

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY OF ADDRESSING THIS STANDING COMMITTEE. I PROPOSE GIVING A BRIEF OUTLINE OF MY CREDENTIALS, THEN PROVIDING A PERSONAL VIEWPOINT ON SOME OF THE PRINCIPLES I SEE AS PERTINENT TO THE MATURE AGED UNEMPLOYED. {ALREADY STATED BY MY CASE MANAGER. MR. DARYL NIELSEN}

I ENTERED THE WORKFORCE IN 1967 IN THE SERVICE AND INVESTMENT INDUSTRY, WHERE, OVER THE SPAN OF 25 YEARS, I ROSE TO MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT LEVEL, WITH STAFF SUPERVISION AND TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TRUST FUNDS OF THE ORDER OF \$100M. I GAINED RESPECTED EXPERTISE IN MY FIELD, AND ATTAINED A HIGH LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IN INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS. AS WELL AS A LARGE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUALIFICATIONS. I BECAME SKILLED IN TRUST LAW, TAXATION, INVESTMENT AND ACCOUNTING, AND GAINED A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF REAL ESTATE.

I AM A UNIVERSITY GRADUATE WITH HONOURS.

I AM A LONG SERVING OFFICE BEARER IN A NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.

I AM COMPUTER LITERATE, ARTICULATE, AND HAVE SOUND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS.

I AM 51 YEARS OF AGE.

I HAVE A FILE AT HOME THROUGH WHICH HAS PASSED IN EXCESS OF 400 REJECTION LETTERS, REPRESENTING, I ADD, ONLY THOSE ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE BEEN WELL-MANNERED ENOUGH TO REPLY TO MY APPLICATIONS. ALL SUCH APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN FOR POSITIONS THAT I WAS CONFIDENT OF FILLING, AND FOR WHICH I FELT I WAS SUITABLY QUALIFIED.

IN SHORT, INTERRUPTED BY A TWO-YEAR STINT AS A CONTRACTEE IN THE STATE PUBLIC SERVICE, FOR EIGHT OF THE PAST TEN YEARS. I HAVE NOT HAD MEANINGFUL WORK.

IT IS THE CONCEPT OF MEANINGFUL WORK THAT IS CENTRAL TO THE DILEMMA OF THE SKILLED, MATURE-AGED UNEMPLOYED. PLACE YOURSELVES IN MY POSITION; REFLECT UPON YOUR WORKING LIVES PRIOR TO YOUR POLITICAL CAREERS, AND ENVISAGE WHAT YOUR REACTION WOULD BE TO 400+ PEOPLE TELLING YOU YOUR SERVICES WERE NOT WANTED, AND PROFFERING NO VALID REASON WHY THAT SHOULD BE SO. I SUGGEST THAT, AS WITH ME, THE EFFECT ON YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, YOUR SELF-RELIANCE, SOMETIMES YOUR SELF-RESPECT, WOULD BE DEVASTATING. THE NOTION THAT THE EXPENDITURE AND DEVOTION OF SIGNIFICANT EFFORT, ENERGY, AND ACHIEVEMENT OVER THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR ADULT LIFE CAN, ALMOST OVERNIGHT, BE RENDERED AN EXERCISE IN FUTILITY, BECOMES A VERY TANGIBLE PSYCHOLOGICAL HURDLE.

IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE IS AN IMPLIED EXPECTATION IN OUR SOCIETY THAT WE SHOULD JUST ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT COMES ALONG. THAT THIS IS THE WAY IT IS; THAT ANY JOB IS BETTER THAN NO JOB. INDEED,

FOUR OF MY CONTEMPORARIES AN EX-BANK MANAGER, BANK ACCOUNTANT, MORTGAGE BROKER AND RESTAURANTEUR AT PRESENT ARE FILLING THEIR DAYS RESPECTIVELY BY MOWING LAWNS (7 days a week). WASHING DOGS, REPAIRING MOBILE PHONES AND MANNING A HEAD-SET, ANSWERING COMPLAINTS FROM TELSTRA CUSTOMERS. YET WHEN THEY TELL YOU THAT ANY JOB IS BETTER THAN NO JOB. YOU CAN DETECT IN THE THEIR WORDS THE RESIGNATION, THE SELF-DELUSION, FOR WE ARE OF AN AGE WHERE WE REMEMBER THE TRUE MEANING OF CUSTOMER SERVICE. THE PLEASURE IN THE APPLICATION OF PERSONAL, AND OFTEN UNIQUE SKILLS. AND THE CONCEPT OF PRIDE IN WORKMANSHIP - ATTRIBUTES THAT HAVE ALL BUT DISAPPEARED IN THE REVOLVING DOOR PHILOSOPHY OF TODAY'S EMPLOYMENT REGIME.

THOSE WHO ARE HOLDING OUT FOR A MEANINGFUL CONTINUATION OF THEIR SKILLS ARE BRANDED "JOB SNOBS" BY THE LIKES OF MR TONY ABBOTT. THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE MEEKLY SURRENDERED THE EFFORTS OF THEIR YOUNGER YEARS TO THE MAXIM THAT JOB SATISFACTION IS HAVING A JOB, AND ULTIMATELY THEIR SKILLS WILL BE LOST FOREVER.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

PRESENT INITIATIVES HAVE MERIT, AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE JOBS NETWORK WITH A "MATURE-AGE" FOCUS. RE-SKILLING, AND RE-TRAINING ARE USEFUL TO US, BUT ONLY WHERE THEY ENHANCE EXISTING SKILLS. I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMERCE WROUGHT BY ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGES IN LEGISLATION. AT LEAST THIS SORT OF RE-TRAINING KEEPS ME IN TOUCH WITH THE MOST OBVIOUS AVENUE FOR MY REEMPLOYMENT. HOWEVER, TO COMPLETELY RE-WRITE YOUR CAREER ASPIRATIONS IS SELF-DEFEATING. RE-TRAINING TO A DIFFERENT INDUSTRY MERELY PLACES US IN A DIFFERENT QUEUE, COMPETING FOR LIMITED POSITIONS WITH THOSE WHO HAVE THE ONE QUALITY EVIDENTLY NOT REQUIRED IN OUR ORIGINAL PROFESSIONS - EXPERIENCE. I AM DISCOVERING THIS MYSELF IN MY ATTEMPTS TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY.

(As Mr. Nielsen has said) THE INITIATIVE WITH THE MOST POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR THE MATURE-AGED LIES IN THE RE-EDUCATION OF THE POWERFUL IN COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT, OF THE INTRINSIC WORTH OF THE MATURE AGED WORKER. WHETHER AS MENTORS, TRAINERS, OR, IDEALLY, AS FULLY RESTORED OPERATIVES, THE MATURE AGED SHOULD BE ABLE TO APPLY THEIR ACQUIRED SKILLS TO A WORK-FORCE THAT IS INCREASINGLY BIG ON THEORY, BUT LOW ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION. LOYALTY AND BUSINESS "SAVOIR-FAIRE".

IN MY VIEW, THE EDUCATION OF THE POWERFUL SHOULD EXTEND FURTHER. THE ALMOST OBSESSIVE ACCEPTANCE OF THE THEORY OF ECONOMIC RATIONALISM BY INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND GOVERNMENT ALIKE HAS BEEN THE SOLE ROOT CAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT, AND IF YOU ELIMINATE THAT OBSESSION. YOU WILL ELIMINATE UNEMPLOYMENT AT ALL LEVELS. THE THEORY OF ECONOMIC RATIONALISM IS SOCIALLY FLAWED, BECAUSE ITS PHILOSOPHY IS CENTRED UPON

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE PROFIT MOTIVE. THE PROFIT MOTIVE IS SERVED BY THE PERIODIC DOWNSIZING OF RE-USEABLE RESOURCES. INCLUDING HUMAN RESOURCES, WHO ARE DUMPED ON A SOCIETY THAT HAS NEITHER THE ATTITUDE, NOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM. SOME OF OUR LARGER CORPORATIONS HAVE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PROFITS IN EXCESS OF 3 BILLION DOLLARS. THIS IS AN OBSCENE AMOUNT OF MONEY AT THE BEST OF TIMES. WHEN VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT THAT THOSE PROFITS HAVE BEEN GENERATED PARTLY THROUGH THE WHOLESALE DOWNSIZING OF STAFF LEVELS. THE OBSCENITY BECOMES EVEN MORE PROFOUND. AND YET THE CORPORATIONS ARE LAUDED FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.

AND THE THEORY OF ECONOMIC RATIONALISM IS FLAWED MORALLY, BECAUSE IT PLACES THE VALUE OF A SMALL, ROUND, GOLDEN COIN ABOVE THE VALUE OF A SINGLE HUMAN BEING. I AM WORTH MORE THAN THAT.

UNFORTUNATELY I DON'T THINK I WILL GET MY WISH. ECONOMIC RATIONALISM WILL ENDURE, PROFITS WILL GROW, PAYROLLS WILL DIMINISH, UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS WILL BECOME EVEN MORE FLEXIBLE, BUT WILL MOST LIKELY LEVEL OUT AT A GENUINE 7%, YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE, AND WE WHO CLING TO THE BELIEF THAT WE USED TO DO IT RIGHT, AND CAN DO IT RIGHT AGAIN, WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF MORE AND MORE TALK-FESTS, OUT OF WHICH, ADMITTEDLY, SOME GOOD WILL COME.

IN THE MEANTIME, I WILL CONCLUDE WITH THE WORDS I HAVE SO OFTEN USED IN MY BITTER AND TWISTED WRITINGS TO THE POPULAR PRESS.

DON'T GIVE ME A JOB: GIVE ME A PROPER JOB.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.