



**OFFICE OF SENATOR THE HON. ERIC ABETZ  
LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SENATE  
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT  
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE  
LIBERAL SENATOR FOR TASMANIA**

Ms Marilyn King  
Volunteer President  
WOW! - Willing Older Workers Inc.  
PO Box 6447  
WEST FOOTSCRAY VIC 3012

19 AUG 2015

Dear Ms King

This letter is in response to your email of 18 May 2015 to Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz, Minister for Employment, concerning the Restart wage subsidy programme. I am responding on the Minister's behalf. I apologise for the delay in responding.

At the outset, I commend Willing Older Workers Inc. for their good work providing assistance and support to older Australians. The Australian Government values the contribution of older Australians and believes that we cannot afford to waste the talent and skills of mature age workers by excluding them from the workplace.

In your email, you raise the issue of eligibility for the Restart wage subsidy programme. **The intent of the Restart programme is to move mature age job seekers off income support and into paid employment.** A primary requirement of the Restart programme is that a job seeker must be unemployed and in receipt of an eligible income support payment for six months or more. **As taxpayer resources are limited, Restart must be targeted to those who need it most.**

It is important to note that a number of income support payments enable a job seeker to be eligible for Restart. This includes the Newstart Allowance; Parenting Payment; Disability Support Pension; Bereavement Allowance; Widow Allowance; Carer Payment; Special Benefit; Partner Service Pensioners; War Widows; Age Pension; Mature Age Partner Allowance; Wife Pension, and the Widows B Pension;

Restart is not the only way that the Government is addressing the issue of mature age unemployment. In 2014, Minister Abetz helped to launch "The Power of Oldness" campaign. This campaign is designed to change negative attitudes and raise awareness amongst employers of the benefits associated with employing older workers. These benefits include experience, loyalty, commitment and a good work ethic. More information is available on the campaign's website, [www.powerofoldness.com](http://www.powerofoldness.com).

In addition, the Australian Human Rights Commission is currently undertaking a National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination against Older Australians and Australians with Disability. For more information regarding the inquiry, visit the Australian Human Rights Commission website. If you wish to become involved, register your interest at [ageanddisabilityinquiry@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:ageanddisabilityinquiry@humanrights.gov.au).

In relation to your suggestion about a mentoring programme, the Government's Corporate Champions programme may be of interest to you. The Corporate Champions programme supports employers who commit to moving towards best practice in the recruitment and retention of mature-age staff (aged over 45 years). Eligible employers receive tailored support and assistance valued up to \$20,000 provided by an industry expert. More details are available at [www.employment.gov.au/corporate-champions](http://www.employment.gov.au/corporate-champions).

Thank you for sharing your views, and for taking the time to write to the Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Fryar', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Fryar  
Acting Chief of Staff