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

# Submission No 76

**Name** Withheld

**Submission made by**

[x]  Older Australian looking for work

[x]  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?**

[x]  Yes

[ ]  No

[ ]  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.**

I have had a long and successful career as a Software Engineer / Architect. At the first level of discrimination, the Federal Government has allowed organisations to 'outsource' technologically-intensive work to 'cheaper' geographies. Main problem with that is that, while the bidding, etc. by these overseas organisations may on paper be 'cheaper' than what projects in Australia would cost, in practice, they take, at times, Six (6) times longer in real time to complete, and cost at least TRIPLE what the project could have costed if it had stayed in Australia.

Due to this mania after cheaper initial contract costs, many jobs (like mine) disappeared here (or became so rare that only younger (cheaper) workers (with less experience) workers get consideration. This is a 2nd level of discrimination.

So, if my work has disappeared, then the question becomes, 'what (else) can I be qualified to do, especially to support myself / my family, in a city as expensive to live in as Sydney? This is a diverting and difficult question to answer or address successfully, in practice.

There is a third level of discrimination in Australia, and this is at base, cultural - there is a 'youth culture' that works against older/more mature workers competing in the normal marketplace. So, until incentives (read financial/tax) for businesses are put into place, AND the Federal Government puts the importance of mature workers into its platform(s) and on-message advertisements, the problems we are discussing here cannot even be looked at intelligently, much less solved.

**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**

No; I received a redundancy due to my work disappearing overseas to China/India/Phillippines, as related above. While I do not have significant costs (like mortgage) to pay off any more, the new superannuation CW (Conventional Wisdom) is that $400-500K is not going to be enough any more, and that was where my super was. Now, it will be necessaray to work longer, if for no other reason, to fund-up my super to a higher level. Who knows - by the time I get to whatever the new number is, the CW may have changed (upward!) again, but we can at least try (if we have the opportunity to do so).

### **Barriers**

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

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Not sure

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

Like mine, except more profound, and incentives would also be necessary ($) for businesses to take a better/longer look at that class of potential employees.

**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**

Well ... as above, lack of overt / platform /'message' encouragement from the Federal Government (or state governments). Recognising that not all things (including morality) cannot be legislated, one would hope that a desire to work in an egalitarian mode (which is supposedly the Australian ethic) would be less trouble to pull off.

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

**Incentives:**

There are none at the moment, effectively, and this is why those structures I have discussed above need exercising / 'messaging', by the Federal Government. Remember ... with the continuous expansion of the older population, those people are still (also) voters, so it will behoove the Federal (and State) governments to make older workers (and/or disabled) / voters a priority, as a strategic thing. The first party to get serious about this, over the longer run, will, mathematically, enjoy ascendancy. A related benefit is more tax being paid by more people (who are working), but I hope we don't have to dwell on tax revenue as being (also) a good thing.

**Disincentives:**

As above - lack of Federal / State Government incentives (of a serious / $ nature), and continuity of the platform / message (no knee-jerks allowed here). Also, an erosion of the culltural / egalitarian fabric of what was always advertised as 'Aussie culture' (ie., 'have a go', or 'mateship'), and lastly (which I covered first earlier) the allowance to eliminate / export technical work to overseas locations, where both the costs become ulltimately higher / quality to the consumer suffers.

### **Good practice**

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

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[x] 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.**

Haven't seen any as yet. Will let you know if I do.

### **Solutions**

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

In either case, as above, the Federal / State governments need to put strategic and persistent incentives in place, for (the) their future, as government, in the first instance. These people only have two choices (a) be a 'drain' on tax revenue (ie., on the dole), or just drop out of the workforce altogether (and tax revenue suffers, as well as unemployment numbers staying high) good press copy, but bad for any government!

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

As above - Federal / State incentives ($/tax) to business, and start convincing the voting public (getting older) that the governments care about them, and want them to continue to participate in the Australian economy / culture.

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

As above - Federal / State incentives ($/tax) to business, and start convincing the voting public (getting older) that the governments care about them, and want them to continue to participate in the Australian economy / culture. This needs to happen from here, into beyond the foreseeable future (or certainly, beyond the next opinon polls!), and to be a fixture of Australian governments' messages, and become a world-renowned feature of Australian culture. If we think about things like Social Security (which Australia led in), Australia has led in many things that has become a feature of 'developed' countries in other places.

This sort of advance would be another way that Australia could lead the world (especially the developed world).