

To suggest that prevalent attitudes are anything but discriminatory is farcical, exempting people from work on the basis of race, creed, disability or colour is discrimination but to exempt someone on the basis of their "over-qualification" is not, surely over qualification is some sort of disability, after all one has no control over how smart one is.

I reactivated a small consultancy company which I had set up some years earlier and for the next six years have scratched and eked out a living as a freelance electrical engineer at a greatly reduced income.

Obstacles which I have met along the way are, the high cost in time and money to comply to standards which any small businessman would regard as necessary for survival. Quality assurance compliance costs more than many small businesses turn over in their first year, it is not on a sliding scale and as such is a significant impediment to competition by small companies. Licensing, legal and insurance costs are proportionately higher as a function of turn over for small business. The sum of the impediments to free competition are significantly weighted against the small business in spite of the often stated knowledge of the government that small business is the greatest employer and trainer of workers. From my own experience I can categorically state that small business is about getting things done and getting paid. The need to maintain turnover dictates the survival of all small business.

I had a chance meeting with an associate a few months ago, I jumped into a cab in the city and the driver was a fellow with whom I had worked some fifteen years ago - My old workmate was one of the best electronics engineers in the State, his talent was recognised across Australia, what awful failure had brought this eminently qualified and able individual so low?

He failed to disobey nature's law, he could requalify 'til he was blue in the face but he'd turned fifty and that, in Australia today, ladies and gentlemen is a sentence!

Older workers are not looking for a handout, all we want is a fair go!

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