



Age Discrimination in SA: Older People's Views

**COTA National Policy Forum 2010
Ageism & Age Discrimination**

16 June 2010



Age Discrimination Survey

COTA Seniors Voice & SA Equal Opportunity
Commission March 2010

Older people's views and experience

Age Discrimination - Phone and Have Your Say!

The Equal Opportunities Commission, in partnership with COTA Seniors Voice, is interested to learn about age discrimination in the South Australian Community.

If Age Discrimination has happened to you, or to someone you know, phone **08 8207 2247** on the 30th or 31st of March 2010 (8:30am - 7:00pm). If you live outside the metropolitan area, use the freecall number **1800 188 163**.

If you do not speak English, an interpreter service can be arranged.

If you prefer, you can complete a survey online at <http://www.tfaforms.com/142371>





Other ageism initiatives

- **Ageism: A Significant Social Issue**
[SA Gerontology Conference Aug 2009]
- **Agesim and access to technology**
[CSV Older People and Technology Forum Oct 2009]
- **Ageism: Wellness as the Outcome of Aged Care/Health Interface**
[ACSA SA/NT Conference March 2010]
- **Ageism Panel**, COTA Seniors Voice Annual General Meeting Nov 2009



Survey Respondents

195 respondents

38% Male; 62% Female

15 % rural; 70% metro



No discrimination

16 [8%] people responded saying they had not experienced discrimination



Age Range

4% 49 and under

24% 50-59

34% 60-69

18.5% 70-79

15% 80-89

4.5% over 90



Areas of discrimination

42% Employment

11% Healthcare

11% Customer service

9% Insurance

4% or less for each of Pension/
Centrelink, Housing, Care providers,
Media, Abuse/Bullying, IT, Transport



Respect

Ageist treatment:

- Forms of address
- Being treated as an infant
- Incapacity
- Inability to learn
- Inability to remember



'Doddery' Quotes

If someone has grey hair they are treated as deaf and senile

It makes me feel like a second class citizen

Once you are aged over 60 years even your own family treat you like you are witless and can't function properly



The 'dear' assumptions

- Available at the convenience of others
- Free labour source
- Cooperative/compliant



A 'dear' quote

People 'assume the older you are the weaker you are'



Another quote

Older people are not taken seriously, even as volunteer workers, there is often less respect for our skills, time, offers of help etc



Gender Differences

Women reported discrimination more commonly in:

- Health Care
- Customer Service

Men reported discrimination more commonly in employment



Age Differences

The predominance of responses relating to employment reflect the proportion of respondents of working age



Complaining About Discrimination

56% complained about the discrimination

Employment related: only 46% complained

Health care 84%

Customer service 68%

Insurance 65%



Avenues of Complaint

41% Person involved

26% Manager

16% Company/Agency – in writing

8% Company/Agency – formal complaint

5.5% SA Equal Opportunity Commissioner

3.5% Australia Human Rights Commissioner



Why People Don't Complain

Half the respondents who did not complain said:

“I didn't think that it would do any good”



More quotes

I circulated the survey among a small group of women. Some chose not to speak up as they were concerned of consequences

I wish I had more courage and had asked loudly for assistance



Encouraging older people to act on discrimination

COTA Seniors Voice and the SA EOC will:

- Explore further why people don't act
- Provide info on appropriate avenues for types of complaint
- Ask why existing avenues are not better used by older people



People's suggestions

Survey respondents suggested many means to combat age discrimination:

- Encourage people to complain
- Affirmative action/ age employment targets
- Increased policing & penalties
- Less rhetoric about older people as burdens
- More services specific to older workers
- More older people in decision making roles



Next steps for CSV/EOC

A plan of action for reducing age discrimination is being developed



Further info

www.seniorsvoice.org.au

www.eoc.sa.gov.au