

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

Dear Sirs

I am 51 years of age and was retrenched from a position as a Sales Representative with a Melbourne based national plastics company some three years ago following a major restructure.

I had been employed by the company and its predecessor whom it acquired, for over nine years and was well regarded by clients and within the company where I consistently achieved sales and performance targets.

Over the last three years I have unsuccessfully applied for over two hundred and fifty positions -suitable to my skills and experience in industry. Most of these positions have been closely aligned to my experience in the plastics, plumbing, irrigation, heating and retail sectors where my product and client knowledge would be valuable.

Most of the positions that I have applied for were Melbourne based and I made quite clear my willingness to relocate. Out of these applications I have received forty interviews and a small number of second interviews including one interstate (Tasmania).

From discussions with employers that I followed up to assess the standard of my application and my interview performance I feel I am not gaining employment due to my age.

I was recently told that being over fifty and on a three monthly dole form hand in that I need not register for intensive training and that I could keep looking for work if I felt like it.

During this period I have attempted to keep my skills current by undertaking word processing and computer program training as well as marketing development.

On a personal perspective I am a single (divorced) person, renting and the small amount of superannuation that I had was depleted paying living costs. I have no other residual savings and have recently been placed in the invidious position of having to declare myself bankrupt.

I remain personally optimistic and feel that I have a lot to offer an employer with my extensive industry skills and knowledge base and my ability to liaise and negotiate with people from all sections of company hierarchy.

I also have the acquaintance of a number of other similarly aged unemployed all of whom have been in middle management and sales. The solution for some of these to gain employment seems to be to "buy" a job by purchasing a courier service, mowing round or some similar service business.

Generally these are people whose skills were not manual but they were not technologically redundant in their field, the situation of unemployment seems age related.

When I was first retrenched I was confident of getting another suitable position in the immediate future, but have now come to the personal conclusion that employers are discriminating because of age and this must impact within industry and commerce in the loss of an enormous knowledge and skills bank. Perhaps the Government could look at some form of mentoring assistance program in reverse to encourage employers to take this not so old and very valuable national asset back into the work force.

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