

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 permanent employee, working as a Stevedore, currently earning around \$38 per hour.

I live in the Northwest of WA. Rentals are expensive and house prices are through the roof, unfortunately, I can not afford to pay these rents, or keep up with a mortgage that big, so I am still living at home. I am saving a deposit for a house.

If penalty rates were abolished... There is no way I could possibly afford to stay living in _____, the town I grew up in from 12 years old.

On the weekends and after our 8 hours work weekdays, we are paid double time, as you can appreciate, this bumps our wages up so that we can afford to pay for our inflated cost of living up here. Some examples, median house prices June 2012 were \$742,000, (surprisingly, not a mansion, but ususally a well over 30 year old home is

what you'll get for this price) Rents, \$1400 median price PER WEEK. Diesel, as of Sept 2012 \$168.9 a litre. Doctors visit \$105, that is minimum cost per visit, still only \$38 medicare rebate. And this is before we get to the supermarket where lettuces are regularly more than \$5 a head, tomatoes more than \$5 a kilo. To have a service done on a 4 cylinder small car, \$580. Please note, I have not even touched on utilities here. So now, that \$38 an hour does not look so much in the face of these types of living costs. And I am aware this seems to be more and more so across the country, higher costs of living, wages stagnating.

By taking away penalty rates, you take away peoples opportunity to boost their wages to be able to cover their cost of living.

Also in taking away penalty rates, you are taking away fair compensation for people who give up their weekends, especially in such industries as hospitality, retail, carers etc. Despite the push to be a 7 day a week fully open for business type society, most social gatherings, family gatherings, entertainment oportunities are held on the weekends, if you are working, you need to be compensated for giving up this important time.

My weekends are important to me because... That is the time I relax, spend time with family and friends, contribute to the local community, indulge in my hobbies. The weekend is the time to recharge the batteries ready for another week.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. If you give up your weekends, you should be compensated accordingly. As penalty rates are a way to earn more money, either by working longer weekday hours, or working hours on the weekend, what will happen if penalties are taken away? People would have to work twice as many overtime hours to get in front, or, godforbid, break even. This will leave little time for family, friends or input into the local community. Families and community will suffer.

I worked in hospitality for 10 years. Giving up 6 evenings a week, with weekends

virtually mandatory. Although my compensation for working the weekends was a mere \$4 an hour, it made a difference. I think we need to look at the award, realise in these industries where weekend work is a necessity, the penalty rates are not double time, except for public holidays. They are fair and reasonable rates of pay for giving up what is traditionally, and still family time, time for friends, indulging in hobbies or sports, the time you donate to local groups.

People should not be punished by having their penalty rates taken simply because they have to, or choose to work weekends.

Thank you for your consideration,

Submitted by

Tamara Stubbs

Thursday 20th of September 2012