

## Youth Wages

Junior rates are a discriminatory practice. In a society which aspires to ensure that a person's rights are not limited or infringed upon by discrimination, junior rates in industrial awards represent the retention of a large, imposing and obvious impediment to the attainment of a non-discriminatory society.

The retention of junior rates for workers aged below 21 years is illogical in a society which, for all other purposes regards a person as an adult when they reach 18 years of age. Moreover this is particularly so when the junior rates system has no demonstrable logic or common approach to it.

The retention of junior rates perpetuate the significant financial difficulties which many young people today find themselves facing.

The SDA does not accept that the removal of junior rates would create employment problems for young people. Indeed such a move would have the effect of removing a source of exploitation and actually open up employment opportunities for many of our nation's youth.

There is no evidence to suggest that industries such as retail, where the bulk of young people are employed, would be adversely affected on a long term basis by the abolition of youth rates. Moreover, introduced on a phased in basis, the removal of junior rates would not have any significant inflationary impact.

The SDA is seeking to negotiate with retail employers for improvements in the junior rates situation.

Slowly, but surely, progress is being made. Some employers are beginning to see that the current structure of junior rates is unfair and they are moving with us to change things.