

To whom it may concern,

I have decided to put my experience into writing. As a young 15 year old I experienced something that not many people of that age would have to go through. I had gotten my first job at Sizzler I was a model employee at times over my school holidays I would be known to work 60 hours a week. The feeling of freedom of security about finding your own way in the world and coming of age was beautiful. Although I was unprepared for what would happen at that time in my life. After being kicked out of home for being gay I found myself in a situation where I moved to another city for support. At the time even though in my home state it was still illegal, there were two Southern states that have legalized homosexuality. I have digressed slightly by mentioning this but if you were to approach Centrelink and ask for assistance for being kicked out of home at the time there was not the provision to help a homosexual child. I say child because legally that's what I was. And I will bring up this point later on in this letter. But given what was going on in my life at the time I was having to deal with a lot of adult issues without support.

Now within that time I ended up getting diagnosed with HIV at such a young age. I wasn't able to access a support mechanism and also having caring parents that might guide me was not an option. As I have grown up with what is deemed a pre existing illness about 5 years ago I decided to start cashing in my super because it's always eaten up by fees, the little bit I have. It also brought to my attention the fact that any insurance, because of my pre existing condition would pretty much be useless so I decided to stop paying that component. But it also got me interested in the fact of surely when I had my first job I was being paid super and therefore would I have had any insurance policy attached to that super? At a time when anyone diagnosed with a terminal illness might have had some sort of financial access to the insurance component attached to super.

My investigation has actually pointed out an unfair discrepancy with the system. There are certain circumstances where people under 18 years of age are not actually paid super even though in my eyes there has been reform on the minimum wage for youngsters it's gone from about \$4 50 somewhere around \$18 even taking into account inflation it is a huge improvement for the use and recognition that their work is valued compared to the older employees. But actually finding out that superannuation still today is excused from a young persons pay packet as it was in my case when I was 15 and sometimes working 60 hours a week. I have spoken to Collins food who were the proprietor of Sizzler restaurants at the time and they have confirmed that they did not pay super contributions to someone of my age and circumstance. But I'm absolutely horrified that young people still today sometimes do not qualify for superannuation payments from their employers and will not be covered by the private insurance that comes with such a product. My life could be so different to what it is now with the financial assistance I feel I was owed that my peers within the community had access to at the time. I was a 15 year old dealing with problems even some adult wouldn't be able to comprehend.

It would be my absolute pleasure if you would consider this submission and I'm more than happy if you would like to get in contact to further elaborate on how I fell through the cracks as a young person. The one thing I can be sure of is communities values when it comes to protecting the youth are a utmost importance in society's eyes. I'd like to give an example it is an extreme example but the public is aware of say and incarcerated inmates point of view when it comes to anyone who has let down or in some way damaged a child. There is absolutely nothing I could do, and I have found a somewhat peace with

myself about who could have done this to me concerning my HIV status. But given my story I'm pretty sure that most people would understand how a treating me as an equal to the rest of the workforce at the time and allowing for super contributions to everyone of any age is crucial. And the fact that there are still these discrepancies is a terrible state of affairs to this day.

My apologies if there was an emotional nature to this letter.