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 Senate Committee,

Any Bill that will reduce weekend penalty pay is a vicious strike at the working conditions of the whole productive sector of the Australian economy. The share-bludgers of Australia would be happy to see workers further impoverished, but ultimately even the un-productive sector of our society will also be losers if penalty rates for workers are lost. That is because poorer workers will have even less disposable income to spend in shops and on recreation; weekends will become socially meaningless and less tax revenue will be collected from workers leading to cut-backs in all government expenditure and probably a recession that will hit small business all the harder.

If the intention is to help small retailers and hospitality businesses to stay open on weekends, then it would be better to pass a bill that allows such businesses to put up their prices marginally in order to pay the penalty rates that have always been, and

should remain as, the worker's compensation for the sacrifice of their family, community and social time at the weekend.

If weekends cease to be a time when a large proportion of the population is free from work, then a great deal of community and volunteering work will become endangered.

Weekend and other penalty rates are a just compensation for workers who commit to work at times when nobody wants to be working. To remove this compensation would be a terrible injustice. It would also mean that no-one would have an incentive to work unsociable shifts and hence employers would be even harder-pressed to find workers on what should be holidays and/or rest-time for all of us.

As a low-paid worker in an aged care facility I'm certain that the abolition of weekend penalties would bring a lot of financial pain to millions of workers who cannot afford to earn one cent less than they do.

If your aim is to enable small business owners to employ more people, let's move towards much greater and more genuine worker-ownership. When workers have shares in, and a real say in, their work place, then they will work in substantially different, more collaborative, more democratic ways.

Employment and leisure should be shared much more fairly in our society; this will make life better for everyone.

To rob working people of penalty pay will radically change the nature of Australian society and cause a large number of very negative, unintended consequences. Please do not allow this to happen!

Sincerely yours, Bob Elliston.

Submitted by

Bob Elliston

Friday 14th of September 2012