

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 university lecturer, currently earning around \$52 per hour.

I am a Registered Nurse and commenced nursing training when there were no penalty rates. I have higher degrees and work as a university lecturer, with regular intensification of work which extends well beyond my paid working hours.

I like working and I love my family, friends and community. I have two boys whose school hours meant that they had weekends off and I needed to be around for them

If penalty rates were abolished, I think people would go back to what it was like for me where I had most of my early nursing career where I had no part of the weekend off. With no financial incentive to work weekends, the most junior staff were left to cover the unpopular shifts.

For the earlier part of my working life, penalty rates were critical to my capacity to have an adequate income. Nurses are not badly paid, when penalty rates are included, but nursing would not have the capacity to retain staff if these rates were removed. Nurses have higher levels of qualifications and they are transportable...to professions where pay and conditions are more family/life friendly.

My weekends are important to me because without them I would not have time to spend with their children ..who have school hours during the week. Parents need to be able to structure their time to include weekends for child care. Child care centres do not operate on weekends so it is extremely difficult to find appropriate carers over the weekends. I believe we are paying for goods which have the penalty rates built into the costings...I doubt that the removal of penalty rates would mean reduction in prices, rather only increases in profit for owners (they deserve profit but not at the cost of their employee's work-life balance).

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. We need to give families time to spend together while their children are growing up. To give up a weekend is something most people, including myself, will do if it is compensated in some way and the times when it is important to have with my family is accommodated. Low paid jobs have little scope for increasing income, I despair at the thought that hotel staff, nurses, police, food industry workers, will be asked to "donate" part of their income to assist people who do not have to give up anything in return.

Submitted by

Robyn Moroney

Wednesday 19th of September 2012