



In response to the inquiry into issues specific to workers over 45 years of age seeking employment, Jobfind Centres Australia has separated the issues into three major areas of concern.

These concerns have become apparent to Jobfind Centres Australia through the operation of Job Network Services - specifically, Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance.

1. Identified Problems Faced by Jobseekers over 45 Years of Age.

Employer's Attitudes

- Discrimination by Employers
- Employers are offered no incentives to employ this high risk group (as they are with youth traineeships)
- Older workers compete against lower wages for youth.
- Employers still believe traineeships are for the young.

Skills Issues

- Lack of re-training opportunities.
- Outdated skills - many older workers believe that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" or see themselves as so close to retiring that there would be no point retraining.
- Non-transferable experience
- Limited skills-of women coming back into the workforce after having a family.
- Out of date with employment trends (uncomfortable with modern application procedures and interview techniques)
- Adverse to change to meet changing trends
- Standard of education often low
- Low or non existent literacy/numeracy
- Often jobseekers have moved to a new location to retire. Their skills may not match the geographical location of their new location. (E.g. A worker from a wool textile plant Albury in NSW relocated to Noosa, which has 50% of all positions in hospitality)

Physical Limitations

- Work injuries that stop them from doing their previous work (ie back injury suffered by an ex-construction worker)

Psychological Problems

- Lack of confidence-low self esteem associated to changes in lifestyle.
- social conditioning

Financial Problems

- Money received from traineeships would be difficult to live on for an older aged person if they have a family or other financial commitments
- Even though they may be unemployed, older jobseekers are often reluctant to accept lower salaries than they received in previous employment.

2. Does the Job Network Adequately Service this Group?

Some jobseekers over 45 years of age do benefit from the current system of assistance. However, as their barriers to employment (including those listed above) are often not viewed as severe enough to warrant eligibility for Intensive Assistance, often older jobseekers cannot access sufficient funds for the retraining which is necessary to their success in gaining employment.

- The Job Network is structured so that if clients are not eligible for Intensive Assistance then over 45's have no access to employer subsidies or funds to assist them in re-training.
- They also miss out on the one-to-one personal support that is provided with Intensive Assistance.
- Currently over 45s are often assisted like any other Jobseeker with Jobmatching and Jobsearch Training. Their age should have a weighting in the assessment to decide whether they are eligible for Intensive Assistance.
- Insufficient funding to generate age-specific training and in some cases retraining.

3. Are there enough training opportunities available?

- Employers generally do not employ older aged Job Seekers into Traineeships.
- If they are eligible for Intensive Assistance older jobseekers can access training. If not, jobseekers must pursue employment with their existing skills, which may be dated or inappropriate.
- Prior to the Job Network there was a greater depth and breadth of funded opportunities available to people over 45 (such as New Work Opportunities.) This assisted those who were seeking a change in occupation or were getting back into the work force after a period of time.

4. Recommended Solutions

- Marketing strategy directed at employers highlighting the benefits of employing mature aged workers and explaining traineeships and their relevance to this age group.
- Government funding put aside for re-training.
- Give “over 45” jobseekers greater access to Intensive Assistance - alter the criteria for classification into this service so that over 45's are eligible.
- Provide added incentives in taking on an over 45s in a traineeship.
- A more supportive National Training Wage for over 45's.
- More funding for extra training and access to extra training to skill the Intensive Assistance consultants to address the specific issues this age group brings.
- Incentives for Employers – perhaps a reduction in Workers Compensation for 6 months or reduction of pay for 6 months.

5. Conclusion

Jobseekers over the age of 45 face numerous barriers to employment. The Job Network is currently not adequately servicing many unemployed people from this age group.

Problems Experienced by Jobseekers over 45 years of Age

- Identified Problems faced by Jobseekers over 45
 - Age discrimination – preference by employers to hire juniors and not or someone older (or older than them)
 - Reluctance by employers to pay over the award rate, or junior wages
 - Inability to do strenuous physical work
 - Redundancy in trade or industry due to technological developments eg printing,
 - Lack of jobs available in their industry or profession eg building, construction, trades and professions
 - Lack of opportunities for retraining
 - Lack of confidence in ability to find work, self esteem, confidence, self worth issues
 - Inability to market, identify and transfer skills/attributes
 - Employer attitudes toward mature bracket
 - Out dated Jobsearch skills and inability to look at big picture – lateral thinking
 - Gold Coast “traditionally” employs younger person image
 - Skills need to be updated in some circumstances
 - Identifying suitable employers to match skills and ability
- Does the Job Network Service them adequately?

JST improves confidence levels and assists in exploring alternative job opportunities

EC's can market them to employers

Yes if able to break through defense barriers and at an early stage

Yes – however it can be difficult when they believe they are too old to work

We offer assistance, advice and encouragement. We offer as much assistance to those jobseekers as we can if we don't have the positions available to offer them

- Are there enough training opportunities available?

No - The focus appears to be training for youth and current training groups may not be sensitive to needs of mature people. Some mature students can be intimidated when in learning groups of younger students

No – many need retraining in the skills currently demanded by employers (eg computer & sales skills) but most cannot afford it and no funding is available

“Real Training” sometimes difficult to find – ie Cert IV in Workplace Cat 2 very effective for this age bracket as client sees worth in this area

Finding employers willing to give these people employment opportunities

Training packages are not tailored for mature age

- Recommended Solutions.

Marketing campaign to employers re benefits of hiring over 45's - continue Employer education

highlighting advantages – eg experience, knowledge, contacts, reliability, general work ethic etc

Development of “mature age” traineeship – and call it something else – increase the benefits to employers to further subsidise wages – wages is an issue with small businesses

Provide funding for training opportunities for skills which are in high demand

Other:

Encourage/motivate client to update jobsearch methods and take on board “today's” methods – run Mature Age Jobsearch workshops??

A lot of over 45's adopt the “No one will employ me – I'm too old” outlook even when short term UE

Develop Questionnaire to jobseekers on registration & employers to identify needs, problems, opportunities etc to assist us to inform the over 45's of general employer expectations