



# 04 mature age employment seniors fact sheet

This fact sheet outlines ways in which the Howard Government supports older Australians who want to stay in, or get back into the workforce.

## Age Discrimination Legislation

Age discrimination can be a significant problem for older people. The Australian Government's Age Discrimination Act 2004 recognises the importance of Australians of all ages being able to participate fully in society, and prohibits both direct and indirect age discrimination in particular areas of public life, including employment. The Act is part of the Government's strategy for managing the economic and social implications of Australia's ageing population, in particular, by assisting older workers to continue to contribute to the workforce. More information can be found on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's website at [www.hreoc.gov.au/age](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/age)

## Australians Working Together Package

As part of the Australian Government's Australians Working Together (AWT) package, mature age people now receive better support and more personal attention. AWT is about giving people more support to look for work, learn new skills or get involved in the community in some way. Above all, it is about helping people get into jobs wherever possible.

The changes help mature age people maintain an active lifestyle and enable them to contribute more to the workplace and the community. The changes recognise the difficulties that some mature age people face in getting into paid work and provide assistance targeted to their specific needs and circumstances. More information about employment services for mature age job seekers can be found at [www.jobwise.gov.au](http://www.jobwise.gov.au)

## Job Network Services

Newstart recipients of all ages have full access to the range of Job Network services available to help them look for work. This includes Intensive Support, which begins at three months unemployment with an increased intensity of assistance and includes job search training. Further information about Job Network services is available at [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

## Job Search for Age Pensioners

Age pensioners are able to access Job Search Support services provided by Job Network providers. Job Search Support can provide the assistance necessary to access suitable job vacancies as well as providing job search facilities, such as computers, touch-screen kiosks, and phones. Further information about Job Network services is available at [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

## Pension Bonus Scheme

The Pension Bonus Scheme provides an incentive for older Australians to defer claiming Age Pension and remain in the workforce. The scheme is entirely voluntary and provides a tax-free lump sum when participants eventually claim and are eligible to receive Age Pension. People must be gainfully employed for at least one year after registering for the scheme to be eligible for the bonus. For further information, contact Centrelink on **13 2300**, or visit [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

## Mature Age Worker Tax Offset

The Australian Government will introduce a new Mature Age Worker Tax Offset as an extra incentive for people to stay in work beyond the age of 55.

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The offset will be available to people aged 55 and over, and will provide a maximum annual rebate of \$500 on their earned income. Subject to enabling legislation, it will take effect from the start of the 2004-05 financial year and will be payable on assessment. For further information phone the Australian Taxation Office on **13 2861**, or visit [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

### Mature Age Employment and Workplace Strategy

The Australian Government announced in the 2004-05 Budget the Mature Age Employment and Workplace Strategy, which will provide \$12.1 million over four years. This assistance is in addition to services already available to mature age job seekers through Transition to Work and Job Network.

### Self Employment for Older Australians

For some unemployed people self employment is a viable means of facilitating a return to work. The Australian Government recognises the importance of this, which is demonstrated by its funding of various programs.

**The Small Business Assistance Program** includes the following initiatives:

- > the Small Business Incubator Program provides funding to not-for-profit organisations to help meet the infrastructure and set-up costs of new small business incubators;
- > Small Business Answers provides financial grants to organisations to deliver advisory services to small business owners and managers across Australia;
- > the Small Business Enterprise Culture Program provides grants for initiatives designed to enhance small businesses access to skills development and mentoring.

Further information on the above programs can be found at [www.ausindustry.gov.au](http://www.ausindustry.gov.au) or by contacting the AusIndustry Hotline on **13 2846**.

**The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)** provides income for a period of up to 12 months

to people currently receiving income support, who are below age pension age and are establishing a new business. Further information about NEIS can be found at [www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au) or by contacting Centrelink on **13 2850**.

**The Business Entry Point** website at [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au) is an online Australian Government resource that provides a wide range of services and information including start-up, taxation, licensing, grants and legislation.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources also hosts a small business website [www.smallbusiness.gov.au](http://www.smallbusiness.gov.au) providing assistance on a range of small business matters.

Taxpayers can claim a capital gains tax exemption on the sale of small business active assets where the proceeds from the sale are used in connection with their retirement. Tax exemptions are also available on the sale of small business active assets owned for at least 15 years if the taxpayer is aged 55 or over and retiring, or if they are permanently incapacitated. More information is available from the Australian Taxation Office website, [www.ato.gov.au/businesses](http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses) or by phoning **13 2866**.

The fully-deductible amount for personal superannuation contributions made by the self-employed is \$5000. Contributions above the fully-deductible amount remain 75 per cent deductible, with a maximum deduction equal to the taxpayer's age-based limit.

The Government also contributes \$1.50 for every dollar of eligible personal superannuation contributions made. The maximum co-contribution of \$1500 is payable for those with an annual income of \$28 000 or less. This amount is reduced by 5 cents for every dollar of annual income over \$28 000. The maximum income for eligibility is \$58 000 a year. For further information phone the Australian Taxation Office on **13 1020**, or visit [www.ato.gov.au/super](http://www.ato.gov.au/super)