

9<sup>th</sup> June 2022

KPMG Perth Office

Level 8

235 St Georges Terrace

Perth WA 6000

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am writing this letter to explain the circumstances of the past that my husband [REDACTED] and I experienced, trying to access his long service leave.

[REDACTED] first made contact with Michael Buchan on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 explaining his circumstances. [REDACTED], since he was 21 had battled Leukemia and had survived two allograft stem cell transplants, as he was initially diagnosed with AML in 2001, then relapsed in 2007. This contact was to ask Michael for help to access his My Leave.

[REDACTED] managed to work in between the second diagnosis and after the second transplant. This is when he became a Scaffolder. [REDACTED] worked on some of the biggest offshore jobs in Australia in his time, including the Kipper Tuna, Wheatstone, and Itchy's pipeline, to name a few.

[REDACTED]'s life dramatically changed in 2019 when he was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma in the buccal mucosa. This resulted in two life altering, 12 hour surgeries that completely disfigured his face. The second surgery resulted in his fibula being removed and replaced in his jaw, as he had been told that the cancer had then spread to the bone in his jaw.

[REDACTED] could not eat or drink towards the end of his life. He was fed through a PEG in his stomach. The last few months of his life he could not talk either, he had to communicate by writing everything down. Throughout all of this, [REDACTED] still had hope that he would return back to work, and he continued to pay his CFMEU fees.

[REDACTED] was a few weeks short of gaining access to his long service leave. When he initially reached out to My Leave he was told that under no circumstances was he entitled to what was rightfully his, what he had earned. We were in financial hardship, we have two young children and a mortgage to pay. [REDACTED] was on the disability pension, and I was his carer, so money was extremely tight!

Michael responded and he tried his best to help [REDACTED] as he empathised with his situation. He contacted the My Leave Board Chairperson and was asked to sign an Authority to act form, which he signed. Then we heard nothing.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021, [REDACTED] contacted Michael again from his hospital bed, with severe Pneumonia, begging for his help. His last email that he sent, in his words, "Thank you so much Mick, you have no idea what peace of mind can do for someone who is dying, cheers, [REDACTED]".

[REDACTED] survived that hospital visit, he passed away from pneumonia on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021. He has left behind two children now aged 12 and 9, and myself. We were together for 22 years.

The reason that I am writing this is to make sure that this does not happen to another family, that the Legislation has to change! My husband worked extremely hard for his family, he knew that he was dying, and he did not want to leave me struggling. Individual cases should be considered, not allowing the finances to be absorbed by the Government.

Michael stayed in contact with me regarding this, and in the end broke the news that the CFMEU wanted to make up the funds that My Leave refused to pay out. To the CFMEU I am eternally grateful, this money paid for my children's private school fees for the year, which took away a lot of extra stress, as we were, and still are, severely grieving!

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our story. I genuinely hope that this does not happen to another family and that we see a change in the Law.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]