

1. Some thoughts on the Kelly Hoare correspondence for submission. The source of these comments is from the unemployed themselves, or those who have given up looking for work and have 'retired'.
2. Many of the over 45 year olds, although highly efficient in their trade may not have additional skills to their base trade and therefore become much harder to re-employ in these days of multi-skilling.
3. The Boilermaking trade re-employs far more readily than the Fitting and Machining trade (probably because the manufacturing side of industry is not very bouyant), however, if a boilermaker has advanced welding certificates (pressure, MIG, TIG etc) they are much more likely to be re-employed than those who have more basic skills. Age does not necessarily become a barrier when the employer is looking for specific skills (i.e. like the dockyard).
4. Through changes to the apprenticeship curriculum younger tradesmen have broader skills than the older tradesmen (i.e. pneumatics and hydraulics for instance).
5. Younger tradesmen may be more employable as it is easier for them to work out of their local area. The over 45, maybe more particularly over 50 - 55 years of age often do not want to uproot their children from school and have their wife/partner leave their employment to move to another area, particularly as most of these jobs are short term contract work (6 month -2 years say).
6. Many of the unemployed have expressed the opinion that employers don't want to employ older people, some say its because they are union members, some say they are not skilled enough but quite a few say there seems to be no valid reason apart from their age.
7. When industry was going through its massive restructure/multi-skilling quite a lot of the older tradesmen (over 55 more so than under) opted not to become multi-skilled and wanted to remain static (so they were 'red circled") and when the company wanted to shed workers in many instances they were the first to go. If they did not upgrade their skills while they were out of work, they most likely would become the long term unemployed.
8. A very large percentage of work nowadays is short term work through labour hire or contractors, some workers only picking up the odd day here and there. With all the companies which have closed or laid people off over the past decade or so in the Newcastle area, the rate of unemployment remains high and although it fluctuates a bit, doesn't really reduce very much.

It is expected that this scenario is mirrored in most Industrial towns throughout Australia.