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

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref: Issues specific to workers over 45 years of age seeking employment,
Or establishing a business, following unemployment.

As a 53 year old who has this week been given an 'offer of employment' (AWA for 3 year term) following a 4.5 year period of part-time, casual, sessional and sporadic employment – I am in a unique position to make some comments regarding issues specific to workers over 45 years of age etc.

During the period January 1994 to September 1998 I was 'between jobs' – extending my experience in the training sector and study of adult education (Diploma of Teaching – T & FE). I have been actively involved in adult education since 1989 – as a literacy tutor, teacher of calligraphy, member and Chairperson of regional council for Adult Community and Further Education. During the period 1994 – 1998 I continued and strengthened

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my involvement in ACFE (still!), participating in several professional

development activities and maintained my knowledge and networks of up to date information.

Whilst working in Central Victoria for Skillshare and other adult community education providers I came in contact with a diverse range of people seeking work and looking to establish businesses. The most frequent issues I saw and heard discussed were:

1. My age is against me.
2. Low self-esteem.
3. Negative attitude to ever getting further employment (understandable in an area with very high unemployment).
4. Inability to recognise and pursue the true value of further education and training.
5. Inability to access further education and training because of cost, travel, time, plus the obligation to be actively seeking employment (a 'catch-22').
6. Number of times people had been refused employment, together with despondency at not hearing back from employers after applying for jobs.
7. Lack of recognition by many individuals of their skills and special qualities, as well as the ability to transfer skills to jobs other than those they have experienced.
8. Lack of recognising and acknowledging skills other than those used ON the job, eg skills used in every day or special interests/hobbies, which can be used in the workplace.
9. Accepting the need for a resume – many people 45+ have been in the one job for many years and have never needed a resume. When they find they must have one there is quite often resistance to getting a resume – why do I need it, what is it? Many people have never seen a resume.
10. Low levels of literacy – writing, reading, thinking = low confidence.
11. Low skill/knowledge level of how to apply for jobs and approach employers. (This applies to all ages).

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In closing, my good fortune can be put down to having strong networks, maintaining professional interests and being prepared to accept training, and

where possible actively seeking it out. Keeping a positive outlook can be difficult at times, and for some people a near impossibility – especially when one constantly hears/sees negativity in the media and from political sources.

Best wishes for the inquiry. I look forward to seeing the outcome.

Yours sincerely,
Tricia Walsh