

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

I urge the Senate Committee to abandon the attempt to penalise workers on penalty rates. The proposal is poorly conceived and based on flawed arguments.

University students in my family work in the retail industry during the week and on weekends. They only agree to work on weekends because of the loadings; weekend work interferes with their study, sport, family and social activities, and weekends away, so they give up a lot to work on weekends.

The people who work in retail are among the most poorly paid workers in our community and it is unfair to expect them to reduce their standard of living in order to maximist profit for others. If retailers, including small businesses, are seriously trying to reduce their costs, they would be better advised to tackle the exorbitant rental rates charged by the cartels who own shopping centres. Weekend penalty rate expenses

pale into insignificance compared to the other costs borne by retailers. Poorly paid workers will lose their incentive to work well and retailers will lose even more business to online shopping. Retailers and the restaurant industry will find it difficult to attract good staff and shoppers will find nobody there to sell them products, again causing falling sales.

Should the government force workers to lose their penalty rates, the powerful landlords will quickly take up the chance to further gouge on rents and nothing will be gained from it, but much will be lost by those least able to afford it.

Submitted by

Linda Coyle

Tuesday 18th of September 2012