



MEDIA RELEASE

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Ageism is alive and well, with female jobseekers 40yrs+ overlooked

Not only is the 'gender gap' a real issue for Aussie female job-seekers, but the majority of Australian women also believe that age plays a major factor in securing employment, with 62% of respondents believing that employers are more likely to hire a candidate under the age of 40, reveals research conducted by The Heat Group, Australia's largest marketer to women, and Fitted For Work, a not-for-profit organisation committed to assisting women experiencing disadvantage to find work and keep it.

The vast majority (88%) believe that employers take into account the physical appearance of candidates before making a hiring decision, and (going one step further), **nearly half (45%) believe they have been discriminated against because of their age – some because they appeared too young (23%) and some too old (22%).**

Taking matters into their own hands, **39% of job seekers have attempted to alter their appearance in order to fit the expected age, with 23% attempting to appear younger, and 16% have tried to make themselves look older for an interview.** When it comes to the tools that they use to achieve the look, 89% of Aussie women have turned to makeup, 60% have overhauled their clothing and professional wardrobe, and 54% have changed their hairstyle. Nearly one in twenty (4%) have even gone under the knife to try to improve their chances.

"Women are unfortunately judged more harshly than men when it comes to their appearance, and this includes their age," says Gillian Franklin, Managing Director of The Heat Group. "We have always known that women use makeup, clothing and hair to highlight their best features and build their confidence. However, now we have a worrying 39% of women who are changing their looks based on their idea of the 'ideal age' for a job, across all levels of experience, seniority and skill level. I would question the notion that there is a right 'age' for women and caution women against trying to look a different age than what they are..."

"Businesses need to value the wisdom, knowledge and expertise that comes with mature-age employees. We should all encourage more experienced women to actively participate in the workforce without fear of judgement or age discrimination," concluded Ms Franklin.

Newly appointed Fitted for Work CEO, Donna de Zwart, agrees. "At Fitted for Work, we see many mature women striving to re-enter the workforce and achieve gainful employment who are concerned about how their age translates into the current employment market. Every woman brings something of value to the workplace. Making the most of her best assets is not about presenting a crafted persona but it is about maintaining a sense of authenticity about who she is and what she can offer. The importance of capitalising on personal strengths is a message that we reinforce throughout all Fitted for Work programs. And we will continue to remind employers to focus on skills, experience and attitude over a person's age."

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ABOUT HEAT GROUP: Around Australia, a product from the Heat Group is purchased every 2.67 seconds. Heat is the exclusive Australian distributor of Max Factor, COVERGIRL, Bourjois, essence, Coverderm and Jeanne Arthes fragrances, the official licensee of Warner Bros. personal care, and the owner and distributor of ulta3, Billie Goat Soap, OZK.O and MUD. Heat is recognised as one of Australia's most successful entrepreneurial companies and works to make a difference to the lives of Australian women every day. Engage with The Heat Group on **Facebook @HeatGroup** and **Twitter @theheatgroup**.

ABOUT FITTED FOR WORK: Since 2005, Fitted for Work has transformed the lives of more than 19,000 women. As a not-for-profit organisation and the first of its kind in Australia, Fitted for Work's mission is to help women experiencing disadvantage obtain work and keep it by providing tailored holistic services predominantly in Victoria and New South Wales. Fitted for Work helps nearly women a year through its personal outfitting and interview preparation service, transition to work programs including work experience and mentoring, and staying employed programs which help women to develop and self-manage their own career plans.