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I am responding to a notice regarding the inquiry by the Committee into issues specific to the employment of workers over 45 years of age.

As I have published a number of papers on this subject, reflecting research over the past 5 years, I thought that the most useful contribution I could make to the Committee's deliberations would be to enclose reprints of two of these papers, both published in 1998. Other relevant publications, including my own, are listed in the references to the chapter on "Age Discrimination" which is attached. I have also covered some of the same ground in a chapter entitled "Work in Later Life", in the volume *Ageing and Social Policy in Australia*, edited by A. Borowski, S. Encel & E. Ozanne, published by Cambridge University Press in 1997.

I would like to add the following comments to supplement the material in my published work:

1) Since the 1980's there has been a continuing increase in the number of long-term unemployed (LTU) and very long-term unemployed (VLTU). The number of persons over 45 - especially men - in these categories has risen disproportionately. Although the increase in LTU and VLTU appears to have slackened or reversed, this disproportion has continued to rise. As a variety of reports by international agencies like the ILO and OECD have emphasised, this problem underlines the need for labour market programs targeted to deal with the particular problems of older or "mature" workers. The value of such programs was, in fact, the subject of several OECD reports in the 1960's.

2) Age discrimination by employers is a major factor in this situation. Last year, I completed a report based on an analysis of the records of the Anti-discrimination Board in NSW which gives a number of examples of discriminatory behaviour by employers (*Over the Hill or Flying High*, published by the NSW Committee on Ageing in 1998). Two examples drawn from my research illustrate some of the problems faced by older workers:

In the first case, a woman aged 50, recently widowed, responded to an advertisement for a 'mature person'. After telling the prospective employer her age, she was informed that "mature" meant someone in their 20's.. When she asked ironically, if he thought she should stay at home and take up knitting, the answer was "yes" and the call was abruptly terminated. In the second case, a woman aged 47, whose husband had lost his job through downsizing, applied to a job placement agency for admission to a computer training course. She was told by her case manager that it would be a waste of time at her age. (Surveys carried out by the American Association of Retired Persons indicate very similar attitudes on the part of U. S. employers)

3) A number of examples of business enterprises which have developed successful programs to utilise the special qualities of older workers have been reported in the literature. British examples include the Tesco Supermarket chain and the "Do-It-Yourself" chain, B and Q. In the U.S. firms such as Travelers Insurance, McDonalds, and Days' Inns have had similar success. Unfortunately, the number of such cases is not large. Consciousness raising is necessary to spread the message. In Britain, a group of large employers has set up a project entitled the Employers' Forum on Age (EFA), in cooperation with the charity Age Concern, to

develop a program of consciousness raising. EFA is supported by the government, which is introducing a code of practice for employers in relation to older workers. In Australia, the former Liberal government of NSW introduced a scheme of "best practice awards" to encourage employers, but this was dropped by the present Labour government.