

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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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 midwife, currently earning around \$38.00 per hour.

I am a registered nurse/midwife currently enrolled in a full-time PhD. I am married with a family of five children, my last child is currently sitting HSC exams.

If penalty rates were abolished I would not work Sunday night nor public holidays. Working these nights do cause interruption to family dinners, family functions and get togethers. I used to attend my daughters tuck-shop on a sleeping day after working all night.

My weekends are important to me because it is usually when we as a family can all be together. Sunday lunch or dinner is the preferred time we are all available. I have

missed many special events due to working Sunday nights and public holidays.

I strongly urge the committee to keep penalty rates for shift workers. Working night duty is abnormal and interferes with sleep patterns. I am always on sleep catch up so I can attend school functions, continuing education programs, university and study commitments. As a midwife on night duty, I work with less support than is available during the day. There are few experienced doctors at work or on call, no educator/mentoring nurses rostered on to support junior nurses, and rarely any clinical or clerical support staff. Night duty is anti-social and many people have problems sleeping during the day. Working night shift is an almost unavoidable part of nursing and midwifery and is increasingly difficult to find nurses and midwives who are prepared to do this shift. Penalty rates are an incentive and an improvement to compensate is the only solution. Taking penalty rates away would be disastrous. I actually like night duty but would not consider this shift nor weekends nor public holidays unless I was compensated for working such unsociable hours which have caused such disruption to myself, family and friends for almost 30 years.

Submitted by

Mary Jenkins

Tuesday 25th of September 2012