

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

Some-one's thinking of removing penalty rates?

Wow, that would be a brave decision!

Especially if they foresee even a remote chance of requiring patient services in one of our hospitals on a weekend.

Let me explain...

I run my own small business and I work during the week. Customers don't like to be kept waiting so the weekend is the only time I have free for family. But I'm not always so successful in business as I'd like to be. So my wife made the decision to return to the workforce. As a nurse, a field she had worked in many years before. So now she's

often missing from our lives.

Working shift. On the weekends. On the only days I get off work.

We miss her but make the trade-off for her extra earning capacity those days.

If penalty rates were not in place it would not make sense for her to miss our family time. And that would be one less front-line person available for our hospitals. It's not an uncommon situation in our social circles. Having a number of people like my wife remove themselves from the weekend roster is going to put a strain on staffing levels.

And we're going to see more headlines about aged pensioners left on emergency department trolleys for hours...

I wonder if whoever makes these types of decisions stops to think about why penalty rates were introduced in the first place. Maybe, just maybe, it had something to do with getting enough people to give up their family time to keep some of our critical institutions running...

Submitted by

Giles Patterson

Wednesday 3rd of October 2012