

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 junior academic, currently earning around 41.00 per hour.

I am a Registered Nurse and so is my partner.

We have x3 school-aged children and a mortgage.

I currently work permanent part-time (28hrs/wk) teaching Nursing Students at a leading university and facilitating them in the clinical setting.

Irrespective of the time of day I am in the clinical setting, I do not get paid a shift penalty - like NSW Nurses currently receive for evening, nights, public holidays and weekends.

My partner, is the primary earner in our family. He works a full-time, rotating roster in the clinical/health care setting. He currently receives shift penalties for weekend work.

If penalty rates were abolished... my family would lose \$5,500,00/year. This is only accounting for Saturday and Sunday penalty loadings and not including Monday-Friday evening and night shift loadings - all of which are part of the mandatory, non-negotiable workplace requirements for my partner.

My weekends are important to me because...I am currently the sole parent home with my 3 children on a weekend. My partner works three out of every four weekends as part of his mandatory workplace requirements.

The sacrifice is, that, as a family, we rarely have any sustained time in one another's company. My children have expressed their concern at missing their father but we explain it is part of the non-negotiable requirements of his employment.

We rarely get to socialise with friends, on the weekend, as a family and I am usually the parent that will attend our children's weekend sports events.

My husband regularly has to decline social invitations and the remainder of the family end up not going as a result.

Christmas time is especially different for shift workers as, often they do not get annual leave or that day (or New Year's) off work.

It is challenging having to juggle all the parental responsibilities on my own - because my husband is at work on the weekend - along with other household demands.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates.

We realise, by virtue of the nature of our work, that most nurses are required to carry out shift work. If we are required to work, we trust that the state government and relevant Ministry will act in good faith, and compensate us accordingly for the disadvantage/impositions this places on our personal lives. We are serving our community.

I am about to embark on shift work, once again, and the cost of child care (if both my partner and myself have to work weekends) will be considerably greater than weekdays.

We cannot always ask or impose upon our family or friends to provide this.

I may even be left with no option but to, occasionally, decline work on the weekend if we cannot find adequate child care; therefore limiting our earning capabilities.

Our children miss out on time with us and we realise the long-term sequelae for children not interacting meaningfully with their parents on a regular basis.

If weekend penalties were abandoned then I would have to increase my hours of paid

work; further disadvantaging my children in my endeavours to honour our family's financial commitments.

The loss of weekend penalty rates, especially if it were to occur for public nurses might see a greater rate of attrition than is already evident in our profession and I see the people of our community being the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged.

Submitted by

Cassandra Barford

Tuesday 25th of September 2012