

15 July 2021

Ms Erma Ranieri  
Commissioner for Public Sector Employment  
[erma.ranieri@sa.gov.au](mailto:erma.ranieri@sa.gov.au)

Dear Erma

***RE – Public sector workforce rejuvenation must not become a front for age discrimination***

I am writing with reference to a measure in the 2021-22 State Budget “allowing workforce rejuvenation” on a voluntary basis to create an incentive for employees to separate from the SA Public Service.

Many people have interpreted this measure as having the potential to unfairly target older workers to lure them out of the public service.

Consistent surveys indicate that about a third of older workers experience age discrimination which results in unemployment, underemployment and an under investment in the training and development that maintains contemporary skills for employment.

Older people are unemployed for much longer periods than any other age group. While all older workers are affected, older women are particularly disadvantaged including because they have had much less opportunity to accumulate resources for a secure future.

In our COTA SA 2021-22 State Budget Submission we urged a focus on measures that would assist older South Australian workers, and especially older women, to get and keep work. We need such a focus both for the sake of older workers but also as part of ensuring we have a future labour force throughout South Australia that will get our jobs done.

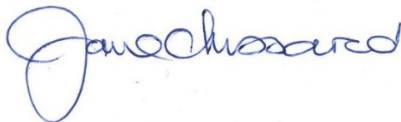
The public service workforce rejuvenation risks doing the opposite.

We ask that the roll out of this measure is monitored closely so that the public sector workforce rejuvenation initiative does not become a front for age discrimination and the unfair targeting of older workers.

It would seem to us very sensible to prevent age discrimination proactively. There is also surely an opportunity to invite and promote access to training and development opportunities that will serve to retain key older workers?

I will ask my Executive Assistant, Ross Atkinson to make a time for me to meet with you about how this measure will be rolled out and how our State Government could lead strategies to enable older people to be part of a vigorous and valued South Australian workforce.

Yours sincerely



**JANE MUSSARED**  
Chief Executive

cc Cassie Mason, Director, Office for Ageing Well (OFAW)