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I am 59 this year. I have an Honours degree in Physics, a graduate apprenticeship in aero engine design and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. I have a wife and two children, 20 and 21 - both unemployed.

I have only been able to find contract teaching work in the last ten years - having returned to Australia after the military coups in Fiji. I was in Fiji at the invitation of the government and church there to set up physics teaching in the Fijian Schools - I was there with my wife for 6 years on a local salary.

I came specifically to South Australia to help look after my parents where were at that time 79 and 80. I applied for work with the Weapons Research Authority and was told that I was a security risk, having come from Fiji. I went to the Dept. of Education and was told that as "you are over 45 and not female" there would not be any permanent work for me in teaching.

I have now taught in 46 different schools in South Australia, private and State from Ceduna to Lameroo, and from Coober Pedy to Port Lincoln. I have averaged about three terms out of four over the last ten years, - the first term is always the hardest in the year - like this year, as I have had three day's work so far this year.

Christmas is hard as the term ends before Christmas and the DSS don't get around to interviewing one until the new year, so January is without money - though they do pay in arrears eventually. If I have saved some money, they don't pay me at all! - Brilliant. That removes all credibility of the system for me.

If I get job search and get two days of work, as I did last week. I get no job search allowance (it is cut off as my pay exceeds the limit) and the Education Dept take three weeks to pay me, so it means there are very thin times. (The maximum they have taken is five weeks). This was particularly hard when our two children were in school - with school fees being required in January.

It was also hard when the Howard government cut so many out of Austudy. I was unemployed at the time and we had to really tighten our belts for our elder daughter to continue at TAFE. I made a number of calls for help, through Susan Jeanes MHR, but was told that "the computer says your daughter is not eligible".

I have applied for over a thousand jobs over the last ten years. I have a handful of replies. "You are too qualified for this post" is the most common reply, - when I get one!

I have applied for retraining - but because I have post grad. qualifications I have not been able to get financial help.

I have applied for government help to learn how to set up my own computing business - I have been using computers in 1963 - programming in Fortran - but since there were no bits of paper issued then, as we were all learning together - I have not been able to get any suitable bit of paper myself. I quite often teach computing, computer programming, software packages etc etc. to people who will get bits of paper, but don't have the right bit myself!

However we live in a marvellous country and have many advantages that so many in the world do not have, that I count myself amongst the lucky ones.

My wife and I built our own house with our own hands - despite being over 45. I am not afraid of work. I've paid it off, - at times by raiding the waste bins at Bi Lo and Woolworths for bread and vegetables. (As you may remember the coups in Fiji meant a 37% devaluation of the Fijian dollar - and some money we sent to Australia after the first coup did not arrive at this end!)

To have to go every fortnight to the DSS is something that I wonder whether is really necessary. I went to the Job Agency, as I am obliged to do, to be told by a girl of 20 or so that 'we will find you a job, don't worry'. I would have counted this as an insult, if I had not felt she was lucky to have a job. They offer no help except to say "there is the book on the table there with jobs in it, it is updated every day". Great. I count myself fairly expert on looking for work - and getting it as a contract part way through term first term or so. (I have this year too, three days contract for the rest of this term and for next term.)

I will do my very best to help the students I teach to understand that education is important. I will help them learn their maths and science - which I believe I am able to do very well.

I will find it difficult to say that they should stay in South Australia - perhaps they should go overseas like John Olsen's daughter has had to do to find work.

We **must must must** give the younger generation a reason to study and learn, and then an opportunity to use those skills in meaningful work.

Thank you.
Rob Pattison.