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

# Submission No 15

**Name** Withheld

**Submission made by**

Older Australian looking for work

Older Australian who would like to work

# Submission regarding Older Australians

### **Your experience**

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

Yes

No

Not sure

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

Yes

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.**

I live in a very small inland rural catchment area, more than 400kms from the nearest capital city and everyone here knows you, how old your children are and how old you are. After unsuccessfully applying for more than 50 positions in the last 18 months, I submitted an application for a position I am more than qualified to fill but under a fake name. When I was contacted to attend an interview I declined citing personal reasons. This annoyed me as I would have loved the job but really confirmed my belief that particular org. is being disciminative. Ironically I had recently submitted several applications to this organisation for similar jobs and not been shortlisted.

*Supplementary information provided:* No action taken. **[Redacted]** is a small regional city where everyone knows who you are. Once the media gets hold of a story, even if it’s rubbish or you have a valid complaint, mud sticks and that’s the end of it.

**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

No

**Please tell us more**

There are limited employment opportunities locally and many of them go to 457 visa workers or backpackers offering labour hire rates. Although I am experienced and well qualififed in admin. and managment I would be happy to be offered any susitable position at these rates. However, I believe age is now the major barrier to me being short-listed for jobs.

*Supplementary information provided: I have been unemployed for eight months.*

### **Barriers**

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

Yes

No

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

When you must apply for a positions online, you are often asked to provide a date of birth or provide evidence that you have had ongoing employment, or explain why you weren't working at a particular time. Also, as with recruitment for **[redacted]**, you are asked to fill out a pre-employment health check. At interview you are asked if you are able to walk, carry articles, use Ipad etc. but at health check, there are questions such as do you have high blood pressure (well I would if I wasn't taking medication), able to climb steps, etc.

Physical appearance is also a disability. I'm not the young, slim, pretty person I used to be BUT I can't compete with Elle.

However, I am not on a disability pension, so do not qualify for Restart assistance.

*Supplementary information provided: although I am a fit and healthy 60y/o and very qualified in Business Management, administration, customer service and reception and have years of local knowledge and experience, I am not getting shortlisted for jobs that I am more than capable of fulfilling. Employers can pick whoever they want, so it’s only natural they will pick a newer model over the vintage one.*

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

Yes

No

Not sure

**Please tell us more**

*Supplementary information provided:* Three or four months ago when I still had hope that I would be called for interview. Now I am feeling so undervalued, frustrated and depressed that I’m sure people can sense my negativity.

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

Yes

No

Not sure

**Please tell us more**

Restart is disciminative. While those who are receiving benefits may attract up to $10,000 for their employer, those who aren't get nothing. This severely disadvantages older workers applying for the same positions. My 64y/o husband who works full time is supporting us both on the minimum wage. We don't get any benefits from centrelink and still have to pay our mortgage and bills. He has a bad back and is contemplating giving up work and we would be better off with both of . Restart should be offered to ALL long term older Australians (6 months or more).

Recruitment terms such as 'young and vibrant' 'young and enthusiastic' 'young and energetic' are rife in the job market, as are pre-conceptions that we wouldn't accept a low salary.

Not being considered for employment in indigenous programs.

*Supplementary information provided:* Restart is discriminative, that you have to be receiving benefits to qualify.

Online job advertisements requesting date of birth with initial application.

Advertisements using language such as ‘seeking young, enthusiastic self-starter’ or ‘the right person we can train into the job’ or ‘junior wage rate’

Worst attitude is that 75% of employers are rude and lazy and do not bother to contact the unsuccessful applicants. I have a portfolio of these type of businesses and won’t spend a cent with them. I would love to name and shame them!

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

**Incentives:**

Self respect, being valued, contribute to economy, be independentSelf funded, pay the mortgage, pay more into superannuation, have savingsKeep active, social interaction

**Disincentives:**

If you are having to live on one minimum wage with no benefits or on labour hire rate and still have to pay the bills, you may as well go on the pension because there is not enough super to support us.

After working for 40-50 years in building industry and two back operations I would like my husband to be able to retire in relative comfort. I would also like to work on to support us but can't get a job mainly due to age discrimination and not qualifying for the Restart program. I have been unemployed for seven months, is this not long enough?

### **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.**

Organisations that have long term employees are encouraging them to reduce their hours and take leave.

### **Solutions**

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

More jobs, especially in rural Australia.

Promotion on TV about REAL older people, not just those with movie star looks who are valued in their workplace. Case studies etc.

Restart for ALL older Australians/Australians with disability that have been unemployed for more than six months. Not just those who are receiving benefits. From my experience, many of the people who are disabled would prefer not to work, so why not assist those older people who do wish to work as well? I don't have a problem with paying tax to support people with disabilities, just give me a job!

(Three years ago I was **[redacted]** administering $4.8m in projects and following redundancy cannot find employment)

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

More jobs, especially in rural Australia because there are not enough to go around as it is.

Promotion on TV about REAL older people, not just those with movie star looks who are valued in their workplace. Case studies etc.

Make it more attractive for people to work than go on the penison, eg. pay a 'work participation' bonus at tax time.

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

Action

More jobs in rural areas

Promotion, case studies

Work Participation bonus

Reduce taxation on superannuation.