Marlene Palmai

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 Nurse Unit Manager, currently earning around 49 per hour.

I am responsible for managing a small Health Service within a custodial environment. All of my staff do rotating rosters, with familes, small children, mortgages and some are sole parents. All work weekends and rosters with the sole aiom to increase income with the benefit of penalty rates.

If penalty rates were abolished... If abolished staff have advised me they would no longer be available to work weekends or shifts other than regular hours and would choose to apply to work set rosters and monday-friday only, or take extra leave. This would therefore make rostering extremely difficult with detriment to the safe practice and type of service being delivered.

My weekends are important to me because... For the past 35 years I have been a shift worker, and I ahve missed many family and social events because of the adage" sorry i have to work", this has included Xmas's, easter, birthdays, graduations, soccer, netabll, dancing, family dinners, reunions, you name it. My friends and family have heard it over and over. Trust me, if I wasnt getting paid the penalty rate I certainly wouldnt be doing it! & I wouldnt expect any of my staff to do it either,

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Penalty rates are a form of compensation for working out of "normal hours". If Penalty rates are abolished I beleive the health system within NSW with collapse. As the old saying says nurses are the backbone on our health system and while I beleive we dont get paid what we are worth, particularly those who have stuck it out for as long as I have and still doing shift work, I beleive if the end result was flat wages, I would likely choose to move to another career. With so many of my friends in a similar situation I wonder who would be around to support, train, nurture and educate younger nurses coming into this field? As it is now, nursinf= is an aging profession with new graduates not having the confidence to practice unsupervised as a Registered Nurse upon graduation. I personally fear for the future of nursing in NSW!!

Submitted by
Marlene Palmai
Tuesday 25th of September 2012