

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 employee, working as a Nurse, currently earning around 50,000 per year.

I have teenage children. My eldest son has Down syndrome. My husband and I use our penalty rates to pay our mortgage, feed our children and pay for school fees. The NSW State Government is already talking about cutting funding to our Education system which will increase school fees, we already go without to provide our kids with a decent education. My husband works weekends and night duty so there is someone home for my disabled son of a day.

I work day shift currently so I don't get any penalty rates. I can tell you a flat pay without penalty rates is pathetic considering the type of work I do. After 30 years of working for NSW Health I am aware that nurses across Australia work the worst hours in order to bring in an income that they can live on. If we didn't have the penalty rates

my husband brings in we would have to sell our home. Its not just us, it's all those students who rely on weekend work to pay Uni fees and feed themselves and small business employees and our emergency services. Nurses, Firemen, Amulance Officers , Police. We have the most thankless jobs but we do it because we care about people its certainly not for the wages.

Weekends are very important to family life. I have missed lots of events in my family and friends lives because of shift work and so has my husband. Many of us don't choose the hours we work because we love being awake at 3 am in the morning. You do whatever you have to, to support your family. If penalty rates are removed many of us will be forced to pick up additional work which will place my husband and I, colleagues and their families under more pressure and less time together.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. It is hard enough to attract young people to areas like nursing. I still have another 10-15 years of work ahead of me my husband probably has 10 years. Without penaly rates our quality of life will suffer and I'm not just speaking in monetary terms. Shift work and night duty has had a huge impact on our health and of our colleagues. If we aren't paid for what we do we may as well give up now. I've never asked for anything from the Government and I have been raised with a strong work ethic but as time goes on I become more and more disgusted by some of the decisions the Australian Government makes.

Submitted by

Deborah Grover

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