

I wish to make the following submission to the inquiry into the retirement income system. My comments relate, particularly, to the statement in your web page: "As part of the review the Australian government announced an investigation into measures to strengthen the financial security of seniors...".

As a senior, my financial security is being undermined by the government's superannuation policy.

The government's superannuation policy specifically excludes older workers (75+) from:

1. making 'concessional payments' (tax free) to their superannuation fund
2. making any payments to their superannuation fund;
3. receiving 'employer productivity superannuation contributions' (9% of salary, tax-free). This means that older employees are paid >10% less (after tax) than their younger peers, for the same work, even when they are employed on a union negotiated contract.

This policy appears to be discriminatory and contrary to government promises to ensure that:

- the workplace would be fair to all,
- equal work would always be rewarded with equal remuneration;
- everything possible would be done to retain a skilled workforce (including elderly people who were prepared to work);
- people were encouraged to provide for themselves in their retirement.

Their promises made no mention of excluding those aged 75+. In spite of repeated requests for such information the government has reported no characteristic or peculiarity of older persons which warrants them being treated differently.

Since March 2008 I have written to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, the Minister for Ageing, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and to numerous other politicians, requesting that this policy be changed or that I be provided with a rationale justifying the policy. All deferred to Senator Sherry who first wrote to me on 27 May 2008 stating that the policy was a deliberate decision of government and that the rationale was to demonstrate fiscal responsibility - i.e. workplace discrimination was justified if it saved the government money.

In replies to my further correspondence (29th August and 11th November) Senator Sherry, reiterated this position, completely ignoring my questions.

In spite of his comments concerning all the concessions and special allowances provided to Seniors, none of this applies to me, nor does any other new benefit which has been provided by this government.

Finally he suggested that older workers could negotiate with their employers to try and get them to pay a (taxed) supplement in lieu of the 'contribution'(i.e. complete an individualised AWA).

I advise that I had extensive correspondence with the previous government on this issue. Eventually, in July 2007, they changed their policy, moving the age of discrimination from 70 to 75.

I attach my letters to the Prime Minister and to Senator Sherry together with the letters from Senator Sherry which I believe are 'public' documents. [not published for copyright reasons].

[removed for privacy reasons]. I have no plans for full retirement..

Like many other elderly workers, over the last year I have lost a significant proportion of my savings, in my Self Managed Superannuation Fund (administered by Dixon Advisory Service).

I need to keep working to secure my financial future (life expectancy continues to increase).

I would be able to replace my losses quicker if the superannuation provisions available to my younger peers were available to me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Les RH Drew, AM,

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