



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

The Honourable Susan Ryan AO
Australia's Age Discrimination
Commissioner

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Age discrimination in the Australian context

**Presentation to the UN Open-ended Working
Group on Ageing**

Creating the role of the Age Discrimination Commissioner in Australia



In 2011 the Australian Government appointed the first independent Age Discrimination Commissioner for Australia.

The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* was amended in 2011 to make this possible.



Age discrimination information and potential remedies



The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* is Australia's most recent anti-discrimination law. Its aims are to ensure that all Australians – young and old – are treated equally.

The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of age in many parts of public life, including employment, education, accommodation and the provision of goods and services.

Age Discrimination coverage



The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* covers situations that can include the following:

- refused employment
- dismissed
- denied a promotion, transfer or other employment-related benefits
- given less favourable terms or conditions of employment
- denied equal access to training opportunities
- selected for redundancy
- harassed

Priorities of the Age Discrimination Commissioner



- **Discrimination in employment** including age limits on entitlements and discriminatory attitudes in recruitment and the workplace
- **Aged care services** and training for aged care workers so that they follow a human rights approach
- **Older people and the Internet**, including access to training and cyber safety
- **Financial literacy** for older Australians
- **Stereotyping of older people** through media

Age discrimination in employment

This publication entitled: ***Working past our 60s: Reforming laws and policies for the older worker*** aims to address discrimination in employment.

Millions of older Australians are locked out of the workforce by age discrimination

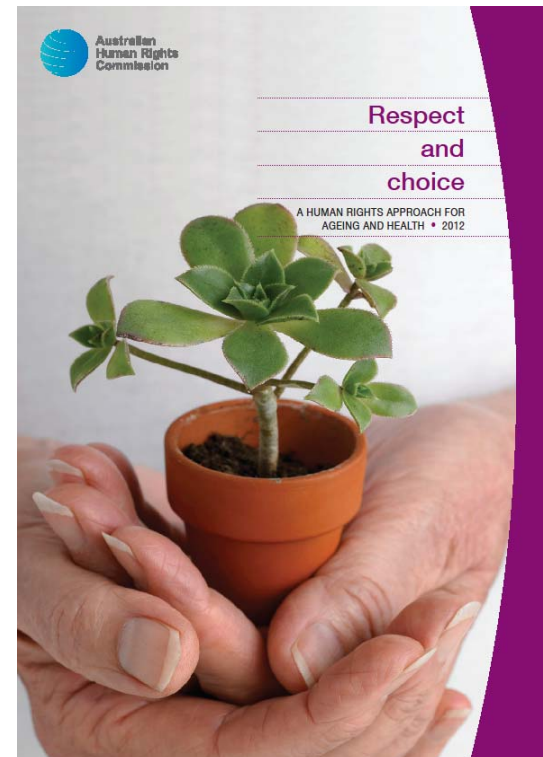
This paper shines a light on the policies and laws that prevent older people working, even when they can find jobs. This includes the age thresholds that apply to workers compensation, income insurance and to essential professional licenses.



A human rights approach for ageing and health

This position paper entitled: ***Respect and choice***, outlines a human rights approach for the implementation the Australian Government's aged care approaches.

The human rights approach makes clear that aged care should be available, accessible, appropriate and of good quality. It should also have effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms.



Older people online



- Many older people missed out on any education about the digital revolution. This has limited their access to goods and services and to efficiencies that the Internet can bring.
- Exclusion from the online world has social, economic and service consequences.
- Cyber scamming is a large problem for the global population, including people with low levels of skill online.
- Some interesting education initiatives are emerging – school students working with seniors clubs and others to assist older people to be confident online.

Financial literacy



- Many people have insufficient savings for retirement. In a lot of cases people don't start thinking about retirement until they are almost upon it – and by then it is difficult to increase savings.
- Planning for retirement is essential from the earliest stages of our working lives.
- I am developing a publication to assist people to plan for their retirement. This publication will be useful for people who are not yet retired and for those who are currently in retirement.

Stereotyping and older people



- Negative stereotypes can limit the life chances of older people.
- Media terms like 'Apocalyptic Demography' do not provide a positive view of an ageing population.
- The Australian Government has provided funding to my office to develop a strategy for training the media to avoid age stereotypes and to provide a balanced view of ageing which includes the advantages and competencies that come with ageing.
- I have a Webpage entitled: **Age Positive** and anyone can post their stories of positive ageing.

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<http://www.facebook.com/AgePositive>