Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Australia

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

A Personal letter to the Senate Committees about Penalty Rates

While I am no longer employed in the hospitality industry I was for over nine years to fund myself through University as a young student.

Working on weekends in Hotels and restaurants was the only way I could afford to make enough money to cover all my living expenses including some uni fees (I still incurred a HECS debt which took me years to pay off).

The strongest memory I have of hotel/restuarant work is strangely not the work its self but of have to go to social gatherings after I had finished work at the hotel after midnight or 1pm and sometimes later. It became a very ostracising experience as the "party was over" so to speak by the time I had finished my hotel/restaurant job and

arrived. But it was the penalty rates which kept me reliable, hard working and devoted to this work as they made up for this awful disadvantage to some degree.

Weekend social/university gatherings are very important when one is a young university. student.

The other stark more important experience that is still cemented in my mind about working in hotels/restuarants was the policy that all the young single people were rostered on to work at the hotel/restuarant special Christmas day lunch that hotels/resturants have for patrons whether you wanted the work or not. Only employees who had children could say the were not available to work Christmas day. I missed Christmas with my family for all the years I worked in the industry and I still believe today that my family never forgave me for it or at best did not understand. I'm certain this was because my Great Grandmother, Grandmother and Grandfather never knew when it might be their last Christmas. In fact, penalty rates whilst making these circumstances bearable still don't really reflect the anti-social, anti-family nature of such work. Nor did they make up for the disapproval or disappointment of family. They did, however, meet other important realities of my life at the time such as paying for a roof over my head, food & clothing and for going to University so I wouldn't have to wait on tables for the rest of my life.

To think that the land of Aus. will become like America where hospitality workers are subject to the mood of the customer to tip them to make up a fair wage is scary & UnAustralian.

Nick Xenophon's Bill to get rid of penalties rates disturbs me greatly.

Submitted by

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