

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 IT professional, currently earning around 45 per hour.

I am a little older and have paid my mortgage etc but still struggle a fair bit like most of us with family costs etc. As an It Professional acquiring new knowledge and study is just a part of life as has been shift work and the requirement to be available on week ends.

If penalty rates were abolished I feel a lot of people would discontinue working in certain sectors at their current rates of pay. I would lose around 30% of my expected income which would have a serious impact on my family as would be the case with most people.

I literally could not afford to or be willing to remain with my current employer.

My weekends are important to me because of many lost experiences, as a long term shift worker I am fully aware of the impact shift work can and does have on peoples lives, the health impacts, loss of and damage to relationships, missed childrens activities on weekends, family functions, time with friends, sporting participation and events. You can forget about participating in your childrens weekend activities.

Over my life I have regularly missed out on various events including family weddings and major events with my child.

I have also suffered from shift related health issues. In my view these hours come at a premium non negotiable rate.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates.

Virtually nobody does shift work because they want to and most people have no idea of the real cost of being a shift worker.

2 pm is not the same as 2 am, 11am on Wednesday is not the same as 11am on Sunday and there is an intrinsic additional value to working at these times.

As an employee the market rate on working at this time is and should be greater than during normal hours.

These times will impact peoples health with known association to heart problems,

stroke digestive issues, almost universal sleep problems, higher rate of errors accidents with lower probability of promotion and a lower life expectancy for genuine shift workers.

Over many decades solid well founder competent businesses have had no issue with paying appropriate wages. All this will do is to temporarily prop up employers with poor business models while allowing many others to increase their profit at the employees expense in a profit shifting arrangements as we previously seen with workchoices just with a different name.

Employees should not be expected to fund their employers profit increases.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates as a fair, reasonable and morally correct outcome.

Submitted by

Jeff Smith

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