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

# Submission No 65

**Name** Nicholas Griffin

**Submission made by**

[x]  Australian with disability looking for work

# Submission regarding Australians with Disability

### **Your experience**

**Have you (or the person you are submitting on behalf of) experienced employment discrimination?**

[ ]  Yes

[ ]  No

[x]  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.**

No. I felt absolutely powerless when approaching my employers. I lacked confidence and did not feel I had the support in having my needs addressed. I felt at the time it was easier to walk away.

**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 suffer from mild Cerebral Palsy & Generalised Anxiety Disorder. As result of these two conditions I can feel very uneasy in the work place especially when others treat you differently or alienate you. I have held several jobs that ended with me having to resign and in some instances seek medial assistance. In the case of youth work, the clients issues became to challenging for me to handle on top of my own issues related to my physical and mental health. No support was provided to me as worker and I was expected to simply hold myself together. I ended up resigning. As a laboratory technician I had trouble working in a compressed environment which proved difficult in relation to my co-oridnation. Having to resign from two jobs because of your own limitations is soul destroying. I am an intelligent man and can learn new things easily but it makes it difficult when employers are not prepared to accept your differences or take interest in the issues affecting your own health. I've been unemployed for near 10 years now on DSP and it has significantly damaged my confidence and I am desperately trying to obtain financial security so I can study next year at medical school.

### **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?**

Absolutely. One of the biggest barrier are those which we create within ourselves. When you receive constant knock backs you begin to think there is something wrong with you and you can start to become self destructive and loose faith in your abilities. Long term unemployment is particularly bad. Not only are you dealing with your own disabilities, but you are also dealing with a lack of confidence and a desperate need to convince employers your are capable of performing a job. The effects on mental health are extreme and trying to dig yourself out of the unemployment hole as well as come to terms with your own abilities is soul crushing.

**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**

Recruitment systems are out of date. I have no idea how an employer can honestly assess your ability to perform a job from a written application. By our vert nature, those with a disability can tend to undersell ourselves especially if we do not have sufficient support around us. I have no family, very few friends and social connections and trying to feel good about your own abilities and express them in a job application is very difficult. Employers need to change how they asses a person for a job. They need to meet with applicants and get a feel for them as a person.

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

**Incentives:**

Greater financial security and change to improve personal comfort in order to establish and develop a family.

**Disincentives:**

The danger of failure, loosing work and finding oneself without financial security.

### **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