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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 in an operating theatre, currently earning around $36.80 per hour.

I am married with two children. I have a mortgage and work fulltime to help pay this off which at this rate will be by the time I am 60 years of age, all going well.

If penalty rates were abolished... I would be greatly penalised. Due the specialty area I work in, being the operating suite, due to a constant stream of inexperienced, junior staff, I and others like me that do have experience get fostered primarily evenings and weekends. This impacts greatly on my family and personal life as they are mostly home whilst I am at work and when I am home of a weekday morning they are not. I dont wish to be rostered as many of these evening and weekend shifts as I get, but understand it is done out of necessity so that there is a safe working skill mix of staff

working at all times. If I was to loose my penalties then I will refuse to do these shifts and so will many others in the same situation. Receiving the penalty rates is only compensation for doing shifts that impinge greatly on my personal and family life. It will also mean that I will have to work fulltime for longer than planned to ensure my debt is covered by retirement age, but who is to say I will physically be able to do this.

My weekends are important to me because...It is the only time I get to spend quality time with my family, that or evenings. Sometimes due to working so many evenings I dont see my family for a couple of days even though we live in the same house. I have often missed out on parties or functions due to working evenings and I have had to miss several christenings also as people when they send out invites dont leave me with enough notice to be able to request those dates off as the rosters are done so far in advance. The other alternative is to try and organize a shift swap, but again you have to do so with someone of an equal skill base.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. I for one will become unwilling to continually give up my quality time with my family and friends for no compensation. If that is the case I may as well take on a 9 to 5 job same as my husband so that we can spend more time together as he complains frequently about having to spend so much time at home alone with the children as it is. At the moment I can argue that doing the penalty shifts make it worthwhile on paydays, however if I were not to get these penalties, it would give him more fuel to add to his argument, and would add to the strain already placed on our relationship due to my frequent evening and weekend shifts.

Submitted by
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