

The Secretary  
House of Representative Standing Committee  
On Employment, Education and Workplace Relations  
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**Issues specific to workers over 45 years of age seeking employment as advertised in the Brisbane "Courier Mail", April 1999**

Mr G Otway  
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Date 28 April, 1999

I am a worker aged 50 who is seeking employment.  
My qualifications and experience are Electrician Special Class, Electronics Technician, TAFE teacher (registered), and computer programmer with database programming, industrial instrumentation and Personal Computer maintenance experience.  
I have been seeking full-time, part-time or contract positions for the past three years. To date I have not been successful. The following are some general indications.

Applications not answered from prospective employer's means a decline in self-esteem.  
Employers appear to want contract labour for a stipulated time period.  
Over qualified for lower positions and underqualified for higher positions.  
Have worked in one particular industry for twelve years and reapplied as a qualified teacher for teaching in that industry. Informed that I did not address the selection criteria.  
On a contract basis, each employer requires a slightly different set of skills.  
I had a reference from a personal friend. I contacted the employer but again was told that I did not meet the selection criteria.  
Employers appear not to want to train and upgrade existing skills.  
I have applied to employment agencies but have had no response. It appears that they require of people on their books who are not of my age group.  
Employers appear not willing to pay a higher rate of pay for extra skills that I have worked towards over my working career, but want to pay a much lower rate for a single specific skill.  
Employers appear to want the qualifications over experience.  
Have attempted to form mutual partnerships but prospective partner appear to want Centrelink to continue with financial support.

Due to unemployment, the following economic situation has arisen.

Less opportunity to accumulate in the superannuation fund due to broken work record. I.e. employer closed business, job became unavailable  
We are still paying full price for goods and services without concessions applicable to people on pensions because we do not fit the age criteria.  
My wife, a teacher, is unable to obtain a disability pension, as the illness does not meet the selection criteria. In short, "You are not ill".  
The debts have not decreased, and the income is now one-fifth of past salary.  
Caring for my wife on reduced income.

My wife is an Insulin-Dependant Diabetic/Asthmatic who has been on Sick Leave Service since September 1996. The following social situations have occurred due to this.

Had to contact our local Federal MLA when Centrelink had not paid our unemployment benefits for four weeks.

I have been informed that I need to seek part time or contract labour or be denied financial assistance.

We will pay tax on the Centrelink payment yet is a low \$147 each per week.

Wife has been threatened by Centrelink personnel that she will have to apply for Newstart allowance.

Low remuneration for Information Technology work due to employer attitude, "You are unemployed, so therefore you will accept any small payment".

Unable to keep in contact with friends as the financial situation precludes usual normal social contact.

Inability to upgrade present skills in present financial situation to meet potential employer requirements. Reduced education fees apply to Seniors Cardholders.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Otway