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

# Submission No 304

**Name** Catherine Halse

**Submission made by**

[x]  Older Australian looking for work

[x]  Older Australian who would like to work

[x]  Australian with disability looking for work

[x]  Australian with disability 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?**

[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 was actually employed by this employer at one time without them knowing of my disability. When employed I was given high recommendations and so forth for job well done. I left this employer due to the assignemnt or contrct been ended. There was no animosity with them or with me at this time.

There was a time when I made inquiry as to seeking work available and thought I would ring the employer back informed them of disability with my job service provider consultant was with me.

to which they stated they could not possibly employ me with my hearing impairment this despite having worked for them and with high recommendations from them on jobs well done

So I just said that was unbelievable considering I was employed by them at one time, and therefore had to question whether it was really apt for them to say this.

Then just left it at that point hopefully they were able to reflect on this

situation 2/ I was told by a team member that they would not take orders from me due to being a woman and the fact that I was hearing impaired..

So I asked them to please further reflect on this so to decide which industry they wish to work in whereby they won't need to take orders from a woman and make their entry off site ASAP for refusing duty.

**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**

Other team members were in support of my decision to ask worker to leave site. Including that of my employer.

### **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?**

Government policy- Application of disability services been eroded for those previously been on DSP and placed onto Newstart

I was advised that the Government not recognising studies that are under a 12 month period. This is totally mean spirited and depletes motivations and self esteem of older and disabled workers for basically trying to work at updating of skills or entering a new industry or to even understand how a new industry works.etc

Not fairly acknowledged for this when they have tutorials etc as well as trying to keep up with seeking work is very stressful and even self defeating.

Education and training of skills that maybe required to obtain work

**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**

Fear- safety, health, and quality of work performed

Lack of education and understanding of the disability

Workplaces that have significant hire of younger people with no recruitment of older workers because they don't know how to 'gel' with older workers

Having older workers doing very mundane jobs is demeaning and does not make use of talent.

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

**Incentives:**

There are government assistances in cases of funding for employers to hire but tend to be short term

**Disincentives:**

Short term job placements after incentives expire

Frustrated with insensitivity of short term funding when just getting to know the role and having to move on because employers consider better incentives for new hires.

### **Good practice**

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

[x] 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.**

Coaching on site by older workers coaching older workers

Similarly to coaching for workers with disability

### **Solutions**

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

Fairer Recruitment and selection practices by implementing quotas

Education and training to stamp out fear and assumptions

Allow workers to become part of the solution

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

UNITY between all workers and employers irrespective of demographics

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

* I would like to see that there is fairer and just recruitment and selection processes and set a quota in each worksite for hire of older/disabled workers
* the use of employment consultancy agencies is a seriously flawed system irrespective of which way the labour force statistics swing
* I would like to see that people like myself are not helping some employment consultant's advancement in career goals when there is no or limited motivation for support others or my own goals.
* Ensuring that employment consultant agencies are hiring people with life skills, I was informed of some are basically just out of high school age 16 some with poor literacy ability, and trying to consult and advise older workers- This simply is outrageous. This is like having a feral teen in charge and control over your decisions when you have been doing that for decades anyway**,** it lacks sincerity, propagates an ongoing frustration, its disconnecting and disengagement.
* Use of technology and innovation to forgo the use employment agencies who are just a paper tiger for the government anyway.
* Set up business hubs for workers and potential employers to come together to collaborate for ideas, and ways to seek the way forward in getting work, and even find ways to go out into the community to engage better.
* Allow older workers and disabled workers to become part of the solutions = inclusion and allow them to assist in decision making
* Seek to hold workshops on sites over a period of time with the workers pre employment so to get them to know what to do and also get employers and other employees comfortable with these workers
* At what point is one given encouragement for starting up a small business? When having been searching for work has been ongoing since July 2014? Allow for older workers and encourage older workers to start up businesses and provide mentorship from persons within that industry then maybe they can one day also employ people.. **If such programs exist well there seems to be inconsistency as am I not been provided any encouragement for start of my own business.**