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 visitor services supervisor, currently earning around $25.00 per hour.

I am a single mum with 2 children who are 5 and 7 years old. I recently separated from my partner and I am currently renting accomodation. I work 74 hours a fortnight

If penalty rates were abolished... I would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to support myself and my children given the current price of rental properties and increases to power bills and fuel prices. I came to live in Australia in 1998 and my parents and brothers live in Scotland. Since separating from my partner of 15 years I have no support from extended family here in Australia if things get tough. I am already strugglingly financially and it worries me a great deal that in the future I may not be able to provide the basics in life for myself and my children, such as a decent

home, a healthy diet, and medicine when required. I work hard, and as much as possible (74 hours per fortnight) given that i also have 2 young children to care for. i work every other weekend, which equates to about $300 a fortnight in penalties. We are well off as a state but it seems the financial divide between people who have professional jobs or those who work in mining and the rest of us is getting bigger and bigger. It's not just about me, I have my children to think of and their quailty of life.

My weekends are important to me because...it allows me to spend quality time with my children and attend activities that they are involved in with them. This includes Auskick and Tee Ball, both which I help out with too. I have missed out on numerous weddings, parties and social events myself, and with my children, because I work weekends and public holidays

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Working people doing jobs like mine need to be able to house, clothe and feed themselves adequately. Why would any government want to put people like myself in a position where this is not possible?

Submitted by
Gillian Harrison
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