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

I am a permanent employee, working as a n RN, currently earning around $40.00 per hour.

I will be retiring in 2013 and will be working on a casual basis from time to time in mental health services.
I play competition golf on Saturdays and spend time with my family and friends on most weekends.

If penalty rates were abolished, I would not be volunteering my time for the same money as I would get for work during normal business hours. There is plenty of work on offer during business hours, without my giving up weekend and after hours activities. All my nursing friends feel the same.
Providing health services are NOT 9am-5pm activities. How could any intelligent

person even think that, let alone express it? It's a no- brainer and obvously a concept based only on savng money.

My weekends are important to me because they are there for family and community actvities, which keep us in touch with each other and in healthy relationships. If required to give up these activities without appropriate compensation, staff will simply leave.
In addition, if I go to hospital and need care over the weekend or during the night, I would like to expect that appropriately qualified nursing staff would be there to provide that care. I'm sure the politicians would want that for themselves and their familes also.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Lowering wages and removing conditions that were hard-fought for over many years, will not be helpful and is bad economic policy. The examples to be seen are in the United States, where their health care services are a shambles - where the same poorly qualified worker, who cleans the toilets, also changes your IV (because s'he has done the 1/2 day course).
Please don't dismantle our health services in this way. We should be proud of them and strive to maintain them as they are, because they are the envy of the world. Let's keep it that way.

Submitted by
Robyn Forrester
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