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

# Submission No 8

**Name** Dr Sherryl Broderick

**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.**

My recent experiences have promoted this submission

**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**

Yes, application not being put forward despite my suitable skills and experience

**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**

Recruitment agencies are quite honest about the veiled attitudes in the Commonwealth Public Service towards interviewing/employing candidates over the age of 45. I was told that these attitudes exist in most departments because average age is very young, that section bosses are "uncomfortable" supervising somebody old enough to be "their mum" and that one older worker doesn't fit with a team of younger people. Agencies advised that there is more chance of employment in the NFP or small-medium businesses where employers are "smarter" about wanting reliable and dedicated mature workers. I was also told that the APS just doesn't care about personnel dysfunction, that people are paid to do the job. This suggests to me that the APS has probably hit rock bottom on the HR performance; it doesn't value corporate memory, wisdom, life experience, inter-personal skills. It also contradicts the political rhetoric.

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

**Incentives:**

In my network/community I can see a range of incentives for older Australian to want to work, including a passion to make a difference, energy and creativity that can't be confined, being able to contribute and connect with their community/society. Mostly, people are more driven by satisfaction than money.

**Disincentives:**

Some need to work to support themselves and struggle with the physical demands or disrespect.

### **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

**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?**

Yes

No

Not sure

**Please tell us more**

Not selecting older applicants to interview

### **Solutions**

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

Perhaps, it's time to set a quota for the APS to employ qualified candidates between 45-65 and re-establishing the balance of bright young minds and those of us that have a broad range of experiences, innovation and skills to contribute.

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

All business owners could receive a tax deduction for employing older Australians (not just the incentive offered if a job seeker has been receiving benefits for more than 12 months).

All employers could receive information about research (Urbis P/L project) that indicates the benefits of employing older workers.

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

Real actions that are negotiated with partners and properly funded.