

2 Ross Street  
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April 19 1999

The Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations  
R1,116 Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Inquiry into Older Workers

It is my intention to make a submission to the inquiry and this letter is intended as part thereof, to request reference to and inclusion of what I put (tape recorded comment) to the Senate Employment, Education and Training Refrences Committee, 1995: reference Report on the inquiry into long term unemployment, October 1995: Appendix 2, Submissions to the inquiry, No 39, Ms Anne Monten, SA (p 131).

\* Note I consider that both in personal and objective terms, 1999 differs little to 1995 – that the attitudes tend to be negative, not creative, I'd also suggest not realistic; obsessively the focus is on economics, the people out of work are not consulted, research is ad hoc, rarefied, narrowly based.

I would like the House of Representatives Standing Committee to consider that submission, one which I compiled to cover what I now consider has become an extensive informal (barefoot) research into what is also directly my circumstances: I am out of work in the conventional/traditional sense of work for adults as the prime source (for a majority I'd contend) of economic means to live, and as a female, aged 53, with considerable work experience, a (mature age) graduate so with a good education, the opportunity to have some (I hope) comprehensive attention paid to an enormously complex set of social, economic and technological changes affecting work as we have known it is welcome, but I have reservations, not the least of which relates to my view that the divisiveness of the adversarial politics pursued is a handicap, so I plead to the Committee for a non-partisan approach (but with the thought that unfortunately it is as likely as having pigs fly) to the issues to be considered.

I fully appreciate the wish to have typed submissions, and I submit in this preliminary part that poverty resulting for me directly from little or no paid work (let alone career prospect type work) means I cannot afford what I would suggest could be a valuable tool, a home-based computer, hence access to both word-processing and e-mail/internet: there is a growing literature that includes the technology divide happening in industrialised countries due to the also growing rich/poor gap, it adds to exclusion, disadvantage, and in our society now, often there is an expectation that fax, e-mail and so on are in most homes, taken for granted, like a telephone (in Australia, a

place where isolation can be a big factor – in suburbia as well as rural areas – the technological advances – along with phone – can likely reduce same, only though if people can afford it all in the home.)

As mentioned above, I shall make an additional submission, and I ask you to regard the one make, as per page 1, as part of a “package”: what I would welcome (as a better way to elaborate) would be to give oral evidence in support, to be a subject of inquiry, as I’d suggest, representative of the circumstances of many of us in effect in our prime but facing the consequences of radical change, of the revolution that is taking us – the planet entire – into a new era, a post-industrial one, where I’d also ask the Committee to refer to the BBC Reith lectures, 1999, currently being broadcast on ABC Radio National, Sundays, 5pm (please include the series within the framework of the inquiry), Professor Anthony Giddens of LSE: again I plead for the putting of politics aside, so that from the experiences of previous governments, the evaluation of policy, programs is done objectively, constructively critically, and without the (intellectually unsustainable) politically-oriented tendency to suggest all wisdom is within one side of politics, etc . . . so the conduct of politics makes me sceptical about how much will be achieved in this exercise, one where I hope efforts will be made to have much more public awareness, it being likely that few (especially of the people the subject of the concern, older workers without living wage jobs, without a living) know it exists . . . I would rather a royal commission into work, to provide a comprehensive basis upon which to engage in policy making, something I have suggested in representations to various ministers (to resolve questions like whether our measuring of unemployment hides some of it, to examine this ongoing socio-economic revolution, to have you – our representatives – more engaged beyond it being a political football, and for reasons better put in conversation).

I would appreciate confirmation that the submission part of the 1995 Report is before this inquiry, and as I have no copy, if one could be provided, I could then make specific comment, with hindsight (I presume there is a transcript).

Thank you,  
Yours faithfully

ANNE MONTEN