



# **SAVE OUR WEEKEND**



**SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY  
COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO THE  
WORKPLACE RELATIONS FRAMEWORK**

**MARCH 2015**

*“With three children, working weekends is my only option for our household to survive. To be working in an industry that operates 24/7 - weekends being the busiest time - I have sacrificed on children’s birthdays, family functions and sports just to make ends meet. Penalty rates have helped tremendously. Take penalty rates away and it means more time away from my children and day care that we simply cannot afford.”*

*- Naomi, Casinos, NSW*

*“A fair days pay for a fair days work. That’s what we want. Nothing more and certainly nothing less.”*

*- Kym, Education, Queensland*

## ABOUT UNITED VOICE

United Voice is a union of workers organising to win better jobs, stronger communities, a fairer society and a sustainable future. Members work in a diverse range of industries including aged care, cleaning, early childhood education and care, hospitality, healthcare, security, emergency services and manufacturing.

United Voice members are the backbone of our community working around the clock to ensure people are safe, cared for, educated, fed and entertained.

While providing important services, United Voice members are often low-paid and under-valued for the work they perform. Many United Voice members are in insecure work arrangements and a large proportion rely on penalty rates to make ends meet and to compensate them for missing time off with family and friends on weekends, evenings and holidays.





*"I am the sole breadwinner in this household. I'm a nurse. The work I do is hard work, it's caring for others, it's being there at odd times, when others have knocked off, it's missing out on friends and family. There's no work-life balance anymore. The penalty rates help keep our heads above water. Knowing I have job security is one of the things I truly value. And I'm not alone in this. There are so many others like me, we don't (can't) go backwards after working so hard for what we've earned. Please don't make things any harder."*

*- Ericka, Nursing, Western Australia*

*"I have a mortgage which was made possible because I have job security and I can pay off the mortgage because I do overtime and get paid penalty rates. I'm in a good safe work environment thanks to being in a union."*

*- Claudio, NSW*

## **INTRODUCTION**

United Voice is affiliated to the ACTU and supports the ACTU submission to this inquiry. This submission is made in addition to the ACTU submission in order to provide the Commission with the direct experiences of Australian workers.

In particular, United Voice members have expressed significant concern at the possibility of changes to penalty rates and any erosion of the existing safety net.





## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given recent commentary by the Minister for Employment that penalty rates will not be considered as part of this Inquiry, that the Productivity Commission write to the Treasurer seeking clarification and an amended Terms of Reference.
- That any consideration of changes to minimum wage rates and conditions take into consideration the current inadequacies of the safety net as evidenced by United Voice members in this submission.
- That the Commissioners undertake two weekends of work alongside United Voice members in an industry such as aged care, hospitality, cleaning or security.
- That the Commission explicitly rules out considering income from tips in its findings.
- That the Commission undertakes analysis into the historic benefit that the Australian economy has derived from penalty rates.





*"We get a poor wage for the work our job in the aged care sector entails. Working public holidays and late nights are part and parcel of what we do and we have no option but to work these shifts and days. So please give us appropriate remuneration for this. What we do... it's more than a job! Please allow us a living wage, one with job security and the means to pay our bills."*

*- Margaret-Ann, Aged Care, Western Australia*

## **1. THE SAFETY NET HAS HOLES**

*"I challenge you to live on my income for a month, work the jobs I do, rear two kids and decide which child has to miss out because the money is just not there."*

*- Kelly, Victoria*



*"Power and utilities make it such a struggle I can only put the heater on when it's really necessary. The last increase took our electricity bill from \$250 to \$400 and it seems to just keep rising... In 2008, I had a car accident so not only am I a low income earner, but I have medical expenses for chronic pain."*

*- Brett, School Cleaning, Western Australia*



*Job security is hugely important to me. I work as an Education Assistant at a primary school which, although hugely satisfying work, is not well paid. The fact that until now I have had permanency has helped to compensate for that and also made obtaining approval for finance from the bank much easier than if I was a contract worker. Job security leads to happier employees who can make long term plans with confidence.*

*- Vicki, Education, Western Australia*

## 1. THE SAFETY NET HAS HOLES

*“People should not live their lives worrying that they may lose their ability to take care of themselves. Job security plays a large part in this.”*

*- Sheila, ECEC, Tasmania*

When assessing the adequacy or otherwise of the existing safety net, the Commission must take into consideration the stress and lack of security many working people and their families currently find themselves living with.

Over the past two years, United Voice has had more than 30,000 in depth conversations with members across the country about the big issues facing them, their families and their communities.

This wealth of data indicates four key issues facing members across the country:

- the cost of living;
- health care;
- job security; and
- retirement.

When members spoke about cost of living pressures, they referred particularly to low wages, housing costs and rapidly increasing utility bills.

People discussed having to put off trips to the doctor or taking their kids to the dentist, struggling to move out of their parents' homes, living in fear of the next electricity bill arriving, and working well past retirement age in physically demanding jobs because they can't afford to pay their rent or mortgage if they retire.





***“We don’t choose to work odd hours - we HAVE to! Unfortunately, sick people don’t go home at 5.30 every night.”***

***- Lindy, Hospital Services, Western Australia***

## **2. PENALTY RATES**

***“Do you realise what it is like not to be there for your family and friends when they need you? Do you get to enjoy your Christmas Day? Easter? Do you know what it is like to struggle financially? Without my penalty rates, I don’t think that I would be able to pay my bills, let alone little luxuries.”***

***- Kirsteen, Victoria***

Many United Voice members work in insecure jobs without guaranteed hours of work. Not knowing how much income they will receive from one week to the next greatly increases the stress people find themselves living under and makes planning and budgeting extremely difficult.

Proposals to cut penalty rates and weaken the existing safety net will greatly exacerbate the financial and emotional stress experienced by United Voice members across the country.

Penalty rates are an integral and essential part of our industrial relations system and have been so for close to 100 years.

They play an important role in determining accepted patterns of work and delineating social and unsocial work hours. There is a longstanding agreement in Australia that weekends and time with family, friends and community is valuable and those who miss that due to work should be compensated.



*“Penalty rates matter to me as I work weekends and afternoon shifts. I miss out on family time, social events, and special occasions. I don’t choose to work these hours but they are part of the career I am in. Without people doing shift work the hospital would not run.”*

*- Colleen, Western Australia*

## 2. PENALTY RATES

### Weekends Matter

*“I spent Christmas Eve alone and on Christmas morning my children sat waiting for their dad to come home from work before opening their presents. People like my husband who work in our emergency services give up a great deal to do their job. Cutting their pay through removing penalty rates is no way to thank them for the job they do.”*

*- Lara, Queensland*

Despite what many employer groups have been arguing about a 24/7 economy, weekends still matter. 50th birthday parties don’t take place on weekdays, grand finals aren’t played on a Tuesday, and you can’t coach your kid’s soccer team on a Friday morning.

Working weekends, evenings and public holidays means regularly missing out on time with partners, children, grandchildren and friends. It often means being absent for family celebrations, important milestones, social activities and community events.

Placing a premium on work at certain times is necessary and important in order to preserve the distinction between leisure and work. A purely economic analysis of the hours of work over-simplifies the significance of these issues and avoids the long held public consensus surrounding these matters.





*“Could you live on \$45 a day after tax? It doesn’t pay the bills or even put enough food on the table. So a Sunday shift penalty rate is a means of survival occasionally.”*

*- Rhonda, Victoria*

## **Penalty rates pay the bills**

*“It’s hard enough to live with penalty rates, without them it would be impossible.”*

*- Colin, Security Services, ACT*

*“The loss of penalty rates would be a major blow to me. I am a 60 year old widow. What I earn is what I have to live on. I work in the country. There is no public transport so I have to drive 60km each day I work. Penalty rates help to offset the fuel costs.”*

*- Jackie, Hospital Services, Western Australia*

Penalty rates make up a large portion of the take home pay of many Australian workers. For many United Voice members, penalty rates comprise more than 30% of their wages and compensate for low hourly rates in undervalued industries.

The current move to deregulate penalty rates is principally driven by the sectional interests of some employers to reduce labour costs and increase individual businesses’ profit margins at the expense of the incomes of low paid workers.

*“In aged care, we work every day. Not Monday to Friday - every day. Penalty rates are where we make our money. This is because the standard rate of pay is a pittance. I have to work weekends to make ends meet. No option.”*

*- Alina, Aged Care, Western Australia*



## ***“Penalty Rates account for 30% of my income.***

*I would appreciate you leaving these rates alone unless you wish that I walk away from my work. The position will not be worth the money it pays. The hours are lousy and I do not really have a social life thanks to the demands of work. What else do I have to give up?”*

*- Stephen, Western Australia*

## **Removing or reducing penalty rates will impact key industries**

*“Cutting penalty rates will make it hard for agencies to fill weekend shifts, and workers in the disability field will look for work in other areas where they are not expected to work weekends for a lower wage rate. There is already a shortage of trained disability support workers. Cutting penalty rates will discourage people coming into the industry.”*

*- Susan, Victoria*

*“Why would people want to go to Uni with all the expenses to study nursing if penalties are cut?! Sure you can bring people in from overseas but they’ll soon see the light and leave for better paid work. Already newly trained nurses leave the profession, so wait till penalties are cut. You’ll have a mass exodus.”*

*- Petrus, Victoria*

Many industries United Voice members work in, while essential, already struggle to attract and retain the staff required to meet community demand. Aged care, home care and disabilities face particular challenges due to the difficult nature of the work and low wages.

These are all growing sectors. The aged care workforce in particular will need to triple by 2050. While members know their work is important, the long hours, challenging work and low pay will make staying in these sectors difficult if penalty rates are reduced.



# Save our weekend

*"I hate working weekends and missing out spending time with my family and friends, but if I didn't work weekends I wouldn't be able to save to buy my first house."*

*- Lauren, Disability services, SA*

## The appropriate body to investigate penalty rates

The Productivity Commission is not the appropriate body to conduct an investigation into penalty rates. For this reason United Voice has recommended that the Commission clarify with the Treasurer the Terms of Reference for this inquiry.

Penalty rates form part of the safety net and change should only be considered when it is clearly necessary to achieve the modern award objectives as legislated within the Fair Work Act.

The Fair Work Commission has generally adopted a cautious and incremental approach to change. United Voice would contend that this approach is appropriate and necessary due to the fundamental nature of penalty rates and the broad public consensus concerning hours of work.

Penalty rates have been the subject of recent proceedings in the Fair Work Commission and there was no finding that they had any adverse effect on employment or economic activity.

Penalty rates form an important component of the safety net within Modern Awards. The sectors in which penalty rates apply can generally be characterised as low paid, and any consideration of penalty rates needs to be mindful of their role in contributing to the incomes of some of the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers in Australia.

An attack on penalty rates is an attack on the long held view that wages should be set at a minimum level that allows a person a reasonable standard of living.



### 3. RESPECT AT WORK

*"I'd like to work in a place where all workers are equal and have a say in the process. At my workplace, housekeepers are treated like we're a joke."  
- Samantha, Hotels, Queensland*

*"The right to organise my workplace for the safety of team members is paramount, and to have this threatened on any level is unjust and unfair."  
- Ali, Early Childhood Education and Care, Tasmania*

*"Job security is needed by everyone and unions are important to keep employers fair. Not all employers are unfair, but there are employers out there who are not fair and abuse those who are unable to stand up for themselves. We are not America and do not need to follow their very bad practice of abusing certain employees by paying them a pittance."  
- Linda, Education, Western Australia*

United Voice members do important jobs that keep our communities running. They deserve respect at work and to have a say in the big decisions that affect their working and home lives. Members need to have a say in what happens in their workplaces, to be treated with respect and valued for the work they perform.



# MARY

## CATERING WORKER, AGED CARE, VICTORIA

*This is a question of what kind of society we want to be part of. There used to be more of a sense of fair play. Before, no-one thought it was obscene to pay people a fair wage. This new prejudice against working people is really concerning.*

*The cost of living is increasing and wages just aren't keeping up. To keep up, we need to raise the minimum wage as a start. I mean, look at the price of electricity! I don't think anyone should earn less than \$30 an hour no matter what job they're doing.*

*Penalty rates equal survival money. It's compensation for poor wages and the sort of money we should be getting anyway.*

*If I lost my penalty rates, it'd end up costing me much more in the long-run if I suddenly couldn't afford to pay my bills.*

*Penalty rates are an important incentive to work weekends. Nobody would want to work on the weekend if you cut penalty rates. But if you refused to work weekends, you'd soon be out of a job.*

*Working on weekends and public holidays mean you miss out on friend's parties and important celebrations. I just missed out on a 1st birthday party for the child of a family friend. You miss these types of events all the time.*

*I'd invite anybody to come and do a shift with me. Come out and do the job I do and then try and pay your bills on our wages.*

*We need more respect in the workplace, not less.*

# **JOHN SECURITY GUARD, ACT**

*Joe Hockey says he wants us all to work longer and be fully self-funded in retirement. Many mid-life and older workers have rich life experience, skills from previous employments, and been further skilled up on computer applications to do just that! But now it seems that through the Productivity and Fair Work Commissions he wants to remove the incentives to earn a reasonable income so that we can be fully self-sustaining when we finally retire.*

*This is further exacerbated by his pushing out incremental increases in employer contributions to superannuation. For those of us who have taken up private health insurance to avoid later cost penalties, we now face a 6.8% increase in premiums in April (and if we withdraw from private cover, because we can no longer afford it, we will be making further calls on the public system). This is as well as other cost of living increases.*

*With wages stagnating and the flagged push to remove penalties, overtime and allowances – how are we expected to be able to maintain our health cover, or for that matter put more into superannuation to self-fund our retirement???*

*With approximately 20-30% of the workforce working unsociable hours, overtime, penalties and allowances make the difference between just being able to pay the bills, as well as make purchases that help drive the economy!! Removal of these allowances would de-incentivise people to work overtime when the employer requires it. Assuming an army of willing, well trained casuals take this up, the economy will end up with more people at break-even point who are unable to self-fund retirement and fund their private health insurance, plus a lot of wallets closed to retail spending.*



## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The remainder of this submission contains contributions from United Voice members across the country on issues they would like the Commission to consider as it undertakes its inquiry.

The Fair Work Commission is currently engaged in a comprehensive review of penalty rates as part of its four yearly review of all Modern Awards. United Voice intends to play an active role in the common and hospitality stages of the Fair Work Commission's review and is currently in the process of gathering expert and lay evidence to support the maintenance of penalty rates. When this material is filed with the Fair Work Commission, United Voice will also be able to provide this to the Productivity Commission.

United Voice is happy to provide the Commission with any further information it may require and to discuss the issues raised in this submission in more detail.

At the consultation phase we look forward to the Commission hearing from our members in person, and joining them at their workplaces to gain a deeper understanding of the value of penalty rates and other parts of the industrial safety net.

For more information on this submission, contact Madeleine Holme

# THE SAFETY NET

Job security means that I can enjoy spending time with my family rather than stressing about how I would pay the mortgage if I lost my job

- Bridget, Entertainment/Casinos, TAS

I think we need to be very careful about adopting an Americanised system in regards to employment. Everyone deserves the right to earn a living wage through one job. And to have job security. I call for anyone making such decisions to walk a week in the shoes of those on minimum and low wages.

- Tessa

I just want to remind politicians, economists and employers that our work is valuable. We deserve better pay and conditions, not cuts.

- Rinnah

As a nurse in a nursing home, to deliver quality services to the elderly, I need to know I have job security for my great work. I give up my evenings and weekends so should be paid in accordance with this as well. I love what I do and I am damn good at it but if these changes were made I couldn't afford to live on the wage I would receive and not just me - its thousands of others. We need to protect our sick and elderly and make sure we have good staff to support their care.

- Christine

Job security means financial security and that leads to less stress and better health which combined equals less dependence on government agencies in the long term.

- Cheryl, WA

It is too much for employees. Victoria is too expensive already, look at the rents, grocery and even the bills. I'm working two jobs already and still in debt on the credit card.

- Rashid, Security, VIC

Being a long term employee (more than 10 years with the same company) shows my dedication to my career. If it is easier for employers to fire their employees I am sure they would look at firing their long term employees first (so they don't have to give long service pay outs). I don't want this to happen. No one will be safe in their job. To make ends meet, I have a second job (weekends). This is to look at my future (eventually wanting a family) and to provide for myself, my husband and future children. Taking away penalty rates, means I will have to work longer hours (I am already working 7 days a week). I will have to work nights just to try and make the money to be able to live.

- Tracy, Early Childhood Education and Care, ACT

Finding the right people to work in aged care is already extremely challenging the industry needs higher wages and better working conditions if a suitable work force is to be achieved.

- Vanessa, Aged Care, ACT



# THE SAFETY NET

We talk about work/life balance and communities and volunteering then we are forced to have multiple jobs to eat/survive. We only ask for a fair go Australia.

- Troy

Without job security and permanency I wouldn't have been able to buy a house. The banks don't loan to people on casual or low incomes

- Vicki, WA

Half my pay goes to rent alone. If I lose more money myself and my two children will struggle as I am a sole parent.

- Kathryn

People should not live their lives worrying that they may lose their ability to take care of themselves. Job security plays a large part in this.

- Sheila, TAS

I have a family and a mortgage and am working hard to secure a life for myself and for my children's future. Working in childcare we get paid lower wages than others in different sectors with the same or less qualifications but most educators do the job because we love it. Having a fair enterprise agreement and stability is very important to my family and relieves stress and worry.

I work full days educating children so the only chance I have for staff meetings and personal development training is after hours. I work a full day then stay back sometimes until 9pm leaving my young family in the care of my partner. I do this to earn extra money and to better myself and make myself a better educator but if penalty rates were taken away doing this extra work would not benefit my family.

Educators are already on a low wage they rely on the occasions they earn penalty rates to help make them better educators for our next generation and keep the fantastic educators you have working in the sector staying there and not seeking a better paid job. How can the young people of today build a future if there is no security in work or ways to make extra money through penalty rates in low paid job? The low paid jobs that are needed to keep society going, the cleaners, the cooks, the educators, the shop workers, the cashiers, the list goes on. There are all important roles within society but people who struggle on low wages. We as a Western society should be moving forwards not backwards.

- Sharon, Early Childhood Education and Care, WA

Please don't make our lives harder. We struggle enough.

- Simone, Nursing, VIC

We live in a stressful world, it is becoming harder to afford basic groceries, and pay bills. If job security is taken away then we are living in an uncertain world. Why would I bother telling my children to go to university when at the end of it there is no job security?

- Maria

# THE SAFETY NET

I must say I'm sick and tired of politics. For one they don't mind massive pay rises but are happy to cut our workforce and expect more in return. The day they wake up and realise that the everyday, hard working people of the country are the ones that keep their businesses running! Surely there are still big profits to be made for the guys at the top of the table. The ones at the bottom of the table are working as hard as always, being efficient and productive but we are the ones struggling and worrying all the time. I know that I don't want to be lined up at Centrelink!

- Jason, Cleaning, TAS

Job security is important to me as I don't want to be burdened with looking for further employment at an older age when it is more difficult to convince discriminating employers that you are suitable for the job or to later become a statistic in the social security nightmare.

- Christine, WA

Most polities would not have clue as what an ordinary Australian worker requires in a wage packet just to keep pace with the rising cost of living. I'm 71 years old and still holding down a full time job, because the aged pension will barely cover my fixed costs eg. gas, power, water, insurances etc. and I do not drink or smoke. Try getting some of the multinationals and their high paid staff to pay their fair share of the tax burden instead of going after the lowest paid in our society.

- Anthony

The reason I go to work is to pay my bills and taxes and if any is left it is used to feed me and make small donations.

- Yazid, WA

Do not ruin my children's future.

- Matthew, Disability Services, VIC

Job security is so important to me because I need to be able to sleep at night knowing that I can support my family and stay in the job which is near my home and family and not have to move away.

- Stella, QLD

We deserve BETTER PAY and CONDITIONS, NOT CUTS. Returning to individual agreements would be stepping back into the DARK AGES!

- Letisia, WA

We need fair wages for the child care sector as we work extremely hard caring with safety and learning involved with the children. We have studied and continue to study ensuring children are the centre of our focus at all times.

- Gayle, Early Childhood Education and Care, ACT

We along with our forebears have worked darned hard to have a safe and secure working environment. Don't take this away from us and our children and grandchildren!

- Chris, QLD

# THE SAFETY NET

I, and many students like me, already live below the poverty line due to insecure, casual work that we fit in between classes and on weekends. We rely on the rights that Tony Abbott intends to abolish, like the minimum wage and penalty rates to make ends meet week to week. It is patently unfair and discriminatory and will only make life harder for many working people.

- Shane, WA

Being employed for 42 hours per fortnight and regarded as permanent full time I earn just a smidgen over \$500 per week to take home. This doesn't afford me the ability to rent outright so I board with friends and this cannot go on forever. I am in mid 50s and opportunities are far and few. Don't take away my slim amount of security by taking away entitlements.

- Kathie

I am a single mother who is trying to pay a mortgage with two children. I work in a man's world as it is and you probably have no idea how discriminating this can be. Please don't make it any harder than it already is.

- Bettina

Work with a special needs child for just one day and see whether you think an Education Assistant deserves a pay cut...

- Sharon

Don't turn our awesome Australia into an awful America.

- Alex

I am an educator in a child care centre being paid minimum wage to introduce the Early Years Learning Framework to the next generation. Unfair.

- Jane

You state you want older people to remain working and women in the workforce - that means we have to have job security. Older people especially because the young people don't want you there once you are 50 plus.

- Natalie, WA

It's time people realised the lower working class are struggling to live and make ends meet just to survive week to week.

- Mick, Security, ACT

I am a new home loan payer and a new dad. I need stable income and secured job very much.

- Peter, WA

Job security means being able to plan for my family's future. It means being able to enjoy and feel valued in my work.

- Donna, QLD



# THE SAFETY NET

NOBODY CONSULTED the workers about extended opening hours, NOBODY ASKED if we wanted to spend less time with our FAMILY, therefore NEITHER YOU nor My EMPLOYER should get out of COMPENSATING me for MISSING OUT on my FAMILY ACTIVITIES. Tony Abbott says if you don't want to work overtime then don't, so I put this to you, do you HONESTLY think an employer will accept that? Although they cannot terminate you for this they WILL, find a way to make you leave by reducing your hours. I ask that you please do NOT remove my conditions, Do NOT approve individual agreements. By helping us to retain our penalty rates, ensure job security, give us a decent rate of pay this will have a flow on effect to our economy. Job security = buying a house, spending money on a new or second hand car, it will in short increase consumer confidence which in turn will help businesses grow across our beautiful country. Our job security, family security and my work/life balance ALL depend on your decision.

- Brett, School Cleaning, WA

Job security, in the amount of hours I work, when I work them and where I work them allow stability for me and my family. This allows my husband and I to be there for our children and to also plan family time. With so many dysfunctional families and society suffering as a result, I truly believe job security is essential to give families stability. Penalty rates supplement the very basic wage paid to we who are called unskilled workers, but without us who would keep the hospitals, schools and so many places clean so infectious disease doesn't take hold? So I believe we are entitled to job security and our penalty rates.

- Julie, Cleaning, WA

I see employers turn to contracting staff instead of part time permanent or permanent. People want jobs, and will do what is needed to get the job. If they have to sign a contract, they will, just to get the job. A lot of my colleagues will either lose their jobs or have their hours cut.

- QLD

Please leave my award and rights alone. I have fought hard to gain what I have and also missed so much of my family during the early years. It's okay to say if you don't want to do shift work then don't but get a grip. Maybe you need to spend a week doing the shifts with the nurses from start to finish (and that includes no meal breaks at all).

- Doris, WA

All I want is a fair wage for a fair job done. This will enable us to live a basic existence without the fear of losing everything that my husband and I have struggled so long to get. The knowledge that my security could be ripped out from under me is a weight that honest people shouldn't have to live with and fear.

- Karen

How much does it cost for a person to live on their own in the current market? How much do we have to give up time-wise, money-wise and life-wise just so we can live? Put yourselves in our shoes, then think about what you're doing.

- Eleanor, Cleaning, ACT

# THE SAFETY NET

If wages go down I'm in fear of losing our home as trying to pay the mortgage will become even harder. So much for the Aussie dream Tony Abbott.

- Ann, WA

Job security is vital to the wellbeing of the employee to keep you motivated in your work and to continue putting your heart and soul into your job. Even though working as an education assistant is not the best paid work it is rewarding to see the difference you make towards a child's future.

- Trisa, Education, WA

A fair days pay for a fair days work. The last thing the Australian worker needs is a reduction in penalty rates, and award wages. The cost of living, the CPI, and taxes have increased. Give the Australian worker a fair go. We have fought hard for our basic rights, and award conditions.

- Peter

We deserve better pay and conditions. I am a school cleaner and we have already had cuts to our district allowance (for working remotely).

- Roslyn, School Cleaning, WA

We need jobs simply to live and feed our loved ones and support our family.

- Rebecca

It is important to me because like most people we have mortgages, food that needs to be put on the table, to feed and clothe and school my children.

- Brendon, Education, TAS

Job security is hugely important to me. I work as an Education Assistant at a Primary School which, although hugely satisfying work, is not well paid. The fact that until now I have had permanency has helped to compensate for that and also made obtaining approval for finance from banks etc much easier than if I was a contract worker. Job security leads to happier employees who can make long term plans with confidence.

- Vicki, Education, WA

Most of us have to struggle to pay mortgages and utilities and we are all just keeping our heads above water. We should actually say 'you come and do our work'. If there were not great and fabulous workers like us in our industry where would they be? I they would not survive. We actually need better living standards and because we are at the bottom of the food chain we get NOTHING. But the Hospitals would not survive without us - who would do the cleaning? Who would cook the meals for patients? The government needs to wake up and start smelling the roses.

- James, Health Services, WA

We (the working class) drive the economy. Take money away from us and you take it away from Australia.

- Rodney, QLD

# THE SAFETY NET

Penalty rates enable me to keep doing the job I love and pay the mortgage!!

- Ady

I am a long term worker where I work (16 years). I am also mature age (I will be 67 this year). I value my job security because I know it would be extremely hard to secure another position of any kind at my age, and yet the government is telling people my age we should stay in work. I choose to, I could claim the pension, so the least they can do to reward people like me is retain our job security. People like me are saving them a packet in pension payments alone, not to mention all the other discounts pensioners and seniors get (I cannot get a seniors card because of the hours I work, not because I earn a lot of money). This is another area needs review, older workers should be able to have a seniors card, most of the time if you are working you don't have time to use it anyway! Other states give seniors card according to age but not WA.

If my job security is taken away the school where I work could be tempted to replace me with a younger, cheaper to pay person, especially now they have been forced to become an independent school on a tight budget.

The government makes a lot of contradictory statements about older workers staying in the work force which indicate this area has not been thoroughly considered. I am lucky to be quite healthy, but I feel for those who are not as able and yet are not so disabled or ill that they can get a pension. People do have problems as they age but they have to put up with them. Things such as arthritis, vision and hearing problems - they do not make people ill but they can make it difficult for people to work. I value my right to be a union member because I am kept informed about matters like this and I feel supported.

- Cheryl, Education, WA

With the price of everything sky-rocketing, we need to hold on to what we have worked so hard for.

- Iris

Job security means everything to me. If I perform my work according to my job description, I shouldn't be threatened with job loss. This equates to workplace bullying.

- Ellen

Security Officer, 12hr shifts, rotating roster, unsociable hours. My family pays the cost of me not being there for them.

- Andrew, Security, TAS

Job security is important as I have a growing family that I have to support. It's hard enough now to make ends meet with the inflating price of things. Everything is going up but nothing is being done to help the people that keep the country functioning - THE WORKERS!

- Tanya

Job security for myself and my family helps me sleep at night.

- Chris, WA



# THE SAFETY NET

Everyday Australians are having to fight hard to keep their jobs and worry about whether you are going to work the next day or not. Because the way employment is now, a lot of the jobs are casual positions. No work now, you don't get paid.

- David

I love to work and I love to spend my money on my family. This money that I receive for my hard work is just one small part of what I do to help the economy and my country flourish. Make me unemployed and I won't have the money to spend and the economic circle from my family to my country is broken.

- Wendie-Lee, WA

I can barely make ends meet now we work very hard.

- Tam

The Liberals' plans for workplace reforms will enable more and more exploitation of employees. Rich and poor will both suffer with fear of termination.

- Bruce, Cleaning, ACT

I'd like to see them living our life, to get a feeling of what it's like in the real world.

- Dawn, WA

What happened to a fair go for all Australians?

- Moira, WA

A fair work ethic is about entitlements to those who've earned them. When people put their hand up for the job, it's not to do it for free!! Workers need to feel protected when they are vulnerable. It seems that everyone is cautious now of taking legitimate time away from their jobs.

- Olivia

Australians are proud to have reasonable work place laws and pay rates that show that workers in the main are treated fairly. Now we have a government who want to take up on a downward spiral to follow the great American Dream. What a dream! Huge numbers of families living below the poverty line and living on the streets. Family bread winners force to commit criminal acts to feed, clothe and house their families.

- Paul, WA

Come on Mr Abbott what else are you going to take off us? More jobs, more unemployment, when does it stop?

- Carole, Cleaning, TAS

Our industry's workers are already paid less than they deserve; further cuts could ruin our careers. WorkChoices was one of the biggest legislative disasters of the century; let's leave it in the past, shall we?

- Jason

The cost of living is too high, everything is high, bills to pay left and right...

- Virginia, WA

# THE SAFETY NET

Lower income earners need security in our jobs to put food on the table for our families. To take that away will put pressure on unemployment.

- Carol

I want my workplace to be a fair place for me to help provide for my young family. I already work for the Department of Education, work part time for my own business and study part time online at Uni. Life for me is very busy and that is not to mention my wife and kids that really need me out there working hard for them to keep them well fed, educated and entertained. I don't want to lose my penalty rates, public holidays and good hours of work that work for my family. I say no to Tony Abbott no way to any changes, we need to keep a fair deal for everyone.

- David, Education, TAS

Job security is important so the family can survive and give each other a future.

- Karen

We deserve better pay and conditions, not cuts. We need to be treated like humans. Give us a fair chance.

- Jasmine, WA

Job security and fair wages are important to me at my age just to be able to survive day to day living and to pay a mortgage. If there is no job security no one will ever be able to get a loan for a house or car.

- Kathy

Don't take away what the previous generation fought so hard for, to improve the workplace for every hard working Australian.

- Joanne

I am a single 50 year old person who also cares for my 90 year old mum. I have a mortgage and a child to support.

- Lois

Mr Abbott how about you yourself try to live on the pension or as a low income earner for a month and see how you can cope with all the changes that you have made. Young families are struggling to make ends meet every day. As well as the pensioners, you will never struggle like we do every day.

- Judith, QLD

If you have any hope for the future of our children, let them learn from educated, well paid educators.

- Rose, Early Childhood Education and Care, Tas

A place with job security and equality for everyone.

- Gladys, QLD

# THE SAFETY NET

For a change, how about creating full-time jobs, putting infrastructure in place so as steady growth in full-time employment can be produced instead of stripping penalties and conditions away from low paid workers who are already battling to make ends meet? Why is a fair and useful budget for all Australians beyond this government?

- Hugh, ACT

Job security is very important otherwise we would not be building houses and getting into mortgages if it meant that employers could just give us the flick through no fault of our own. Give us a fair go.

- Felicity

At my age job security is very important. Plus you have happier workers when they know what their working future is. Workplace Agreements is another name for the worker to suffer I have seen the results of people going on to a Workplace Agreement and they regretted signing one.

- Susan

Let Tony live on our crappy money! I'm sure his family wouldn't survive. I get up 3am to get a shift allowance.

- Vicki, Cleaning, TAS

Ever since I've been politically aware, every conservative government that has been elected, both state and federal, have always attacked workers as soon as they come to power. I've been closely following politics since the dismissal of the Whitlam government, the worker, who is the backbone of the economy, has come under fire incessantly over that time and longer.

- John, QLD

If the company managing directors and board members can give themselves a bonus worth millions, then they can give the workers a pay rise. They are only interested in their own deep pockets. As for workers taking pay cuts to help companies out, then a short time later, they either close down or go overseas any way. The companies also bid on contracts well under what they should - this applies to the government as they take the cheapest contract. This should be changed so companies do not interfere with workers' wages. When something goes wrong, the worker is the one to be blamed.

- Norman, Security, ACT

Working people need adequate wages to be able to pay all the living costs/utilities, which are always on the rise. If workers do get enough wages the whole economy suffers when there is not enough disposable income.

- Vilma

A good wage is the only income for workers who keep our country strong.

- Patricia, WA



# THE SAFETY NET

My parents and grandparents stood up with the union to fight for better conditions and these are slowly getting eroded bit by bit. Nobody says anything and employers and government are getting away with it. Without standing up for our rights we will soon have none.

- Jennifer, Early Childhood Education and Care, QLD

I am on call 24/7 no penalty rates my hourly rate is \$19.50.

- Stan, WA

We work really hard for the kids and we do value our students. We do not deserve to have unfair wages and cuts in our department.

- Savita, Education, WA

Stop eroding basic rights of hardworking Australians!

- Rachael, QLD

I work in Aged Care/Dementia. We have such low wages that I, like many colleagues feel very resentful, frustrated and unvalued. It's not good to have care-workers going to work feeling like this every day.

- Tina, Aged Care

The price of everything else is going UP. So out of fairness, so too should our pays!

- Zane

With four young children it means stability and security of my job.

- Jannelle, WA

Without job security employees exist in a "limbo" unable to make concrete plans for their own and their family's future.

- Gail, WA

You pay for what you get! If you want more productivity then you need to respect your employees, if not it causes a huge chain reaction of negative impacts which will end up costing the government more in the long run.

- Danielle, WA

My family belongs to the working poor, we have 2 incomes. Our weekly budget gives us \$6.75 left over. Any increase in costs or reduction in wages is critical to our well being.

- Debbie, WA

Our pay rate is already lower than other industries.

- Keyur, NSW

We can't keep losing permanent jobs, plus wages and conditions. It's hard to survive as it is.

- Peter, NSW

# THE SAFETY NET

If the pay and conditions going to be cut, does that mean petrol, food, amenities, bills etc are going to have a cut as well, how about the interest rates on the bank's, as well as education, does that mean free education? Why don't they just increase the tax on the wealthy drop their wages and see what happens there. Why does the government have to pick on the people that already do a minimum of 38hr weeks and still come home with nothing. The Australian government should wake up and listen to the people for a change and not big corporations.

- Aliriza, NSW

\$650 billion in SMSF accounts, likely to rise to one trillion in 18 months and purportedly paying 15% tax except they don't - the companies' fully franked dividends pay most of this tax. Not suggesting those who have worked hard and frugally put monies aside shouldn't enjoy the fruits of their efforts but really - those with over one or two million getting these concessions from the Australian tax payer!!! And then, Four Corners exposing the extent of fraud in the jobs and training network, running into the hundreds of millions of dollars, importantly, with dubious or few positive outcomes, plus many providers and sub-contractors financially abusing the most vulnerable members of our community. Shouldn't these be the starting point for governments be focussing on and Unions to be bringing to public attention?? What happened to our relatively egalitarian Australia?

- John, Security, ACT

With our small pay packet we all pay the same for the essentials of life.

- Rosemaria, WA

# PENALTY RATES

I sacrifice weekends with my family and work shifts to feed patients in a hospital. Without penalty rates I won't be able to feed my family. Unfortunately like most people that work weekends and shift work, we DO NOT get a choice. It's our roster.

- Sharyn, WA

I am a 61 year old hospitality worker who works weekends. I have worked for my current employer for nearly 18 years and cannot count the number of social and family events ie birthdays, engagements etc. that I have missed over this period. I feel the penalties at least reward me for working odd hours and missing out on time with my family and friends. For those unfamiliar with shift work ,not only do you miss out on time with your family ,but also your friends eventually drift away as they get sick of hearing you apologise for not being able to attend due to either working early hour shifts or finishing late in the early hours of the morning. Financially my family now rely on the extra pay I receive for working on the weekend. I do not get a choice in when my shifts are rostered. The same people calling for the abolition of penalty rates are the same people who work regular hours but want other people to forgo their family time to serve them when they go out for a good time. If you decide to abolish penalty rates, then go all the way and force government workers, banks, insurance companies etc to all work 7 days a week as well and not receive any penalties. Also think about our police and nurses and essential services workers who give up their valuable time to serve us all. Please consider all the facts and keep the penalties for those people who serve us all on the weekend and on public holidays.

- Bob, Hospitality, WA

Please do not touch penalty rates. This is the difference between just living or a bit more than just living. My wage is small, to loose of penalty rates will make my wage even smaller.

- Peter

Penalty rates matter to me because I miss quality time with family and friends as well as many events to work every weekend. My employer runs a company that requires part of the workforce to be rostered on weekends, evenings and nights. I expect my efforts to be recognized and rewarded by my boss. If not, I'll go back on working Monday to Friday. I support fair wages because it's time the gap between the rich and the middle/low-class starts narrowing so that more and more people can have and give their families a better and easier future, just like wealthy families. As per job security, I'm writing all of this because I want to be stress free – not stressed out.

- Rob, QLD

I am the sole breadwinner in this household. I'm a nurse. The work I do is hard work, it's caring for others, it's being there at odd times, when others have knocked off, it's missing out on friends and family, there's no work-life balance anymore. The penalty rates help keep our heads above water. Knowing I have job security is one of the things I truly value. And I'm not alone in this. There are so many others like me, we don't (can't) go backwards after working so hard for what we've earned. Please don't make things any harder.

- Ericka



# PENALTY RATES

Its very easy for anyone to comment about cutting our penalties, it only could be realised if they come & work with us during dark nights in open sky with all possible weather conditions.

- Muhammad, Security, VIC

Really look at the facts before looking at the savings. Ask yourself what can you live without? Who will care for your elders if penalty rates are cut?

- Julia, Aged Care, VIC

I give up family time and events to be available for my weekend shift. The penalties soften this a little.

- Thais

I need penalty rates as without them I would lose one third of my pay. I am twenty years old and I have not had the opportunity my parents had. My parents bought the house they still live in for just under \$200,000, 18 years ago. Now, it's worth over a million, simply due to the change of our economy. For me to buy a house, even one in a bad location as some of my coworkers do, travelling over an hour to work simply because that is all they can afford, I would have to save up at least 10% for a deposit. That's more than my annual take home pay. Without penalty rates, my chances of being an independent adult would become merely a dream. Removing penalty rates only benefits the big bosses of companies, and not the hard workers. Australia was built by unions and the underdogs. It's un-Australian to even suggest cutting the wages of some of the lowest income earners. Companies want to save money? Why not start from the top, as some executives can make millions each year. Not from the people that need every single cent that they work hard for.

- Zoe, WA

I work every other weekend to give me that little bit extra in my pay because of the penalty rates. In so doing I have given up time I could have spent with family and friends enjoying myself. Over the years I and my family have sacrificed those special times in order to be able to afford to pay bills and educate our children so that they could get good jobs and contribute to the economy of Australia. I have worked in Aged care for over 35 years. It is hard work and the wages are not comparable to the work we do. Penalty rates and job security are very important to us, so also is collective enterprise bargaining so that we can safeguard our conditions of employment and employers cannot just sack long- term workers.

- Crissilda, Aged Care, WA

Penalties rates and permanent job security have been a lifesaver for me as I have been widowed over 20 years and brought up a child, who is now an adult with a degree and he has work.

- Janice, WA

Please reconsider your plans to scrap penalty rates. This is the only way we can make enough money to live and save for our children's future education as that will send us broke aswell.

- Jo, Paramedic, VIC

# PENALTY RATES

Why would people want to go to Uni with all the expence to study nursing if penalties are cut?!Sure you can bring them in from overseas but they'll soon see the light and leave for better paid work. Already newly trained nurses leave the proffession so wait till penalties are cut.You'll have a mass exodus. Then there's's the problem of recruiting for the police.

- Petrus, Health, VIC

We get a poor wage for the work our job in the aged care sector entails. Working public holidays and late nights are part and parcel of what we do and we have no option but to work these shifts and days. So please give us appropriate remuneration for this. What we do... it's more than a job! Please allow us a living wage, one with job security and the means to pay our bills.

- Margaret-Ann, Aged Care

I for one wouldn't work on weekends, nights or evenings and /or public holidays if the penalty rates weren't there

- Colleen, QLD

When we're rostered on for public holidays and yes that does include Christmas day, Easter weekend, night shifts and many weekends we thoroughly deserve to be paid penalty rates. We have to work when many, many other workers are on days off. Penalty rates must remain.

- Bryn

I have chosen to give up weekends, Christmas and every other major holiday with my family, work night shifts, work long hours and in possible dangerous conditions. I do this for an attractive salary that can help support my family, buy our first home and pay our way. Any change to this would dramatically change everything for my family and I in a negative way. So please, leave us to work hard and earn our wage. Don't let us make sacrifices for time in order for money just to have that taken away.

- Josh, TAS

Penalty rates are 30% of my wages.

- Francesco, WA

Cutting penalty rates will make it hard for agencies to fill weekend shifts and workers in the disability field will look for work in other areas where they are not expected to work weekends for a lower wage rate. There is already a shortage of trained disability support workers cutting penalty rates will discourage people coming into the industry.

- Susan, Disabilities, VIC

It is easy for rich people to complain about paying penalty rates because they dont and never had to work these weekends public holidays and night shift to make sure they had a sufficient wage to put food on the table and pay the bills for their family.

- Trevor, Security, ACT

Good luck finding workers if you cut the penalties.

- Laura, Cleaning, VIC

# PENALTY RATES

Penalty rates and job security are two majorly important things to me because without it I won't be able to pay my bills, due to all the increases, in water, gas, electricity, registration and the list goes on.

- Kareen, WA

I am a single mum with two children (7 and 10) and I work as a personal care assistant. Due to my work commitment, I need to use childcare service. I also sacrifice my family time working during weekends. The penalty rates I earn cover expensive childcare fees and compensate me for the precious family time I miss out on. Some people have no choice but have to work those times (early morning, late evening, during weekends and public holidays) to care for other peoples' needs. I believe most people appreciate the fact they or their loved ones are looked after 24/7 in nursing homes or in hospitals.

- Miwa, WA

I will not be working on the weekend if there are no penalty rates. Just hope people don't get sick on the weekends!

- Lesley

My basic pay rate is \$22 per hour. Losing penalty rates would cut my weekly income by \$120. I would struggle to live on this.

- Tessa

Weekend and public holiday penalty rates are the compensation for lost time with family and loved ones while at work. To remove them destroys the family and social fabric of our society and could possibly change the work ethic of those entering and already in the workplace with weekend and public holiday shifts not being covered by staff preferring to spend quality time with family and loved ones. It is a compensation, so leave the penalties in place and balance both the working and social lives of all Australians who work hard to make this country a fabulous place to live, work and to bring up a family. Thank you for your time.

- Michael

Without penalty rates or the job security of my chosen profession, I may not have considered embarking on the Degree that allows me to be employed in that field.

- Stew

I need my penalty rates so that I have a half decent pay to take home as an enrolled nurse. It goes toward the high cost of living up here in the Kimberley.

- Geraldine, Nursing, WA

Penalty rates account for 30% of my income. I would appreciate leaving these rates alone unless you wish that I walk away from my work. The position will not be worth the money it pays. The hours are lousy and I do not really have a social life thanks to the demands of work. What else do I have to give up... the right to breathe?

- Stephen

Without penalty rates, I wouldn't be able to pay my mortgage and I would have to sell my house.

- Anne



# PENALTY RATES

I have two kids to support and a house mortgage to pay. Scrapping penalty rates will mean my whole family struggling to live a decent life. My life depends on the job that I have right now.

- Lourdes

Without penalty rates I would not be able to live on my wage as we are low paid workers in the aged care sector. I give up my valuable time to work weekends just so I have enough money to live on. Without penalty rates I can't live, it's as simple as that.

- Patricia, WA

Having to miss out on family gatherings, special events and time with your friends is hard enough. To work the weekend public holiday and the dreaded night shift without any reward or benefit and for the same money as people working the nine to five Monday to Friday who are free to spend time with family and friends with the benefit of the services of those that are denied that luxury is just unfair and unaustralian. Do not take our penalty rates from us without them there is no incentive to work these times rather than being with our families

- Lyn, WA

Working weekends means time robbed from friends and family. Often there is no choice but at least with penalty rates we are able to pay for things that matter when we do get time with our families. With the growing cost of living penalty rates for weekend shifts often are a way to make ends meet. Please don't take them away!

- Anna, QLD

Mr Abbott said recently "If you don't want to work Sundays, then don't". But why should I give up quality time with my family and friends and be paid the same as others who only work a regular Monday to Friday? For years I worked in the hospitality industry as a hotel receptionist. Many times I couldn't go out with my friends because I had to work; or even miss Christmas lunch with my family because I had to work. I needed a job and income so I could not afford to refuse to work.

- Paula

I am a casual and get \$24 per hour when I get shifts, at the whim of my employer. I have been a casual for three years with a pay as low as \$700 a fortnight and sometimes a decent amount of \$1600. At the same time I am expected to come in at weekends, nights, afternoons as they want. I have little home life and everything revolves around shifts yet they want to take my penalty rates away. I revolve my life around my shift.

- Richard, WA

Penalty rates help to pay bills!

- Romel

Penalty rates are the only way to keep my head above water and enable me to pay all my bills AND keep food on the table.

- Elena

Penalty rates mean the difference between living and barely surviving.

- Donna

# PENALTY RATES

I'm an Emergency Services Paramedic. Shift work, weekend work, public holidays inclusive of X-mas and Easter are all part of my normal working regime. (NO CHOICE) Erode our penalties and you will have mass disturbances among all shift workers, especially emergency services professionals. It's hard enough missing out on family gatherings over all holiday / celebration periods, without the threats of taking money from us.

- Pete, WA

Penalty rates are basically what we are working for. And all those time we stay back or start earlier and still got paid the same rate is so unfair. Hospitality is not an easy industry. We have to stand together and fight for our rights!

- Miki, Hospitality

It's obvious what we give up working week-ends, late nights and public holidays, birthdays, family events and school events just to name a few. The penalty seems, to some degree go towards making amends for what we give up.. Tony Abbott say's "if you don't want to work week-ends then don't", what an ignorant thing to say. We don't have a choice if we work week-end, late nights or public holidays so we should be paid accordingly.

- Steven, WA

I am a shift worker both day and night shifts 12 hours in duration. Penalties make it worthwhile as we lose valuable time with our loved ones and this to some extent helps with the missing out of home life.

- Tony

I like to work on weekend, nights and afternoons just because of the extra pay

-otherwise why work if it is the same pay?

- Grace

The government needs care workers due to the increasing number of our aging population. It's the penalties that keep us in a demanding, low paying job.

- Susan, Aged Care, WA

With three children, working weekends is my only option for our household to survive. To be working in an industry that operates 24/7 with weekends being the busiest, I have sacrificed on children's birthdays, family functions and sports just to make ends meet. Penalty rates have helped tremendously. Take penalty rates away means more time away from my children and daycare that we simply cannot afford :(

- Naomi, Entertainment

I currently only work weekends as that is what my workplace has pushed me to do due to wanting mainly agency workers. If my penalty rates were taken I would have to give up work.

- Marie

I'd prefer not to work on weekends, so when I'm forced to, I'd like to be compensated with penalty rates for the loss of time with my family.

- Ange

# PENALTY RATES

I sacrifice seeing my wife, family and friends evenings and weekends to be able to survive. Penalty rates are necessary to live.

- Grantley

Shift work directly affects my family life and social life. Some compensation for this is needed.

- Sue, WA

Penalty rates make a big difference in my pay each fortnight and means you are not giving up your time with your family for nothing.

- Sonia

My job requires me to work over a seven day roster. Unlike most other jobs where public holidays and Sundays are a day to relax with family and friends, I am at work. I work with the public transport authority so the trains never stop for holidays. Even Christmas and Boxing Day and Easter holidays I am at work. It can be a very lonely existence as it is also nightshift. Penalty rates are the only thing that keep me going. In regards to all these proposals for changes I say put yourself in our shoes and see how far you could walk in them. We work hard and at the most anti-social hours without complaint, we provide a service to the public that goes unnoticed and unrewarded and so penalty rates are the only reward we have for giving up those precious holidays that should be spent with everyone else.

- Claudia

I sacrifice spending time with my family when I work on weekends and public holidays, but it's worth it if it means I am able to earn a little more money to spend on household needs, bills and other family expenses.

- Virgilia

I work for my living for a fair wages. If people work outside hours, overtime, public holidays or weekends or shift work, then penalty rates should be paid.

- Rosenda

I work late night, which means I'm sacrificing my family time. Cutting pay rates will disadvantage many families, result: a poor society.

- Anita, NSW

The loss of penalty rates would be a major blow to me. I am a 60 year old widow. What I earn is what I have to live on. I work in the country. There is no public transport so I have to drive 60km each day I work. Penalty rates help to offset the fuel costs. Comments such as you chose to live in the country is not always correct. If I sold my modest home I would not be able to buy a home in the metro area, and who would employ a 60 year old woman?

- Jackie, WA

I could not survive without penalty rates.

- Jayne, WA



# PENALTY RATES

This year I missed seeing my family on Christmas. It was the first time in ten years we had been in the same city but because I work on rotating rosters I have to work public holidays.

- Jo-anne

Penalty rates are not just important but a crucial part of our pay because they are the only way to somehow get compensated for a loss of social life during the weekends and public holidays.

- Drago

Shift workers don't get a choice about whether they will, or will not work "out of hours". If we lose penalty rates we will suffer a COMPULSORY reduction in living standards, and in many cases could lose our homes.

- Michael

Penalty rates are my incentives for shift work.

- Victor

In my job you have to provide 24 hour care and in order to develop a work life balance you have to put in requests for time off otherwise you work any shift. As an essential service we can't switch off at 5pm and not work weekends and there needs to be due recognition for this. Many nurses work family birthdays, mothers/ fathers days, public holidays and miss out on quality time. Plus shift work is exhausting. Don't remove penalties for your essential service personnel.

- Debbie

The wages in Tasmania are so low, and the state government keeps increasing charges 'to bring pricing in line with the rest of Australia'. Without our penalty rates we wouldn't be able to reside and raise our families.

- Darren, Brewery Industry, TAS

Good grief - we already do sleep-overs at a health authority organisation, that is 15.5 hours of which we get 6.5 hours pay at a low rate and 9 hours at \$7.00 regardless if I sleep or not. Now you want to take away our penalties! Who are you going to have left to work with the elderly and disabled?

- Rita

Without penalty rates our working wage is not worth getting out of bed for. I would like to see the government ministers, or Tony Abbott do the jobs that we do, for the same rate as pay that we receive. The pay rises that the government ministers get per annum is greater than most workers get for their paid job.

- Peter, WA

Being a single mum, penalty rates helps me a lot financially.

- Florida

Penalty rates give me security and a stable life.

- Goran

# PENALTY RATES

I need to keep my penalty rates as the cost of living is increased all the time. They help paying water rates, petrol, council rates, electricity. As a family of five with one income, we depend on the overtime for our food.

- Lee, QLD

Penalty rates matter because if we earn more, we can spend more and have a decent living, if you take penalty rates away, people will spend less, it will cost companies more because people will not work weekends or public holidays if it doesn't suit them, and the economy will suffer. Unemployment will rise or remain high because it will make jobs less appealing.

- James

Maybe I won't work outside normal business hours any more. So, who will be there for the disabled ladies I help? Not everyone will do my job.

- Carol

We can't survive without penalty rates as everything is extremely expensive especially food and the basic things we need to feed our family. We need an increase in wages.

- Marie, WA

Penalties are the life booster for common people to survive. The more penalties they earn, the more tax they will be paying which ultimately helps the government to survive and helps the community.

- Jignesh, QLD

I work an average of 20 hours per week, for the minimum wage, half of those hours are on the weekend and attract penalty rates. I work this way instead of the 9 to 5 Monday to Friday employment I used to have (at a higher hourly rate) because I have a foster child with medical issues and a widowed mother with 97% hearing loss. If you would like me to send the foster child back and leave my mother to rely on social services while I work more hours to make up for the loss of penalty rates, go for it...

- Carol, Cleaning, TAS

Why should a so many have the weekends off and those who work have to lose penalty rates. It is a sort of award for working unsocial hours. Not being able to socialise and keep up with family and friends. Losing contact and being tired. Not able to partake in team sports. There is also no help when you are unemployed.

- Josephine

Having penalty rates is the way that I am compensated for missing out on social and other opportunities in my life. Without penalty rates, I would choose these social and other opportunities over work.

- Wayne, WA

I give up precious family time to work weekends so we can actually survive pay to pay.

- Janine, WA

# PENALTY RATES

Penalty rates were bought in for two main reasons; to encourage the employer to ensure weekends, public holidays, RDO's, and excess hours were free time for the employee to enjoy with family and friends or however they saw fit. They were also bought in to adequately compensate any employee who chose or otherwise to work on such days. The fundamental right of a 38 hour week (or less in some cases) is being attacked with the hope that it be eroded away altogether. Our fathers and grandfathers will be rolling in their graves, thinking that their hard struggle years ago has been in vain.

- Bruce QLD

Penalty rates are a fair reward for working inconvenient shifts. They are desperately needed to keep the minimum living for low income earning families. Being part of the union can protect workers' right, justice, respects & dignity as individual workers in the workplace thus enhancing job security; furthermore, workers' entitlements and pays will also be monitored properly.

- William, WA

The penalty rates that I earn by working 12 hour night shifts and weekends equate to one weeks' mortgage payment. I do the hours to earn the income that allows me to pay off our home and support my young adult family. If you were to add up all the taxes, fees, local council rates, bank fees, cost of living, motor vehicle fees, car, home, health insurances, utility bills, mortgage & on-going costs of up-keep to a home it becomes apparent that a good chunk of my modestly fair wage is spent on all of these monetary obligations & responsibilities. I do my fair share, I take care of my family, I contribute to the economy, that is what is fair and what is right. So why would you want to change and take away my fair pay for a fair nights work???

- Kehu, WA

More and more people are being made casual and working part-time. We need the penalty rates to make ends meet.

- John, Security, TAS

I live on my penalty rates. If those are taken you take away what I live on. How can it be good for the wellbeing of Australians do this?

- Timothy

Penalty rates mean being able to provide and to be able to live comfortably, instead of being down on your last dollar. Not everyone chooses to work on weekends, some of us are rostered that way. A cut of penalty rates means a cut of the way we all live.

- Joel

Nurses need their penalty rates as they are working while nearly everyone else is tucked up in bed or out and about enjoying themselves.

- Irene, WA

# PENALTY RATES

My mum is a nurse and many of my friends who work in hospitality often need to take up shifts that have penalty rates just to keep their head above water. It's really tough on them missing out on family and other important events but it's understandable because they need the money. If penalty rates were taken away we wouldn't see them and they would lose a significant portion of their pay. They shouldn't have to do this.

- Celeste, TAS

Utilities such as water, power, heating etc., shopping, petrol increase all the time and if I don't get penalty rates, how can I afford to pay for these increases?

- Susie, WA

Without penalty rate, I as an enrolled nurse would be better off on the dole. You cannot expect the working poor to tighten ours belt if politicians don't do the same. Politicians have a lot of perks that are not sustainable ie travel allowances, subsidised meals at Parliament House, junket tours which could be conducted by video link. Politicians don't enter into any EBAs for pay rises...

- Barbara, WA

The only reason I work after 6pm on weekdays, weekends at all or public holidays is for the extra money. I would not do it otherwise because my family need me more than it would be worth. The extra money allows us to pay things off quicker and save for holidays.

- Tania, WA

I already work two jobs to supply for my financial need. If you cut the penalty rates I would have to pick up a third job to survive and never be able to spend time with my family.

- Christopher

Penalty rates are important to me as I only work part time and the extra money helps with the cost of living so working weekends helps a lot.

- Carol

Leave our penalties alone, this is how we pay our bills.

- Tracy

Don't tell me working in the dark and cold, taking years off our expected lifespans, missing any number of family special events for years on end is no different to a 9 to 5 occupation. This is so grossly insulting to my fellow shift workers who have for many years continued to keep our community safe and functional.

- Verne, WA

I am a grandmother who treasures family time which for me is everything. Penalty rates are the only incentive as I am already on a low income. At 58, job security is essential especially as I am working for an organisation that has little regard for their employees. I thank god for union representation as these days it's all about money.

- Margaret



# PENALTY RATES

Penalty rates keep me working in the hospitality industry.

- Damon, Hospitality, TAS

I work weekends. I'm only a part time worker. Without penalty rates I will be losing about \$200 in my pay. Who is going to work weekends then?

- Mandy, WA

As shift workers we have given up our social life and family time and we also put our health at risk.

- Angela, WA

I work hard in my job that helps ensure the industry I work in provides service and peace of mind for people who have family with disabilities. I also sacrifice my own family relationships to work. We aren't asking for anything other than just what is fair and right and to be paid the penalty rates we work for - nothing more or less.

- Virginia, WA

It's damn hard working weekends when the rest of your family is off somewhere else without you. The money we earn is not much now, if we get lower wages how are we meant to survive? We all have bills to pay. It's not right.

- Ann, Cleaning, TAS

Penalty rates have been a big help to my family because it can give extra income in the house. Through this we can afford to go for a travel in Europe which needs a lot of money, save up while paying bills (food, water, power, internet, school and etc.) including a home loan which we have now. I have two children. Sometimes, I wish that I had no work during the weekend so I could spend time with them on Saturday and Sunday. I know the feeling to work without penalty rate and on a low wage income. You have to work as many hours as 100 or more in a fortnight just to pay the bills and you cannot afford leisure time with the family.

The employer should pay for the days we are supposed to stay at home to spend quality time with our family. We need decent wages as our cost of living here is expensive. Not all people like to work weekends and holidays so at least they are still earning decent money while enjoying family time. We should maintain this lifestyle in Australia. I was so happy when I moved to Australia as my life has become better because of higher wages and penalty rates. I don't want the penalty to stop as this will bring hardship and sorrow.

- Uvielane, WA

Having penalty rates allows me to actually be able to live and help support my family due to the excessive cost of living imposed on the people of Australia by governments that can't control their spending.

- Grant, WA

Reducing penalty rates and job security is false economy.

- Douglas, Cleaning, TAS

# PENALTY RATES

I sacrifice leaving my family at night and on weekends to go to work and so I think it would be unfair not to get penalty rates.

- Angelyn

The penalty rates are what bring my part time wages to a level that I can exist on. To have them removed would push me deep into poverty. Just look at these companies in Africa or Asia and it doesn't take much intelligence to see how much they rip off those people so the CEOs and managers can gloat in their pride over their profits while the poor people are paid a pittance. HONESTY AND INTEGRITY ARE MISSING. I'd like to see that come into our culture. Sorry but this whole greed thing by people really gets on my goat.

- Gary, WA

In these current days of economics when the living expenses education fees and life style costs are going up at an astronomical rate, an average income earner can only hope to maintain their ends meet by working and earning extra dollars on weekends, public holidays and late nights by gaining penalty rates. Be fair to the workers Mr. Abbott.

- Eugene, WA

I am a paramedic. I work weekends, public holidays and nights as rostered. A good proportion of my salary and holidays is made up of penalties and allowances to cover this. If my employer is allowed to cease paying them, this would be a loss of almost a third of my wages.

- Graeme

Penalty rates matter to me as I work weekends and afternoon shift. I miss out on family time, social events, and special occasions. I don't choose to work these hours but they are part of the career I am in. Without people doing shift work the hospital would not run and one would prefer to do regular hours if the rates were all the same.

- Coleen

Penalty rates matter to me because I believe that people who work on weekends should be paid more to give up their time. No penalty rates would hugely disadvantage lower paid workers, students etc. I think that job security is extremely important for peoples' mental and financial wellbeing. We should not become like America!

- Gail, WA

Penalty rates are important. We need a bit of extra income otherwise there isn't enough for our daily needs.

- Friel

Giving up weekends with my son. Working late at night as I have done in past years. Working late and weekends for penalty rates as extra income. So many individuals do this to SURVIVE to pay their mortgage, to put food on the table as a base wage is not enough.

- Carol

# PENALTY RATES

I sacrifice my weekend time with my family and friends for the extra pay while others are having a good time.

- Ron

Do you want late night services and shops to continue? Weekend shopping at the mall? All operating because of penalty rates. Penalty rates give an incentive to work at the times everyone else is enjoying their family. So those with their families can enjoy all the normal day to day things that the penalty workers operate.

- James, Security, ACT

Penalty rates represent freedom of choice which I believe is an Australian right.

- Amanda

So, we sacrifice our quality time for our work - working on holidays and overtime. We are somehow depending on penalty rates or we aren't able to afford normal, daily expenses. As employees, we are also human beings. We need a break from work. We also need holidays with family and friends for quality time. We are sacrificing those moments to go to work. If penalty rates are not applicable, we are tricked from both hands.

- Bhanu

I work weekends not by choice, but through necessity. My flat pay rate does not provide enough income to support my children's education. We all miss out on family time but they deserve to have a decent future.

- Elizabeth, WA

We are sacrificing our families and friends on weekends, public holidays and late night just to make extra money to meet our expenses.

- Eric, WA

The more the government make cuts to the average income earner, the more unemployment will rise. If our penalty rates are cut employees will not want to work weekends for a start, this just takes from the hard working Australians, so the rich get richer.

- Heather

Job security is important so people can plan their lives into the future with certainty. Penalty rates are needed to compensate workers for missing out on time with family and friends. Being a member of a collective - a union - is the only way workers can negotiate with employers on a more equal footing.

- Robert, Cleaning, TAS

Without penalty rates the pay I receive is not enough to live on. Freedom of choice about being in a union is a fundamental right for everyone.

- Lina, WA

# PENALTY RATES

I give up my weekends to work shift work for decent pay which is under threat if penalty rates are removed or touched. Why bother working shift work if that is going to be the case?

- Boris

Penalty rates equals being able to pay bills and food on the table which together creates more spending and contributes to a better economy for all Australians! Having a united voice means job security and having conditions that are improved and not returned to the dark ages.

- Doreen, WA

Job security is very important for me because I can plan my future. And with no penalty rates I could not pay my bills and my life would be very difficult.

- Alma

When I work public holidays, weekends, nights I lose precious family time. Job security matters because an insecure worker worries about their job and can't concentrate as well on the job in hand.

- Norma

If I didn't get penalty rates on weekends I would rather be at home with my family. We give up family time to earn enough money to look after them.

- Ralph

Penalty rates are very important to us because the amount helps us in our everyday needs. I believe that the government should help the rights of workers rather than cutting them off. Abbott should take into account that without the workers the economy will go down. Why can't Abbott protect the workers? Retain penalties as we deserve to have this.

- Donnell, ACT

Removing penalty rates will take my job away from me! I work in hospitality full time, I love what I do. I am a talented and well educated woman who is a professional in my job. If Mr Abbott is successful in taking penalty rates away, he will actually be forcing thousands of hospitality workers to start looking for other jobs when we are perfectly happy with our current trades. Why does Mr Abbott insist on creating this divide between the wealthy and the working class? When will you understand the value of fairness?

- Jessie, Hospitality, WA

If you reduce the effective rate of pay by reducing penalty rates, you may as well reduce by extension all wages and salaries. This means everyone on any type of remuneration. We won't have a recession if this happens it will be a depression that will affect generations to come at all levels of society and the way and fabric of our standard of living.

- Steve

Without a stable foundation there is no tip of the pyramid.

- Samantha, WA



# PENALTY RATES

I need penalty rates to live, to pay my rent, to pay my car repayments and for the cost of living as one person on their own can't afford to not work. If I didn't get penalty rates I couldn't afford to live. I have worked weekends for many, many years and have missed out a lot on my family and grand children's lives.

- Joan

Without penalty rates we would struggle financially. Also who will want to work evenings and weekends if they don't get paid penalties?

- Sue, WA

I rely on the penalties because I not only work unsociable hours and am unable to regularly see family members but it pays my bills. I am not lucky enough to be on \$60,000 so penalties in my line of work help me live a normal life.

- Margaret

It's hard enough to live with penalty rates, without them it would be impossible.

- Colin, Security, ACT

When I give up valuable family time to work when the majority of families are on days off, I deserve to be compensated with penalty rates. The sacrifice of family time for work is enormous.

- Patricia

As a support worker and as a union member penalty rates are important otherwise it wouldn't be worth it to work on weekends and public holidays and better and happier to stay with family. Then no one will do weekend work.

- Diana

I give up my time which I'm supposed to spend with my family. I'll lose my lifestyle by losing penalty rates.

- Aman, WA

Penalty rates make it worthwhile putting up with the work so you can have a reasonable standard of living and to be able to pay government charges.

- Reg, WA

I will lose my house. I have a budget and it's the wage I get now that I live on. I like to see you live on what I get.

- Wendy, Cleaning, TAS

As a cleaner at a small metropolitan school I am already required to work unsociable hours for a very meagre wage.

- Malcolm, School Cleaning, WA

Penalty rates makes a lot of difference especially when we need to pay bills and mortgage.. it's the only way we can afford to pay these things. We will lose our houses if not for the penalty rates - especially to some of us who are just starting with family and babies.

- Diane, WA

# PENALTY RATES

People are forgetting that we (weekend workers) are a big part of the economy too. We are consumers too! We go to cinemas, restaurants, concerts, purchase goods from retailers. So if they take away our penalty rates a big majority of the population wouldn't be able to afford these things therefore it's bad for the businesses too. There would be less consumers to stimulate the economy. And if it wasn't for the unions there would be no balance in the country. It would be all for the big corporations and their political allies.

- Ronald

You won't slash the cost of living and it is almost impossible to keep your head above water, so don't slash our wages. We want our public holidays of which there are not many. If we choose to work them we deserve penalty rates to reflect the fact we are missing out on other forms of enjoyment.

- Serina

Penalty rates are a must, we are all only a pay check away from bankruptcy.

- Leigh

I accept working weekend hours because of penalty rates as this will be a big boost for an extra income for me. If this is taken away there is no looking forward to working these special hours. It will no longer be worth working for. This taking back of penalty rates will certainly hit many workers.

- Judith, WA

In aged care, we work every day not Monday to Friday. Every day. Penalty rates are where we make our money. This is because the standard rate of pay is a pittance. I have to work weekends to make ends meet. No option.

- Alina, Aged Care

I need job security and penalty rates to meet my financial commitments. The union is really important to me as they always have my back.

- Judith

When I work on weekends it's because I need the money. If I did not get penalties we would be eating less. Missing all the weekend fun with my family is very upsetting but I have to work weekends to make our family survive. Please consider this and do not change our penalties.

- Helen, WA

It's written into my contract I will work weekends. I have no choice.

- Ashley, Immigration Services

If I have to give up weekends, evenings, or public holidays with my children, I think I deserve to keep my penalty rates... Otherwise there is no incentive to work these unsociable hours.

- Sarah, WA

# PENALTY RATES

Why do people who work in government offices get more penalty rates than cleaners. That is not fair.

- Ying, Cleaning, ACT

I give up time with my child to work to try and make ends meet. I need the penalty rates.

- Marie, WA

Without penalty rates our pay would be terrible... We work nights and weekends to be able to earn that little bit extra... We give up evenings and weekends to get that bit extra. Who is going to work nights and weekends without the penalty rates? Just another mess the government will put Australia in. And you will be putting age care clients in danger.

-Joanne, Aged Care, WA

Penalty rates are important to support my family and my mortgage.

- Hon

I give up spending quality time with my family working on weekends and night so I deserve getting paid penalty rates. Abbott should tax the rich more. The gap is getting wider between the rich and the poor.

- Susan, WA

If we lose our penalty rates we will lose our income. How will we pay the mortgage? This cut will see more people on Centrelink.

- Stacey, WA

We need to keep penalty rates in place.

- Adrienne

It's not a choice to work afternoons and weekends as per suitability to personal life. Due to penalties a person wants to work on the afternoons and weekends so that it helps to pay the bills and mortgage. We sacrifice family time to earn the penalties so household can run smoothly. There is no choice whether we want to work over the weekend or not, rosters are pre made and everyone should work weekends that means no family time and no future if no penalties people will not be able to balance the household budget and family life. People like me will lose the house because of not paying mortgages and chances of more people becoming homeless. Tony Abbot should come and work as support worker for a week by leaving his political career behind and live like a normal person with family, mortgage and household budget.

- Jaspreet, WA

Penalty rates matter to me because of the time with my family I give up to be a nurse in a busy public hospital. I have a child with special needs so need to pay a carer to care for her when I am unable to. Could not afford to do that without penalty rates.

- Leonie, WA

# PENALTY RATES

I am a single parent who could not survive if I didn't work weekends. I work these shifts for the penalty rates - no other reason.

- Debbie, WA

We sacrifice our family life SO THAT WE CAN PICK UP EXTRA MONEY TO COMPENSATE FOR THE POOR WAGES DURING THE WEEK! I'm a Union Delegate. Sydney International Airport.

- Judith

If you take the penalty rates of weekends I won't be working

- Lyn, NSW

The extra hours we put into our jobs is not covered by our pay so the penalties make up for the extra time we give.

- Zoe, WA

I work in a government facility for culture and the arts. I amr every second weekend and we open all public holidays except Good Friday and Christmas Day. I have no choice in whether I want to work these hours. I give up family times, weekend social outings, long weekends away with my family NOT to save lives, or enforce law, but so that other families can enjoy outings to our site on their days off. Weekends and public holidays are not just another day, they are when the majority of society are enjoying themselves, and I help them do that but why should my family constantly miss out for no recompense?

- Fleur, WA

I'm rostered to work on weekends, it's not my joy to work on weekends. If employees are not paid penalties on weekends, I might as well spend quality time with my families & friends.

- Yoke, WA

Family time on a weekend is given up. Penalty rates are needed as Saturday and Sunday employers take advantage of employees

- Amanda, NSW

We sacrifice our valuable weekend and night time away from our family just so that we can pay our bills and have food on our table. Without that we will be struggling. Please do not cut penalty rates.

- Prashant, NSW

You won't get quality qualified staff working weekends in aged care, if you are qualified why work weekends with no extra incentive when everyone else is off and having fun. In age care the penalties make up a large part of our wages as normal pay doesn't pay enough.

- Cathirne, WA

If I do not get penalty rates I would not work my current works as I only do it for the money.

- Stephanie, WA



# PENALTY RATES

To the Prime minister Tony Abbot,

Please remember that your being in charge of Australia means to look after the rich and poor. You have taking away the Government support from parents. The weekend penalty rate is the only means for we the parent who are low income earners to be able to put bread on the table for our children, not that we choose to do so, but because we have no choice. We want to spend weekends with our families too like you do if we had the choice. If you take the rate away as well, how do you think life is going to be for many of us who don't have any other means of earning high salary? We are already doing it tough.

Please help us make life easier for our children if you really care about humanity. Please encourage working families. We are part of the society don't let our children beg bread on the street. We are not all rich, but we are all one body to contribute to the success of the country. Let not it be only for the rich remember the poor as well. God bless as you as you do His will.

- Susan, WA

My basic wage after 34 years is lower than other government workers considering I have people's lives in my hands therefore the penalty rates make my unsociable hours night shift barely acceptable considering people do not like working those hours

- Irena, WA

I need penalty rates to provide me with a stable income. I rely on them.

- Carmel, WA

# RESPECT AT WORK

If I or my fellow educators did not do my job, you would not be able to do yours. This goes for all types of occupations! If there were no mechanics, you would not be able to drive a car. If there were no farmers, you would not be able to eat safe and nutritious food. If there were no early childhood educators, parents would not be able to go to work. It's that simple. These people may not work in sky rise buildings and drive \$100,000 cars, but they are just as important! We are important! We deserve to be acknowledged as such. Enough is enough – we deserve this.

- Ellen, Early Childhood Education and Care, ACT

Myself and so many others are doing jobs that are so easily dismissed by politicians. We don't ALL have suit and tie 9 to 5 jobs...we do the 'dirty work' after hours, nights and on weekends while you are off enjoying yourselves. We are the backbone of this country, where is the basic humanity gone?

- Kaye

Employees are an asset and need to be valued not devalued.

- Jenny

Being a member of a collective – a union - is the only way workers can negotiate with employers on a more equal footing.

- Robert, Cleaning, TAS

Penalty rates are very important. Starting work at 5am to get the cleaning done and floors dry by the start of school at 8am is a safety issue. If I work a split shift which is start at 5 finish at 8 then start a different area at 3 pm and finish at 5:30pm it certainly limits your day. A penalty rate for early start is a very small compensation and a split shift allowance another. Also most of the cleaners I work with and know have worked the same job for a long time but rarely ever have sick leave. The powers that be might want to take that into consideration. Reliability! Instead of shaving penalty rates, perhaps they should think about incentives and rewards. How novel to get rewarded for doing a great job!!!

- Susanne, School Cleaning, WA

Collective bargaining evens out the odds against an individual wage earner seeking a fair wage and working conditions with employers who hold all the purse strings.

- Albert

I invite you to spend a day with me, listen to my life story, listen to my ideas, make the necessary changes for the good of Australians and allow people to start making positive comments about the government. Give people hope! Start listening to people like me who are passionate and honest about improving this country.

- Tracey, Homecare, VIC

My union is a vital part in ensuring I'm afforded these wage incentives & my union fore fathers went without plenty to ensure we benefit from these incentives today & in the future.

- Ian, QLD

# RESPECT AT WORK

With the changes made at our school already it has made a huge impact. I work in a pre-primary centre and we run all day trying to get everything done. We arrive early and leave late with no time for a tea break and most days 10 minutes for lunch if we are lucky. Some days I feel I hardly have time to speak to the students it's just rush, rush, rush. These are our future leaders. Children should have time to enjoy their education, school days and life in general. I feel this it is a waste of my time writing this as nobody out there in the political world seems to care. As an Education Assistant, I think I would do a better job running the country and being responsible for the education of our children.

- Debbie, Education, WA

Without the support of my union my prospects of being able to realize any quality of life when I retire are eroded.

- Phillip, Airport Security, TAS

It is important to me that all workers have the right to organise and join their union – it is the only way to take some power back from employers and keep the workplace fair for everyone.

- Amy

Loyalty should be rewarded. A worker who gives so much of themselves should be rewarded with safe pay and accompanying increases, penalty rates for the extra time that workers give of themselves and permanency and job security.

- Debra

It is important for me to be a part of the union so I am able to have a voice and stand up for my rights!

- Kristie, QLD

Please treat the community with the respect that you demand of us.

- Jennifer, Nursing, VIC

Being part of a union means a check and balance process is in place. Paying peanuts will only get you monkeys! For a single income family shift rates are invaluable for maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

- Damien

The right to be part of union matters to me because security & fair treatment for all workers are guaranteed.

- Aimee, WA

I work in a hostel for people with special needs. I work Saturdays and Sundays maintaining an active interesting weekend. If not for the work I do, every day would be the same for them. I re-joined the union because there is no job protection for working people.

- Lou, WA

# RESPECT AT WORK

The right to organise my workplace for the safety of team members is paramount, and to have this threatened on any level is unjust and unfair. I also highly support penalty rates. Weekends and non- standard hours deserve a special pay rate due to the impact on family and social lives.

- Ali, Early Childhood Education and Care, TAS

A fair work place to me is letting me know of any changes that could affect my holidays, contract, wages and keeping me informed at all times. Not going behind my back.

- Ana, WA

In a time of high unemployment, it is good to have a union that protect our jobs, and living standards.

- Gary

A fair workplace for me is an organisation that pays employees appropriately to ensure the facility and its ethics are not compromised on a 24/7 basis. If I, as an employee, am committed to my job and its responsibilities as needed and when necessary and am willing to make myself available as necessary, which at times can compromise personal ideals, then I think that, as a commitment to my employer, should be recognised.

- Lovey, WA

As work mates are no longer prepared to back you up in the workplace it reassuring to know that I can rely on my union for support.

- Ali, WA

We need the right to be heard about issues and to express our opinion.

- WA

My work as a special needs assistant is invaluable, helping the teacher with every student in her class reach their potential.

- Linda

Yes we want job security. Yes we are the lowest paid and least respected and least recognised. We must remain united against changes.

- Alan, Cleaning

Job security is important for everyone especially myself and people who have a family, the wages seem to be going down not up. What future does it hold for our children and future generations.

- Leanne, NSW

The Union helped me when I was dismissed unfairly from my job & got all my dues for me had I not been a union member I could not fight a big company so for me job security is being a union member.

- Sava, NSW



# RESPECT AT WORK

When it comes to making the decisions of this great country we place them in the hands of people we have elected. We elected them to be our voice not turn their backs on us and treat us disdainfully and with disrespect. This country is where it is today due to the hardworking lower and middle income earners being dedicated workers who value what they do. Our role is vital to the sustainability of the country and it is imperative that our voices are heard.

As part of the early education and care sector -our role is an essential requirement for the security of employment for all as well as providing the best possible outcomes for the future generations. Our country must be seen as a productive competitor and producer for all first world countries to take heed and invest in otherwise Australia will fall behind the eight ball (figuratively speaking); and then where will we be?

- Judi, ACT

A fair and equitable workplace where workers are appreciated for a fair day's work for a fair wage, where workers are acknowledged and respected for their skills and treated as the most valuable asset of a business; where individual workers are recognized for their talents and those talents are furthered for the individual to reach his/her full potential; where individuals can flourish in positions that are eminently suited to their skill-levels, their inherent talents, their personalities; – a workplace that will appreciate the wealth of experience of older workers as mentors for new and younger employees. A workplace where employees are informed and consulted, a workplace that aims to meet the social and environmental responsibilities and all strive together to reach the set goals. In such an environment individuals would thrive and feel part of the efforts of the enterprise, morale would be high and the enterprise would flourish as would the nation if all businesses were to operate along those lines... A Utopian Dream.

Alas, we've come a long way from the sweatshops, the mills, the factories, where kids, women and men toiled for subsistent wages, a long way when people fought for the rights of workers and working conditions, where they suffered and even gave their lives. Those valiant struggles should be remembered equally as much as those who gave their lives during the struggles of war-times. Memorials are evident everywhere to honour those who fought for freedom of oppression. And where are the memorials for those who were maimed and killed to free the workers from the tyranny of the ruling classes? From the owners of Industries? From those who lived in the mansions while their exploited workers eked a wretched existence in hovels. Those times are not that distant in the past, yet the events remain unmentioned and certainly have not found a mention in the school curriculums, nor in any public arena.

Many have enjoyed the fruits of the earlier struggles of Unionists, many have become complacent and workers do not seem too much aware that The Big End of Town is flexing some mighty muscles to wreck the Voice of the Workers, to undermine the rights of the workers, – to reduce the living wage, the fair pay for a fair day's work. In their short sighted greed for money and power they forget that their most valuable assets are the workers, not only for their labour, but for all the inherent talents this Work Force can offer. The country, the nation will be the poorer if the Work Force doesn't awake and fights back.

- Barbara, WA

# RESPECT AT WORK

We all like to feel rewarded when we work hard and feel even better when we know our job is secure. Having people behind us and fighting for us is rewarding.

- Mandy, WA

I am 68 years of age and still in the work force and have worked since I was 14 years old. I am disgusted in this Liberal parties treatment of the workers of Australia did they not learn from former Liberal governments DO NOT MESS WITH THE WORKING CLASS

- Kay Kennedy, NSW

