

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

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

I am Brett Holmes General Secretary of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association. I represent 57,000 nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing the majority of whom work a 24 hour roster including weekends. An attack on penalty rates in one sector of the community will put at risk entitlements of workers in all other sectors. Weekend penalty rates are a significant component of take home pay of many of our members. For instance many Assistants in Nursing who earn at best \$20 per hour after 4 years experience depend upon weekend penalties to make ends meet and compensate them for the adverse hours and lost time with their families.

It is already a challenge to get younger nurses to work weekends and nightshifts if there is no financial compensation why will they keep turning up and shunning their friends who are out enjoying weekends.

It would be very naive and shortsighted to think a removal of weekend penalty rates will have no impact on essential services and areas of difficult recruitment and staffing like aged care facilities just because it is given the go ahead in retail and restarurants.

Casual and permanent workers in all areas deserve compensation for weekend work and the impact on their own personal and family life.

I urge you on behalf of 57,000 nurses and midwives in NSW to reject these proposals to remove the rights of workers to be properly compensated for the loss of family time and the personal freedoms that the majority of our community seek.

Brett Holmes
General Secretary
NSW Nurses and Midwives Association

Submitted by
Brett Holmes
Monday 24th of September 2012