**Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination against Older Australians and Australians with Disability**

# Submission No 238

**Name** Stephen Horton

**Submission made by**

[x]  Older Australian looking for work

[x]  Older Australian who would like to work

# Submission regarding Older Australians / Australians with Disability / Both

### **Your experience**

**Have you (or the person you are submitting on behalf of) experienced employment discrimination?**

[ ]  Yes

[ ]  No

[x]  Not sure

**Did you take any action in relation to the employment discrimination you experienced?**

[ ]  Yes

[x]  No

**Please tell us more, for example, what action you took and how effective you felt it was; or why you chose not to take any action.**

The majority of job applications are done on line in a preformatted document; the design of the document provides filtering to assist recruiters in the selection process.

Examples of establishing the applicants age and religion are in questions such as what year did you cease formal education, the level achieved and which educational facility did you attend.

A filter can approximate age band and likely religion - in my particular case, I completed fourth form in 1968 at School Certificate level attending St Thomas Regional School Lewisham NSW.

These questions exist on both Federal and State applications, in fact School Certificate is not listed but included under "other".

It would be worth identifying if information is sorted by filtering that discriminates on older and / or disabled people.

**Did your experience of employment discrimination impact on your participation in the workforce? (For example, did you have to stop work, change jobs or take sick leave?)**

[ ] Yes

[x] No

**Please tell us more**

### **Barriers**

**Do you think older Australians/Australians with disability face barriers when they look for work or are in a job?**

[x] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Not sure

**If yes, or not sure, what do you think these barriers might be?**

This is an ideal question to put to Government in asking what facilities, support or ongoing education is made readily available to those who are **not receiving any** financial support from Government.

There are Government support systems in place, including financial and job placement for those receiving the dole and younger unemployed with the Green Army scheme.

These reduce barriers for those unemployed groups....let us hear from Government what is in place for older Australians who are not on the welfare system.

If there is nothing in place then it essentially proves that discrimination exists.

**Does employment discrimination have an impact on gaining and keeping employment for older Australians/Australians with disability?**

[x] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Not sure

**Are there any practices, attitudes or laws which discourage or prevent equal participation in employment of older Australians/Australians with disability?**

[x] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Not sure

**Please tell us more**

We are being encouraged to work for more years and government has put in place a staggered aged based timeline for workers to reach before being eligible for the Aged pension and that employers cannot terminate the employment of staff based on (example) age.

As described earlier, employers can filter applicants through the application process .

There would be some statistical information available to identify a range of categories (age/gender/disability/religion) of people that have gained employment over a set period of time

**What are the incentives and disincentives for older Australians/Australians with disability to work?**

**Incentives:**

There are many benefits to an individual being employed, not the least is the reduction on costs borne by the taxpayer which - costs which are collected by way of taxes etc and administered by the Government.

**Disincentives:**

Meeting the ongoing costs associated with someone trying to gain employment enabling them to continue to contribute in a productive and meaningful way.

At some point the costs can no longer be met by the individual.

### **Good practice**

**Are there examples of good practice and workplace policies in employing and retaining older Australians/ Australians with disability?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Not sure

**Please tell us of examples of good practice in employing and retaining older Australians/ Australians with disability in work that you are aware of.**

### **Solutions**

**What action should be taken to address employment discrimination against older Australians/Australians with disability?**

The Government to acknowledge that a gap exists (or is nonexistent) in supporting these sections of society, identify meaningful ways in which to address the matter.

In simple terms, if employment opportunities improve and more of the ageing population are employed the overall effect provides government with an increase in their revenue stream (taxes etc) and reduces their expense (pensions etc)

**What should be done to enhance workforce participation of older Australians/Australians with disability?**

Engagement with Employer groups, Industry Associations and Unions/Representative bodies to identify gaps in the supply of workers across all industries.

Outline skill shortages and suitable training that is currently available or that can be adapted which address skill shortages for older Australians and those Australians with disability.

Promote those opportunities locally and nationally through the media and respective support bodies - government run, charities (eg Vinnies, Salvos, Anglicare) and Seniors Groups.

**What outcomes or recommendations would you like to see from this National Inquiry?**

Government to acknowledge that discrimination does exist in employment of older Australians and Australians with disability and offer a proactive, positive response in changing the current situation