

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 Senators

I am a self-employed media consultant and I know all too well how easy it is for work to invade precious family time on weekends.

I fully support penalty rates: They are a vital mechanism to ensuring fairness at work and to protecting workers' rights to spend quality time with their family.

Weekends are precious times. We all like to go to cafes and zoos but it's easy to forget that people have to serve us and cook for us, and that those people are unable to spend the same time with their families.

I know some employers think every day of the week should be treated the same, but they're not. If every day of the week was the same, then offices, banks, insurance companies and government departments, would be open on Saturdays and Sundays too.

Tourism operators and restaurateurs can recoup what they spend on penalty rates by

charging a weekend surcharge, or by amortising the cost of the rates across their enterprise. Gino's cafe in Fremantle informs customers there's a 10 per cent charge for Sundays and public holidays. Easy. And it's still packed on Sundays.

Workers in retail and hospitality are barely paid enough as it is. Becoming a low-wage country where workers scramble through two or three jobs to earn a living wage is not an economic nor social future we want for our kids.

As a self-employed person I find that I often work weekends to make deadlines. I make that choice because I am self-employed. It is not a lifestyle I would wish to impose on anyone.

Submitted by

Brian Mitchell

Wednesday 19th of September 2012