Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Australia

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

I am a  employee, working as a , currently earning around  per hour.

I myself don't get paid penalty rates. I'm writing to support those who do. I'm a pensioner on the DSP and I work a little as a hobbyist muscian. I have a lady friend who works in retail and a daughter who has worked in retail.

If penalty rates were abolished... people would get paid no more to work on Saturdays and Sundays than they would any other day of the week.

It's only penalty rates that attract people to work when their freinds and family have the time off. Speaking as someone who mainly works ONLY on weekends as a musican, I can categorically say that there is no social life to be had . . . AT ALL . . . if you're working when eveyone else is not and vice versa. There needs to be some financial

compensation for having no friends and precious little contact with your family.

That social isolation is not a good way to live. If penalty rates are abolished the employers will feel free to roster everyone in their employ onto weekend work, whether it suits their family commitments or not. As hard as it may be to believe, people work to support themselves and their families, not to simply make the boss a richer person than he/she already is. If bosses want their employees to work weekends then they should pay them accordingly.

My own brother is a shift worker and it's painfully obvious that if not for the extra money the graveyard shift pays there'd be no way he'd voluntarily work those unpleasant hours.

There is another major thing to consider as well: Working shifts other than day shift is hard on the person's body. The biological clock is designed so that we sleep at night.

I understand that it's the retail and hospitality sectors that are most supportive of abolishing penalty rates. They just want to be more profitable and are blaming the soft targets . . . their own workers . . . for their not making "enough" money.

If retail and hospitality outlets are open on weekends then it's a pretty sure bet that the weekends are their busy times and I reckon they CAN afford to pay penalty rates. The increased sales WILL cover that.

My weekends are important to me because... I missed out on a lot of my daughter's weekend sport and musical activities due to having to work every weekend. I'd hate to see that become the norm. It's too late for me now. My daughter has grown up and

moved on and I'm divorced. That constant weekend work was a contributing factor. I wouldn't like to see other families similarly affected.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. The entire Australian lifestyle is geared around weekend events. Sport, concerts, community events, etc, are all centered around people having the weekends available to attend them. If penalty rates are scrapped the Australian way of life as we know it would undergo a paradigm shift that would forever alter people's enjoyment of life. For those who have to work weekends there HAS to be compensation. If they can't participate in weekend activities due to having to work, then they need to at least make it financially worthwhile.

Submitted by
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Thursday 13th of September 2012