

**Re Submission to Inquiry into Issues specific to workers over 45 yrs of age**

DOMÉ Job Search Association is a non profit, self help organisation located in the Northern suburbs of Brisbane. Our primary aim is to provide activities and projects for the benefit of mature aged unemployed persons (being those over 40 yrs of age)

The Association opened its office on 15 June 1998 and has built a membership base of over 150. This submission addresses some of the issue and negative stereotyping that many of our members have encountered during their job search activities.

June Fitzgerald  
President DOMÉ  
Job Search Association Inc.

## Issues Specific to Workers over 45 Years of Age

### SUBMISSION BY DOME JOB SEARCH ASSOCIATION INC.

#### Social

- Low self-esteem
- Lowering of self-confidence
- Sense of failure, not only of self, but family. This particularly applies to males of this generation, Who were raised to consider themselves the family breadwinner.
- Break down of the family unit because of unemployment and its related issues.
- Casualisation of the workforce leaves most mature age job seekers unable to plan for their future. People are now living to over 80 years of age and are generally in better health from 45 years of age to retirement than their forefathers and thus had expectations of working in well paid positions until 60-65 and enjoying a comfortable retirement.
- Female mature job seekers report that many hirers suggest that they dye their hair to make them appear younger, but male job seekers do not seem to suffer the same indignities in regards to their appearances.
- Young people see their parents and grandparents being cast off by employers to whom they have been loyal, hardworking employees and as a consequence do not have the incentive to be loyal to any employer and thus do not perform at their possible optimal levels.

#### Economic

- Many in this age group near paying off mortgages on primary place of residence find unemployment forces them into selling their homes at greatly reduced prices and then entering the rental market. For many, the family home is their only asset.
- Large numbers still have children in education at all levels and cannot continue to educate these children at a desired level or in a desired institution.
- Lowered living standards.
- For many in this age group, retirement is in the foreseeable future and they have to use savings set aside for this purpose to retrain and to seek employment. (Applying for positions and attending interviews does not come cheaply.)
- The current policy of forcing mature aged workers to use their Superannuation at 55 years of age instead of allowing them to receive Newstart Allowance is discriminatory.

#### Industrial

- Job seekers over 40 (forty) years of age encounter great difficulty in obtaining interviews. Anecdotal evidence from our members indicates that the major reason for this is the age of the majority of hirers (to differentiate from employers), who appear to be under 30 (thirty). The only instances in which mature age job seekers seem to be given equal opportunity of employment are for Government positions where there are very strict guidelines for employment.
- When mature age job seekers are fortunate enough to obtain interviews after having successfully disguised their ages in their applications, they encounter very negative reactions when they appear for interviews and their ages are obvious.
- For mature age seekers not in receipt of Federal Government assistance, costs of courses for retraining are prohibitive. This places them at a further disadvantage.

- The distinct disadvantage in the workplace, which does not employ mature age workers, is that there is no one to act as 'mentor' or role model for younger workers. If a business is to be operated at its most efficient level then the age composition of the staff must to some degree reflect the age groups in society at large and each employee regardless of age, can be a positive influence in some way on their fellow workers.
- There are many myths relating to the inability of mature age workers to adapt to modern technology. Mature age workers developed today's technology and had to learn how to use it on the job. The whole of their working lives has been spent adapting to changes in the workplace, not only to technological change but also to procedural changes, changes brought about by promotion, and changes in focus of employer expectations and direction.
- Many employers regard mature age job seekers as an easy target for offering wages at unacceptably low levels in the belief that because they have a strong work ethic they will take any position regardless of financial returns.
- Casualisation of the workforce gives rise to lack of commitment by an employer to retaining staff. This leads to decreased productivity because employees are continually seeking more secure employment instead of offering their undivided attention to one employer.
- Employers and hirers have preconceived ideas that mature age people who because of their experience expect to begin at the top. This is incorrect. Many mature aged employees have held responsible and high-pressure jobs, but are looking forward to a different working environment and would be willing to accept positions at a lower level to have new experiences and job satisfaction.