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

# Submission No 18

**Name** Margaret Anne Ryan

**Submission made by**

Older Australian who is not working and does not wish 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.**

I suffered discrimination when I was only in my late fourties as I applied for jobs at different nurseries just watering plants or pulling out weeds or general stuff and they wanted people who studying horticultural stuff or had a horticultural degree. I only wanted part time work or casual work as my late husband was in and out of hospital and therefore by working as part time or casual I could have handled both.

**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 , over time I stopped looking because I used to get the answer that the particular employer was looking for someone straight out of school that maybe had more computer or technology knowledge than i did or the fact that I used public transport to get around did not suit them

### **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?**

Employers consider older people too slow to learn new stuff, the employer is often not willing to put a person on part time or casual . If the person is somebody with a disability the employer is not willing to give them time off for medical appointments, they do not want to make changes in the workplace to assist with the management of that disability

**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**

Well one bloody big attitude and law is the fact that if you are on either the age pension or the disability pension if you earn one dollar or sixty dollars you have to let centrelink know and that in itself is a major hassle given the amount of time you have to hang on the phone and it is not always practical to do it online and the wait in the offices is almost as bad and the attitude of centrelink staff at times leaves a lot to be desired.

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

**Incentives:**

there are none

**Disincentives:**

attitudes of employers, the laws I mentioned in relation to centrelink, the lack of all buses being fully accessible so that people can get on any bus instead of at times having to wait an hour or more for one they can get on

### **Good practice**

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

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.**

am not aware of any

### **Solutions**

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

for a starter remove the need for a person on the age pension or the disability pension to notify centrelink of ANY earnings under four hundred and one dollars a month. With all the cross checking that govt depts do with banks etc they would soon pick up if anyone was earning more than that or at least only do an interview with the person once every six months to check on what they were earning, from whom and whether it was paid in cash or into their bank account

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

access to public transport , flexibility in working hours, more publicity about employers who are taking on older australians and people with disabilities in genuine jobs not just somebody they are using as a token example of supporting these categories of employees

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

firstly that it actually gets looked at and used and not just join most of the other enquiries that get done and sit on the shelf gathering dust. that the results are to be used by all political parties whenever they are in govt and not dropped and picked up everytime they have a change of party in power, certainly look at the need for the notification to centrelink of the earnings to be dropped and oh by the way the centrelink staff all to be advised they have to let their appropriate clients know of this as centrelink never volunteer information and you always get six different comments from six different centrelink staff and for the outcomes and recommendations to be implemented immediately