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Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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

As a resident in a small rural town, sport plays a major role in the social welfare of community members. Our aging citizens rely on sporting events to keep in touch with other community members without having to drive to far from home.

Sportsmen and women travel out to our small township for training and games. Reducing the penalty rates for workers may mean that we won't have to depth of players to pick from. Neighbouring teams have had to forfeit games due to a shortfall in players or team categories. When a small community looses it sporting team the community loses too.

Workers who wish to work on a Saturday or Sunday should be allowed to and should receive a monetary gain for giving up their family time. For those who choose to give up additional income to play with their families, go to sporting events, encourage their

children in sporting activities or simply taking them to the park or zoo, then we should allow this to happen.

We need sport and exercise to keep healthy. Abolishing the penalty rate system means we will have a section of the community who become disadvantaged. To make up for family time lost because of work committments on a weekend, parents may opt to remove children from school. Children as subject to weekly routines via compulsory schooling. To withdraw a child from a school so a parent can have quality time with them can result in mixed messages to the child about work ethic and contradicts the message schools are trying to get across that 'It is not cool to be away from school'.

While I can sympathise with small business and particularly the additional payments they have to
cover to meet government superannuation and workcover requirements, taking away penalty awards is not the answer. Governments need to work out something they can do to support businesses who require weekend staff.

Submitted by
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