

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

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

I am a casual employee, working as a Customer Service Representative, currently earning around \$22 per hour.

I am married and we are both working to pay back our mortgage. I'm very employable with degrees in computer science and business management, yet the only work I'm finding locally is selling petrol - My guess it that this is because I'm over 50.

Normally I only get one or two shifts a week. If one of those shifts does NOT include a weekend day, my pay packet won't cover the mortgage payment, let along things like groceries or fuel to attend work. Most of my colleagues, event those on permanent part-time need at least one Sunday or Saturday shift to make ends meet. The employer only has permanent part-time workers and does not have full-time employees as customer service people.

Most recently I couldn't catch up with my daughter and grandson for Father's Day because I was working on both the Saturday and Sunday. This was because others took a leave day on that weekend so they can be with their family. As a casual, I need to say yes when the work comes along. My wife generally works Monday to Friday so often we don't get to see much of each other on the weekends because I'm working.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. To me the penalty rates are a fair compensation for what I need to give up personally in my life to work a weekend or late-night, etc. On the other side, if there were no penalty rate then it is not worth my while to work a Sunday. In my industry you need to be over 18, so that would mean only the permanent part-time people would be working weekends I guess because they are required to stick to their rosters. I imagine they won't be happy with that either. Working weekends puts a lot of stress on families and friendships I've noticed. You become very isolated because you just don't see those you care about as often.

As illustration about rates. As a casual I don't get extra time (penalty rate) for public holidays. So that means it is cheaper for the company to pay me per hour as a casual worker on the coming public holiday than it is to roster on a permanent part-time worker for the extra shift next Monday because the manager isn't going to come-in on the Public Holiday. To me that's what will happen if penalty rates are taken away. They will roster on the lowest per-hour rate that applies for weekends, etc. before they roster on casuals. What happens to me? I predict that I'll be short on my wages for the mortgage, etc. So I just don't know. I need work so unless I find a job in my vocation I'll have to look for a second job of some sorts(????)

One final point, and you should look into this if you ask me. The retail and customer service industry especially is changing. I do not think it is appropriate for those with the least (economic) resources -- We the workers -- To subsidise the businesses' efforts to

avoid making structural changes! Has anyone suggested cutting the penalty rates for the car industry or mining? I really think the Unions, Government and other decision makers need to take this on-board.

Submitted by

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Wednesday 26th of September 2012