

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PO Box 6100

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 registered nurse, currently earning around 38.00 per hour.

I am single , 63y.o. still have a mortgage.I have no social life because of my shift-work.

If penalty rates were abolished It would take me twice as long to pay off my mortgage. I don't have that many working years left so I would probably have to sell my property , find rental accommodation and go on the old age pension. Not a great outcome for someone who has served the community for 46yrs as a nurse. I work primarily 10hr night shifts and weekends. My gross pay would be reduced by \$400 to \$500 a week if penalty rates are scrapped. I would seriously reconsider my plan to work past 65y.o. and I would be hesitant to continue working these unpopular shifts. Nurses will leave the profession in droves if they are to be paid basic wages without penalty rates It is a

hard job both physically and emotionally with family and socially unfriendly hours , so why would one continue to do it unless there were decent wages as compensation? My niece is an EEN studying to be an RN whilst working full time. She has 3 children aged 5, 7 and 11. Tell me why she should continue her studies if at the end her wages will be substantially less that what she currently earns!

My weekends are important to me because...by working them I can be financially independent and afford my mortgage payments albeit at the expense of my social life! (What social life? I have none!) If I am not paid penalty rates why would I bother to continue to work week-ends, I would simply go casual and be unavailable for such work which would put more pressure on full time nurses to do more shift work. Do you really think that will encourage the younger generation to take up nursing as a profession if there a no financial rewards and more evening, night and week-end shift-work?

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. If they are scrapped it will have a huge detrimental effect on staff retention rates and levels of recruitment. Morale is already at an all time low. Such an attack on our wage structure would only exacerbate the general unhappiness with working conditions.

Submitted by

Kerry Rees

Saturday 29th of September 2012