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Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

I write to provide a submission on the *Sex and Age Discrimination Legislation Amendment Bill 2010*.

I welcome the proposed creation of an Age Discrimination Commissioner. In March this year, the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission conducted a survey about age discrimination, which received a strong response from the community. The survey highlighted that recruitment, treatment in employment, health care, customer service and insurance are major areas of frustration for older members of the SA community. Given Australia's ageing population and our shrinking work force, appointment of an Age Discrimination Commissioner would be timely in addressing some of the issues facing older Australians.

I also support the proposed amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. Several of the proposed amendments reflect recent changes to the South Australian *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, such as sexual harassment being extended to protect service providers from customers and clients, breast feeding as an individual ground of discrimination and the inclusion of the ground of family responsibilities (known as 'caring responsibilities' under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA)).

In 2009/10 financial year caring responsibilities constituted 4% of the complaints that the Commission received and the new ground was welcomed by the disability and carers community. This amendment in particular strengthened protection for men under the Act as previously, only women could lodge a complaint relating to caring responsibilities under the sex discrimination provisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the bill.

Regards,

ANNE BURGESS
ACTING COMMISSIONER FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY