

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 Contract Project Manager in Local Government and am currently earning around 89,000 per year.

I am married and have a young son in pre school, Currently we are a one income family as my wife is undertaking further study to get her qualifications recognised in Australia.

Whilst I have now paid off my townhouse but remember all the years I went without to achieve that end. A significant way in which I was able to afford a place to call our own was by working long hours , nights and on weekends.

I am still involved in night road and emergency works and if penalty rates were abolished I believe that many organisations would have great trouble getting people

like myself to undertake such work.

Whilst my hourly rate would not change as I am a contractor on a fixed rate that of many of my co-workers would be reduced significantly. Contractors like myself understand better than most what it is like to not get paid penalty rates or sick leave and only get time in lieu (no overtime) we know just how bad the consequences families would be if Parliament were to abolish penalty rates for weekend and shift work.

If the committee really want to remove penalty payments for workers undertaking weekend work (and other shift work) and not allow people to be given any reward for their time away from their families then they will find that employers particularly those in the service and construction industries will find it increasingly difficult to get quality people to do such work.

My weekends are important to me because they are the only quality time I spend with my family. Australian's already work some of the longest hours in the industrialised world and we need our weekends to be protected. I also believe that the move to abolish penalty rates would be extremely detrimental to society and I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. It is important to realise that during the last 30 years or so of deregulation in this country has largely been done at the expense of Australian families. I find it is no coincidence that rates of divorce and other forms of social breakdown has also accelerated during this same period.

Politicians of all complexions should understand that this issue makes the furore that the former Government faced over workchoices a walk in the garden. Quite frankly If people like Senator Xenophon want to destroy Australia's weekend culture then they should be prepared to take responsibility for the consequences and face getting kicked

out of office. Further it will make Australia an even more unfair and unjust society than it already is at present.

Submitted by

Vance Painter

Wednesday 19th of September 2012