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

I am a permanent employee, working as a nurse, currently earning around $35 per hour.

I am 56, married with a mortgage 2 sons no longer living at home. I am studying for a Masters degree in nursing.

If penalty rates were abolished it would mena about $250 a pay less in my pay packet but much more to my full time colleagues. Some of the nurses I work with are on 1 income due to young children and they would be unable to manage if penalties were cut. We would also see far less people willing to work the weekends and opting for community jobs where much of the work is Mon - Fri business hours. This would leave the hospitals short staffed at critical times when EDs are at their busiest. Health is a 24 hr service and we need staff 24 hrs.

My weekends are important to me because my husband works Mon - Fri so this is the time when we can have some time together for leisure, catching up with the children, grandchildren and extended family. Often I have had to work Christmas and not see my kids open their presents or be there when Santa arrives. This is compensated knowing I will get a bonus in my pay. I have missed out on family gatherings due to working weekends and nights. I hate this but as a nurse I know we run an essential service that is required to operate 24 hrs a day. I think if people are expected to work when others are at play they need to be compensated. Family time is the most important time in a person's life.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. It is a little compensation to receive a bit extra in my pay for working weekends and night shifts. If penalty rates were to be abolished I don't think as many people would be willing to work the weekends and nights not just in nursing but retail and other services.

Submitted by
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