

From: Kevin E Campbell
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To: The Committee on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations.

In response to the offer for people over 45 to make their views on work opportunities known, I submit the following:

I am aged 65 years and have been unemployed since I was 59, when I was made redundant pursuant to a departmental "streamlining". Prior to this time I had been employed continuously without a single day unemployed, for 43 years. This entire time was spent with the Department of Defence. 15 years as a serviceman in the RAAF and the rest as a civilian Technical Officer with the Aerospace Division of Defence Quality assurance.

Having dedicated my working life to the defence of my country, and then to suddenly find myself unemployed and with virtually no chance of being re-employed, owing to the specialist nature of my previous occupation, was a great shock.

I resolved, however, to study at University as a mature age external student. My research indicated that with the assistance of HECS and the PES, (Pensioner Education Supplement) I should be able to cope with the financial requirements. I have never had any doubt about my ability to satisfy the academic needs. I accordingly applied to DSS, before it became Centrelink, in relation to the PES, and was told, (at the Blacktown Office), that I was eligible. So I went ahead and applied to, the University of New England as a full time study load student, (external), in the degree of BA. My object being to ultimately gain re-employment, possibly as an Instructor with Open Learning or something similar. Subsequently I received communications from DSS/Centrelink telling me that I was not in fact, entitled to the PES, in accordance with a revision to the regulations, which had come into effect shortly after I made my original inquiry to the Blacktown Office.

As you might imagine I was somewhat "cheesed off" I was also committed, both financially and otherwise, so I went ahead anyway and I'm presently preparing for my first semester exams. This has been achieved at a considerable financial burden to me. My sole income being the age pension. I decided to make a personal appeal to the Minister, Dr. Kemp, and I did this by fax with a supporting letter of endorsement from Mr Roger Price, MP, It was nearly two months before I received a reply from Dr Kemp, which was in the negative. I had asked him to either revise the regulation or make an exception in my case. I pointed out to him that as a pensioner I contribute little to the community, apart from my good looks, and that I would like to get back into the work force and become an asset rather than a liability. I have plenty to contribute and I'm enhancing my qualifications at the University. When I complete my BA, which I intend to do with Honors, it is my desire to seek a scholarship and do a Phd.

So for me the bottom line is, firstly give me the PES, its only \$15/week, and I need it badly. I have spent nearly \$900.00 on textbooks alone this year. **Secondly, to the Government generally and the Minister particularly, I say this, don't write off senior citizens we are an asset allow us to nourish the community with our experience and hopefully, wisdom.**

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Campbell