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

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a long-term casual hospitality worker in my youth, I feel I can testify to the need for penalty rates. Casual and part-time employees rarely get more than half a week's work in any given week at their place of employment, and find it difficult to gain multiple jobs to fill the gaps, as labour tends to be needed at the same busy periods in the same industries. The times when hours are plentiful are seasonal, and by no means make up for periods of lean employment. Those with full-time working partners, children who need to be cared for during weekdays, or who are studying to gain higher qualifications often are unable to choose employment that does not require them to work on weekends. It is not a choice. It is a necessity. I sympathize with small businesses who are losing profits due to the proliferation of large department stores and chains. However, disadvantaging the most vulnerable people in this equation - the part time workers - is not an ethical solution. This proposal to remove penalty rates simply plays

into the hands of large corporations who would like to see wage rates pushed down for their own greater profit. If the government is serious about supporting small businesses, it needs to consider finding other ways to level the playing field between small and big business. A local example of big business trying to muscle higher profits out of a community is occurring right now in Murray Bridge. The newly established Big W store is requesting that the local council maintain low rates for its premise so that it is not 'forced' to raise the rates of the small business tenants in the building to compensate itself. Small businesses in the town are already suffering from the opening of this megastore and its plaza. Leaseholders withing the complex are charged outrageous rental which will see many close and declare bankruptcy in the short term. There needs to be protection for small businesses which is aimed at this kind of high end exploitation, not at the unskilled labour force trying to make ends meet, hold together a family or gain the qualifications necessary to better themselves and their communities.

Yours sincerely,
Adam Deane

Submitted by
Adam Deane
Friday 14th of September 2012