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7th April 1999

Mr Paul McMahon  
Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Submission from: YMCA Employment Services (T/as Y.E.S.)**

The feedback Y.E.S. has received from job seekers over 45 is that returning to work after a period of unemployment is getting increasingly harder. The stigma related to employing older workers is varied amongst employers we have dealt with; some opinions are as follows:

- Older workers are stuck in their ways, and will not learn it our way.
- Older workers are more likely to take sick days as they are not as healthy and fit as younger workers.
- Older workers have a short working life with a company as they will retire shortly.
- Older workers are less likely to accept new technologies and skills.
- Older workers have not been acknowledged for their transferable skills (such as child rearing and managing households).

Although our role is to deal with myths amongst the workforce and equip job seekers with tools to sell themselves in this market, we did and still do have to acknowledge that this stigma exists.

It is very unfortunate that such stigma exists as most workplaces would be greatly advantaged by the knowledge and experience when employing and “olderworker”.

So what are the facts? (as Y.E.S. sees them)

- Older people have proven work ethic and experience
- Older people are more likely to commit to an organisation for a longer period of time.
- Older people are able to learn new skills and technologies given the appropriate training.
- Older people (especially those who have sustained injuries or have medical conditions) have more knowledge of occupational health and safety and work practices and their limitations.

In closing; as indicated earlier, older workers if assisted with marketing themselves can alleviate future employers fears (as that is what myths are based on) and successfully gain employment. Programs such as Job Search Training can be very effective at identifying and addressing the barriers to assist with the marketing process.

Yours sincerely

Noel Land  
GENERAL MANAGER