



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

**WILLING
TO WORK**

Booklet 2: employment and older Australians

Australian Human Rights Commission

Please tell us what you think



This is booklet 2 of 4.



How to use this document



This information is written in an easy to read way.
We use pictures to explain some ideas.



This document has been written by the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission).
When you see the word 'we', it means the Commission.



Some words are written in **bold**. We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 24.



This Easy Read document is a summary of part of another document.



You can find the longer document at www.humanrights.gov.au/willing-work-issues-papers



You can ask for help to read this document.
A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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What is this document about?

This is booklet 2 in a series of 4 booklets.



Booklet 1: About the National Inquiry and how to tell us what you think



Booklet 2: About employment discrimination and older Australians



Booklet 3: About employment discrimination and Australians with disability



Booklet 4: About discrimination and what you can do if you experience it.



The booklets are part of a large review we are doing. This review is called the National Inquiry.



The review looks at employment **discrimination** against:



- older Australians



- Australians with disability.



Discrimination is when you are treated unfairly because of your race, beliefs, sexuality, disability or age.



The Inquiry will help us make suggestions on how more older people and people with disability, can take part in the **workforce**.



The workforce includes all the people who are working at the moment, and all the people who are looking for jobs.



You can read all about the National Inquiry in Booklet 1. It also tells you how you can take part.

This booklet talks about employment and older Australians.



We have included some 'Things to think about' in this booklet.

These questions may help you to work out what you want to say if you take part in the National Inquiry.

Older people and employment in Australia

Australia has an **ageing population**. That means:



- people are living longer



- the number of people over 65 years of age is increasing.



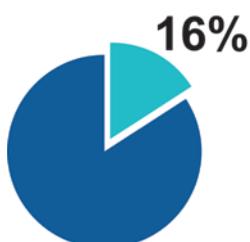
Because of this, it will be more important for older people to keep working longer.



The number of older people currently taking part in the workforce in Australia is low.



Only 1 in 3 people who are over 55 years of age take part in the workforce.



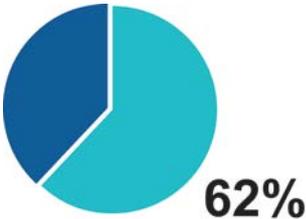
This is only 16% of all the people in Australia who are taking part in the workforce.



Research also tells us that as people get older, they work less.



Between 2013 and 2014, we received a lot of complaints about discrimination against older people.



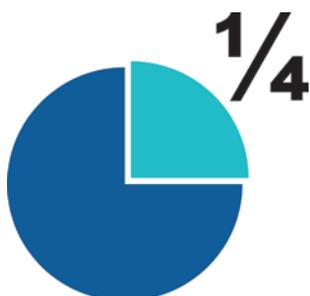
62% of those complaints were about employment.



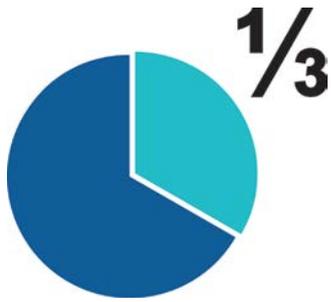
The main people who complained were aged between 55 and 74 years.



We recently did a survey about age discrimination in the workplace.



Over 1/4 of people aged over 50 said they had experienced discrimination in their job because of their age.



And 1/3 of people gave up looking for work after they had been discriminated against.



At the beginning of this year there were 80,000 unemployed Australians over the age of 55.

80,000

12% 

That's 12% more than last year.

To think about

What other information is available about employment discrimination against older people?



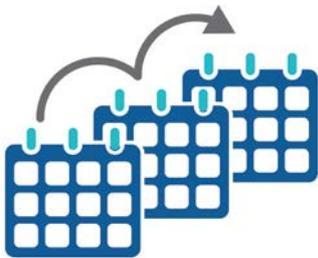
How does Australia compare to other countries?



Over the past few decades more and more older people have been taking part in the workforce.



The amount of Australians aged between 45 and 64 taking part in the workforce is good compared to some countries.



But the government and community will still face challenges in the future.



The amount of Australians aged over 65 is expected to double by the year 2054.

That means there will be a bigger need for:



- health services



- aged care services



- money for retirement



- people to stay in the workforce

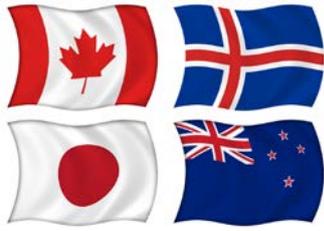
- **sustainable economic productivity.**



Sustainable economic productivity is finding the balance between meeting the needs of people and the economy, without causing problems for future generations.



Australia is not the only country facing these challenges.



Some countries are much better than Australia at employing and keeping older workers.

For example Canada, Iceland, Japan and New Zealand.



There is still more to be done to encourage older people to stay in, or come back to, the workforce.



This Inquiry will look at what is being done well here in Australia, and around the world.



We are looking for good examples of how to deal with:

- employment discrimination
- barriers that stop older people from taking part in the workforce.

Things to think about

Which countries have good examples of how to deal with employment discrimination?

What lessons can we learn from other countries?



Barriers to employment

Older Australians face different barriers at each stage of employment. Some stages are:



- finding a job



- keeping a job



- coming back to the workforce after taking a break.

Some groups of older people in the community may experience age discrimination differently.

For example:



- people with disability



- women



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



- people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds



- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people.

Some people may experience more than one type of discrimination at once.

For example, an older lesbian woman may experience discrimination because:



- of her age
- she is a woman
- she is a lesbian.

Barriers for older Australians



Some of the barriers you may experience while looking for and keeping a job include:



- not being aware of your rights at work



- employers having an attitude, or behaviour, that discriminates against you



- finding it hard to get flexible working arrangements



- having out-of-date job search skills



- having to do training, or get new skills, to keep up



- health problems



- issues with your superannuation or savings for retirement



- tax or age pension reasons



- problems with workplace environments and conditions



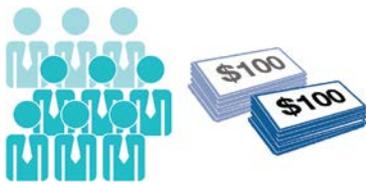
- not many choices for workers insurance.

Barriers for Australian employers

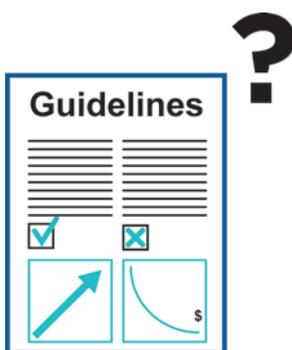
Some of the barriers that employers who are hiring older people may experience include:



- not knowing about all the laws they need to follow, or finding it hard to follow them



- not having enough people and money in their business to support older workers



- finding their way around the age pension and superannuation system.

Things to think about

What are the types of challenges faced by different groups of older Australians when looking for work?

This might include:

- women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- LGBTI people.



The benefits of employing older people

When you work for longer it benefits:



- you



- workplaces



- the community



- the **economy**.

The economy is the total amount of goods, services and money that Australia makes and uses.



Employment can provide you with more income, or money.



This will help improve your standard of living when you retire.



Working longer also improves health and wellbeing.



This can then reduce the need for welfare payments and services.



You also have skills and experience that workplaces can benefit from.



Like training younger, and newer, employees.

Tell us your story



We want to hear success stories from older people.

Share your story with us about finding and keeping a job.

Or maybe you have a story about changing jobs, or your career.

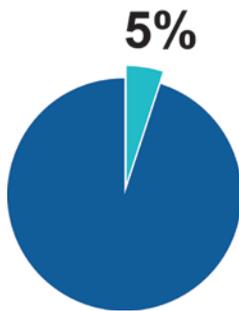
We particularly want to know what things helped you to have a good experience.

There are some stories you can read on our [*Age Positive website*](#).

The cost of employment discrimination



Not having many older people taking part in the workforce affects Australia's economy.



Research shows that if 5% more people over the age of 55 had jobs, Australia's economy would be worth \$48 billion more than it is now.

Employment discrimination also affects workplaces in a number of ways, including:



- loss of knowledge



- loss of skilled and experienced staff



- not having a diverse workplace



- how happy people are in their job



- how much work gets done



- the high cost of finding new staff and training them.



Employment discrimination also effects the quality of life of older people.

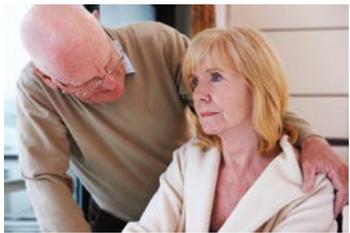
We know that 60% of people who have experienced discrimination because of their age, also experienced:



- self-esteem issues



- mental health issues



- stress.



Others said it had a negative effect on their family or career.



It also made them think about changing their career. Or being trained to do a different job.

Other effects of age discrimination include:



- having to retire early, when you don't want to



- being unemployed, sometimes for a very long time



- not taking part in your community



- having skills that are out-of-date



- trouble accessing benefits and the Age Pension



- not having enough money to pay the rent or mortgage.

Word list



Ageing population

This means people are living longer, and the amount of people over 65 years of age is increasing.



Discrimination

Discrimination is when you are treated unfairly because of your race, beliefs, sexuality, disability or age.



Economy

The economy is the total amount of goods, services and money that Australia makes and uses.



Sustainable economic productivity

Finding the balance between meeting the needs of people and the economy, without causing problems for future generations.



Workforce

All the people who are working at the moment, and all the people who are looking for jobs.

Contact us



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