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Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

I have a very simple philosophy which I think should guide all politics.

If you work 40 hours a week, you should be able to live comfortably, be secure in your accommodation, whether rented or owned and raise a small family of 1 or 2 kids. This doesn't happen in the Australia of today but it should.

Weekend work hits families but sometimes it saves them. A mother works a Sunday to pay for school books and uniforms. Or perhaps the kids birthday party.

It seems these days the business want us to compete but on what? Slave wages with 15 hour shifts, where Apple proudly boast that their Chinese workers get a seat, not to sit on but to lean on in their 15 hour shifts!

Penalty rates, overtime, suit everyone. Businesses trim up on anti-social hours because it costs them. An owner I know works them himself to save the money. Those without family, or who need the money are happy often to get the extra cash.

Often a Sunday shift is the difference between poverty and simply watching the pennies.

We can say what we like but the tone of political discourse in this country has descended into a ranting match with business owners following the mining companies in threatening doom if we don't match..China?

There is a second philosophy which countries like Swedan and Germany follow, don't work harder, work smarter. We are effectively a small country that needs to concentrate on high quality jobs and high value products, not descending into a race to the bottom with countries of 1 billion people who earn a dollar a day.

Businesses are chasing the wrong fight and showing willful stupidity in doing so. They should be looking for concessions on exports and easy employment options where the flexibility suits both parties rather than an old fashioned slave mentality of, the cheaper we get them the better it will be.

Yet they seem to long for the days of the hungry mile.

Submitted by
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