

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 AIN, currently earning around \$19.23 per hour.

I have just completed a 12months course while still working full time to pay my morgages (2) and can not afford to undertake furthur studies to become an RN as I currently don't earn enough to live and study.

We have a fortnightly roster during which I work 5 shifts that have penalty rates these being four pm shifts and a sunday morning shift. I also try to pick up one extra shift a fortnight. To loose penalty rates my wages would decrease by a minimum of \$250.00 and hour and I would quit my job and persue another career.

My family has family BBQs and birthdays on Sundays. It doesn't matter what day your

birthday falls on we celebrate on Sunday so half the birthdays they turn up at 1100hrs and I turn up at 1500hrs, then they cut the cake, eat and leave.

Parties and special events on Sat night I need to be home by 2200hrs to start work at 0630hrs.

Yes I have missed special events because it is very hard to get people to swap on a weekend and most of the time we work short staffed anyway.

If you take away penalty rates you will be hurting the most vulnerable people in our community and is the elderly.

People jump up and down when they see the injustices done to children, but what about the older folk whose family don't come to visit them anymore. The nursing staff are their biggest advocat and reducing penalty rates will make shifts harder to fill and resident care will suffer.

Facilities shown on current affair programs are the exception to the rule...don't believe everything you see.

The reality in nursing homes is that residents who can hit a buzzer get first service and believe me they keep hitting the buzzer all day which has to be answered. This creates problems for those with the mental or physical capacity to also do the same.(Resident 1 doesn'tknow that resident 2 still isn't out of bed even though they have been to the six times due to medications to reduce fluid on their heart.)

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*How would you like it if YOUR mother or father was left in bed all day because there wasn't enough staff to get everyone up.

This reduces mental stimulation, socialisation and promotes poor sleep patterns.

What if the staff levels dropped and YOUR parent stayed in their night pad for 16hrs thus increasing the risk of pressure areas or bed sores.

What if YOUR parent needed toileting but staff were still feeding people an hour after lunch.

What if YOUR parent wasn't fed lunch because of an emergency due to reduced staff levels.

AGED CARE is exactly that but if you take away the penalty rates we would be better working at Woolies as they earn more an hour than we do.

Jokingly when people ask what I do I say I'm a butt wiper and essentially thats true but we are so much more as well. We are CARERS!!!!

We comfort them when they are sick, depressed, confused, diagnose ailments, deal with behaviours that make it look like you have taken ten ADD kids and put them all in one room.

There is nothing glamorous about nursing but at the end of the day we go in with a smile on our face and do the best job we can do on the day.

If you scrap penalty rates it will be like watching rats leaving a sinking ship as families will seek other work to survive, we are earning minimal wages for weekdays and morning shifts.

I urge to go sit in a dementia specific wing for a day, listen to what the staff put up with and still walk around with a smile on their face.(You haven't heard of "White Noise" till you hear a beautiful liittle old lady screaming obsenities for an eight hour shift)

Submitted by

Harriett Perry

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