Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

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

I strongly urge the Senate Committee to reject any proposals to reduce or eliminate penalty rates for weekend, public holiday or after the recognised 'normal hours of work'.

My reasons for this are:
The vast majority of the population enjoy working Mondays to Fridays between 7am and 6.oopm and ouside of these hours is considered leisure or rest time. This has been the case for over a hundred and fifty years when the eight hour day was recognised as being right and proper for all working people and Saturdays and Sundays have been recognised as 'rest' days for nearly as long.

It is only right and proper that if the community desires that other people work outside 'normal' hours in order to provide them with goods or services or protection then those

other people receive suitable monetary compensation to offset their being deprived of the free time or activities that the rest of us enjoy. Giving such persons time off later in the week in no way compensates them for the personal and social disruption caused by our need to have them work while the majority do not.

Those who desire to provide goods or services after hours or at weekends in pursuit of profit already factor into their charges the cost of wages and penalties for the 'normal' working week and there is nothing stopping them adding a percentage into the weekday costs to cover the weekend services.

I understand the 'push' to remove weekend penalty rates is coming from the retail and entertainment industry and they are using the arguement that they will no longer be able to afford to provide their services and make a profit unless the penalty rates are removed. If their margins are really this low then they are on the verge of going 'bust' anyway and should really review their operations! As a person who was brought up in the days of shops closing at mid day on Saturdays and almost total closing of retail outlets on Sundays I would happily survive a return to those conditions. I respectfully remind honerable Senators that retailers and service providers who agitated in the past to extend retail and entertainiment hours did so in the full knowledge and expectation that they would be paying penalty rates to those employed by them to provide the services. It was in the full light of this that the governments and courts granted their applications. The current moves to abolish penalty rates its nothing more than a way of increasing profits at the expense of the employed and as Australians we should be appalled that one section of the community should be seeking to exploit another for selfish ends.

Regards

Mel Cheal

Submitted by

Melvyn Cheal

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