

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 permanent employee, working as a disability support worker, currently earning around 22.50 per hour.

I currently work 25-35 hours per week on a roster. I have an 84 year old blind mother. With split shifts, and very rarely 2 days off together, I have to arrange to see her a couple of weeks ahead of time. Easy to say reduce my hours to give myself more time to see her, but I need the money.

If penalty rates were abolished... My hours vary from fortnight to fortnight. Without penalty rates and after tax and super I would bring home about \$700 on a bad fortnight. For an extra \$150.00 more than unemployment benefits It would not seem worthwhile to work 50 hours when I could reduce my work hours and achieve the same income on unemployment benefits. Currently my penalty rates mean I bring home an

extra 50 to 200 per fortnight. This is the greatest financial difference.

My weekends are important to me because...it is a practice tempered through custom and tradition that we have time together with the people we care about on a regular basis. I have to schedule time to see my mother. It is extremely hard to make a date. I dont have to tell you my social life is suffering. Have you tried to practice together as a band when all 3 of you are on rosters? Ever tried to make a weekly yoga class?

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. What looks like my easy way out is to reduce my hours to 30 a fortnight and claim unemployment benefits, as long as i can satisfy their activity test. And that is possible. And I have more hours to spend taking care of my family, feeding my creative imagination, and enjoying the social and spiritual sides of my life. I'm also pretty sure that the government's objective is to have me working and paying tax and not being on government payments. The financial difference makes me want to work more hours, and to take up the training and career opportunities available through my work. If I worked less hours, they wouldnt be as interested in training me. Penalty rates are thus an incentive for me to pursue a career, not just a small part time job. Again, this is exactly in line with the governments objectives for the workforce. Abolishing penalty rates, looks to me, akin to the government shooting itself in the foot.

Submitted by

Glenys Serslev

Tuesday 25th of September 2012