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

# Submission No 45

**Name** Russell Cairns

**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.**

It is near impossible to prove age discrimination. The term ‘over-qualified’ is frequently used.

**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**

I am willing to work, I have a Graduate Diploma of Business (Technology Management) and more than fifty years work experience, specialising in Information and Communication Technology for more than 35 years. I have applied for in excess of 150 jobs (mostly Business Analyst &/or Project Manager) in the past six months. I am willing to work anywhere in Australia or overseas.

### **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?**

* Businesses instruct recruiters not to consider candidates over 50 years old;
* Recruiters are more likely to place younger people because they know these people won’t stay more than one or two years and then the recruiters will get another commission for placing a new candidate;
* Many recruiters continually advertise jobs that don’t really exist – their interest is in maximising their candidate portfolio in order to attract more clients. Particular recruitment agencies blatantly doing this (from my personal experience) include **[redacted]**, **[redacted]**, **[redacted]**and**[redacted]**.

**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**

* Businesses instruct recruiters not to consider candidates over 50 years old;
* Recruiters are more likely to place younger people because they know these people won’t stay more than one or two years and then the recruiters will get another commission for placing a new candidate;
* Many recruiters continually advertise jobs that don’t really exist – their interest is in maximising their candidate portfolio in order to attract more clients. Particular recruitment agencies blatantly doing this (from my personal experience) include Talent International, Robert Half Technology, Global Consulting Services and Hays.

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

**Incentives:**

* Age pension does not provide enough money on which to live;
* Desire to work & contribute.

**Disincentives:**

* Most government sponsored agencies are either completely inept or have no interest in actually helping people to find work;
* Agencies and employers think that older people are not able to adjust, particularly when new technology is involved;
* Employers think – erroneously – that older people will take a lot of sick time and/or are less likely to be productive;
* Many employers think that more experienced employees will threaten their own positions.

### **Good practice**

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

[ ] Yes

[x] 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.**

### **Solutions**

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

* Employers and Agencies need to be educated in relation to the benefits of employing older people, including loyalty and commitment.

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

* Employers and Agencies need to be educated in relation to the benefits of employing older people, including loyalty and commitment.

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

* Government sponsored education of employers and Agencies;
* Analysis, probably by ABS, of statistics demonstrating the loyalty, commitment, ability, lower absenteeism, etc. of older workers versus younger workers.