

# Working Nation CoOperative Limited

Supp Submission 772  
GUL Inquiry

Incorporating Doyalson Training Centre  
Mature Age Training Extension Scheme

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9<sup>th</sup> February 2000

The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education  
And Industrial Relations  
R1 Suite 116  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

Since our previous submission to your Committee dated April 1999 there have been further developments which we wish to comment on.

ABS unemployment figures continue to show a high incidence among Mature age workers.

Up until August of last year the percentage of unemployed 45 years and over living in the Central Coast, Newcastle, and the Hunter Valley were running around the same give or take two to three percentage points. That would have changed, running against workers in the 45 year old and over bracket in the Newcastle area. And while there has been much speculation about new industry it will require initiatives by Government well in advance of the current effort if there is to be any noticeable change.

We do not suggest that the answer to higher levels of unemployment among those aged 45 years and over lies in what we are doing, however there could be some useful lessons in a model that we have been developing in our Co-operative. This could be in addition to traditional methods of encouraging employment growth

Building on the information in our earlier submission we have gathered in more outside contract work. Exploiting a niche in the market place the number of our participants in the program of hands on training has grown. Our income has increased which is being reinvested in the Co-operative's working capital.

Likewise our computer classes have grown from 90 enrolments in the last quarter of 1999 to 150 in the first quarter this year.

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The number of persons who passed thru our programs in the last financial year was 750. We expect more in the current year. Whilst ages vary a recent count showed that approximately 85% of participants were mature aged

Altho armed with new skills and new confidence , in the labor market their age continues to work against them .


Here is a challenge for your Committee, your Minister, and your Government.

Prejudice against mature aged workers in the labor market has been endemic for years. It applies equally to sedentary type occupations as well as work that entails hard physical effort. A number of regulations and acceptable policies within the community either outlaw or discourage prejudice in employment practises based on sex, religion, race, colour, and so on.

What the mature aged worker requires is assistance from Government which ensures that the only criteria when applying for a job is qualification, training, ability, etc., the normal bench marks required of other workers. If this can be achieved then we would have made great strides in assisting the mature aged to get back into the workforce. A start needs to be made now to realise that objective.

Finally may we issue members of your Committee an invitation to visit our training centre at Doyalson on the Central Coast to examine at first hand the model we are developing.

Yours faithfully

  
R Mortlock                      Chairman  
J Cambourn                     Secretary

