

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 employee, working as a Librarian, currently earning around \$60000 per year.

I rent close to my work in the - it's a four bedroom home and I live with 3 other people. Despite this, a large portion of my wage goes to rent and bills.

Penalty rates allow me to occasionally buy something for myself or put a little aside towards a holiday. Without penalties, I would cover the basics and meet my budget, but holidays and the odd night out would become something I'd have to reconsider.

I realise this bill is largely aimed at the retail sector. I've worked in the retail sector and while some people are looking for more shifts on weekends, they are usually students moving on to other careers. Those who stay in the industry want their weekends off or would at least like to be rewarded for it through penalty rates.

From a personal perspective, weekends are when I spend time with my family and friends. The majority of people I know arrange their lives to have the weekends off for this purpose. Blurring the lines between what is the standard working week and what is not will only put pressure on relationships.

The idea that a business should have to make a profit for every hour or day they are open is ridiculous. Businesses should make the decision to open on Sundays based on broader reasons - that they will draw new customers who may return during the week, for instance. If they have to incur higher costs on the odd Sunday because of having to pay penalties this should be considered as part of their overall week, not a single day. Their overall profitability should be the concern. And if a business hasn't forecast to pay the penalty rates that were there when they established the business, perhaps they should leave it for others to have a go, and like many of us, go and get a job working for someone else.

The committee should definitely find in favour of keeping penalty rates - we are human beings not capital that has a simple cost with no other issues to consider. People are trying their best to get ahead or make ends meet, as well as balance working and family lives. Support the majority and their aspirations, not those who sit in a position where they have no concept of the idea that the difference between eating at a restaurant once a week is a penalty shift.

Submitted by

Glen Smyth

Thursday 20th of September 2012