

Brisbane South Area Consultative Committee

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

What is meant by the following suggested strategies to address the plight of over-45 year old workers:

1. Offer incentives to keep them on the job
2. Put up barriers to stop the “turging” in the first place.

ANSWERS

1. In the United States there are studies (reported by the Australian Institute of Management, Time, Business Review Weekly) that suggest the American culture has swung around to preferring mature workers because of the fact that they are more reliable, take fewer sick days and are generally more responsible. One such area of experience and competence that is time/age related is the ability to handle situations involving people such as resolving conflicts and maintaining civil and harmonious environments. One US study showed that, for example, in retail sales, older people almost always were superior in their attitude, helpfulness and broader knowledge.

Such a culture change would be desirable in Australia – it is a matter of promoting it and persuading employers - Area Consultative Committees could be a vehicle for such promotion.

A suggested incentive therefore is for the Government to show recognition (if not reward with tax breaks) businesses who, say, maintain or increase a certain set proportion of mature-age workers on their staff.

2. As things currently stand, aggrieved workers who are dismissed have some recourse under anti-discrimination laws. However, these do not cover redundancies. If a position becomes redundant, it should not necessarily mean that the person occupying that position should be the one made redundant.

There is therefore a need to put in place some measure or process so that companies cannot exercise arbitrary and capricious judgement in deciding which employees to make redundant, based on criteria to address the situation in a fair manner, with an appeals process. The question arises is how to legislate to make this happen.

A FURTHER QUESTION

In the submission by Peter Weightman (attached to the Brisbane South ACC’s submission), there was reference to research about the success/non-success rate of small business. What is the source of the research?

ANSWER

This is an extract of research arising from 12 major studies done between 1983 and 1986 which involved in-depth State-wide statistical research commissioned by the then Small Business Development Corporation (a Queensland Government QANGO) of which Peter Weightman was General Manager. He is not in possession of the complete study, which he understands would be in State Government archives.

The same percentage findings were made covering a much smaller area when a feasibility study was undertaken in 1995 on behalf of the Southside Chamber of Commerce to establish a business enterprise centre to service the Mt Gravatt area in metropolitan Brisbane.