



17 November, 2009

COTA BACKS REMOVING BARRIERS TO OLDER WORKERS

Calls to remove barriers preventing older workers from remaining in or entering the workforce have been strongly endorsed by Australia's peak organisation for older Australians, COTA (Council on the Ageing).

COTA's National Chief Executive, Mr Ian Yates, said COTA had been advocating the removal of all barriers affecting older workers participation in the workforce for years.

Mr Yates' comments follow the Workplace Futures report presented to the Victoria Summit in Melbourne which predicts significant shortfalls in the labour force by 2025 if retirement and migration rates remain at current levels.

The report predicts this could be as high as 1.4 million workers and recommends raising the retirement age as part of a strategy to increase workforce participation.

Mr Yates said that with Australia's population ageing and the likelihood that Australia's skill shortage will increase, it made no sense to lock out workers who were capable and willing to help fill the gap.

"Australia has a poor track record in workforce participation among over 50s"

Mr Yates said three steps need to be taken immediately to help retain older Australians in the workforce. They are:

- Remove all age restrictions in workers compensation scheme benefits
- Ensure superannuation rules do not discourage on-going workforce participation
- Launch a major Federal program encouraging employers to attract and retain older workers and providing them with assistance to do so.

"Older workers are a valuable resource overlooked for far too long," he said.

"Encouraging employers to look for mature workers; and getting rid of the barriers to people working; will result in many of the problems predicted by the Workplace Futures report being prevented or overcome."

Further Information:

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