

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

**Submission No 20**

**Name:** Owen Thomas

**Submission made by**

X Australian with disability looking for work

X Australian with disability who would like to work

# Submission regarding Older Australians/ Australians with Disability / Both

***a Your experience***

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

*Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because of a characteristic they have, such as their age, or disability. It is also discrimination when there is a rule or policy that is the same for everyone*

*but has an unfair effect on people who are older or people with a particular disability.*

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

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

X 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 made several submissions to the Australian Human Rights Commission and tried to run a case through the Federal Magistrate's Court.

**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?)**

X Yes

☐ No

**Please tell us more**

I couldn't do the work under the artificial and irrelevant conditions that were imposed by each of the seven employers I had. I am now on a disability pension and I live in public housing because no employer will yet allow me to do my job.

***b 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?**

I don't know what barriers exist for older Australians, but I know that human habit imposes anachronistic behaviour on the modern workforce. Today, people should be permitted to work from home in many jobs which are still being done from office blocks. I cannot work in what is socially too intimate and intrusive environment that the office block requires.

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

☐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**

I can't work. I would make a fair bet that there are many other Australians around who are faced with the same difficulty as myself.

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

**Incentives:**

None.

**Disincentives:**

Many.

***c Good practice***

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

☐Yes

X 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.**

***d Solutions***

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

I can do the work I like from home and I can do it part-time, Let me work, and leave me alone so that I can do it.

**What should be done to enhance workforce participation of older**

**Australians/Australians with disability?**

Let people work from home and let people work part-time. Both are achievable with negligible impact on business function. If a company doesn't have to provide and office for its traditionally office-bound employees, then it wouldn't really be a logistical impost to employ two part-time employees to do the work of one full-timer.

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

**Inquiry?**

I'd want to have a job, a job I know is out there. I want the same job that people are doing from offices right now. I see these people doing these jobs from offices because people, being creatures of habit, simply do not want to appropriate behaviour that technology has rendered completely sensible.