual employment for a long time earning very small amounts of money. We have a mortgage and the usual bills that go with living a lifestyle that is by no means grand.

If penalty rates were abolished... many people would not be earning enough to pay their basic house hold bills. We would be creating a larger class of people who are the 'working poor' and this is unacceptable to me.

My weekends are important to me because...I am able to catch up with household tasks and to also see friends. Many years ago when I did different work and did get

penalty rates I worked many weekends and nights and had little contact with friends or family as I was working when they were off and vice versa. I had little time to engage in any sport and other hobbies so felt quite isolated although I worked with people every day.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Australia has enjoyed a good standard of living for many years and to take away penalty rates would mean that people would have to work longer hours to get the same amount of money thus taking time away from family and other commitments.

Most households these days need to have two people working to pay their mortgage and expenses or rental so less money means less time to spend with family and this then breaks down already stretched relationships.

People will always get their needs met even if that means doing things that are illegal if it means feeding family. In times of high unemployment crime increases with many people committing criminal offenses for the first time in their lives.

Taking away penalty rates is a one dimensional response to a complex set of obligations that ordinary Australians are facing. Many people are not earning huge amounts of money and to advantage business owners over workers is not good policy and is certainly un-Australian.

Submitted by

Virginia Mansel Lees

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