

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 Procurement Officer, currently earning around 32 per hour.

Married, mortgaged, three children at university

While I personally work a five-day week, my spouse is a nurse on shifts. Penalty rates greatly assist us to commit to further education, bottom line: we could not afford the ever increasing cost of further education.

Apart from the above reason, my spouse works many weekend shifts that impact on the family's time together. The hard fought for penalty rates are a recognition and just reward of the variable hours that my spouse commits to play a part in ensuring quality health care is available to the local community at all times.

All decision-makers need to look at history - think of struggles that thousands endured throughout time, like the great strikes of the 1890s; what the working conditions were like for ordinary people beforehand and understand the great strides in improved living conditions for all that have been achieved through the advent of union-led awards, such as penalty rates. I plead with the decision-makers to consider what the continuing and insidious reductions in our living conditions will ultimately mean for future generations. The economic 'boom,' by definition, will be followed by a 'bust' and can we really rely on the Rineharts of this world to support the population when that happens? Such types would have us working for two dollars a day and be 'willing and happy' with our lot. STOP ERODING OUR LIVING CONDITIONS, not just for our sake, but for the future.

Submitted by

Bernie Maxwell

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