



Counting on experience

A review of
good practice in
the employment
of mature workers

The NSW Committee on Ageing advises the Premier, through the Minister for Ageing, on matters affecting the needs, interests and well-being of older people in NSW. The 14 members of the Committee come from diverse backgrounds and have skills and interests in many different areas of public policy.

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ISBN 0 7313 9840 8

Design: Anthouse Communications, anthouse@acay.com.au

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Foreword

In New South Wales, in common with many other parts of the developed world, economic and social trends have resulted in mature age people leaving the workforce in unprecedented numbers. Paradoxically, this has been occurring at the same time as improvements in health and life expectancy.

The impact of mature age unemployment falls heavily on the individuals and families directly affected – their current living standards and their future quality of life in retirement. It also has negative effects on social cohesion. Importantly, mature age unemployment and early retirement also represent a major loss of skills and experience to business, employers and the economy.


Many people also predict skills and labour shortages if the generation of baby boomers continues the practice of taking, or being forced into, early retirement.

The Committee on Ageing has a long standing interest in mature age employment and unemployment. Earlier this year, with the approval of the Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Faye Lo Po', it established a Mature Age Employment Task Force to oversee its Mature Age Employment Project.

The Task Force membership was drawn from key State and Commonwealth Government departments, non-government organisations and the Committee on Ageing itself. The Task Force's expert advice and assistance has been invaluable, although the Committee takes full responsibility for the contents of this report.

This report is a major outcome of the Committee's Mature Age Employment Project. It is a review of good practice in the employment of mature workers and it aims to help employers and managers:

- understand the value of having mature workers,
- manage their mature workers effectively, and
- maintain an age balanced workforce.



John Mountford
Chairperson

Message from Ann Sherry

Australians are resourceful, creative people and all Australian businesses count on their experience and talent to create a better standard of living for employees, shareholders and owners, and the community.

As statistics on our ageing population confirm, Australians are also growing older, a trend that is set to magnify over the next two decades as the baby boomers approach their sixties and seventies.

These changing demographics will tip the scales. No longer will businesses be able to rely on an endless supply of younger workers. Yet so far they have largely discounted the talents and experience of older Australians who form a growing potential workforce at the other end of the age scale.

How Australia taps into this valuable resource is an important conversation that we need to have as a nation and one in which Australian businesses can do much to foster debate, certainly, but also to lead the way in changing their recruitment policies, programs and strategies to promote an age diverse workforce.

That's why I am delighted to commend to you the work of the NSW Committee on Ageing and its report *Counting on Experience: A review of good practice in promoting the employment of mature workers*. It sets out the costs involved in ignoring older workers, for the individuals concerned and their families, for the community and the economy. It also makes good business sense.

Like other Australian organisations, Westpac understands that our people are the heart and soul of our organisation. We also know that it is important to match our workforce with our customers' profile. Currently this is not as well aligned as we would like it to be, with the greatest mismatch in the older age group.

We are undertaking a number of diversity initiatives that range from breaking down employment barriers, and exploring skills and training to undertaking joint projects with our recruitment suppliers and offering flexible work practices. We have made some inroads but have some way to go. This Report offers a number of insights in how to bridge that gap including best practice case studies, checklists and ideas of how to translate vision into reality.

I therefore urge you to reflect on the issues raised in this Report so that Australia can build a more diverse workforce that takes into the account the experience of all Australians, including older Australians.



Ann Sherry
Group Executive, People and Performance
Westpac Banking Corporation

Contents

1	Introduction	7
2	Strategies to promote the employment of mature workers	10
3	Why employ mature workers	13
4	Introducing good practice into organisations	19
5	Recruitment, selection and promotion	24
6	Training and education	27
7	Flexible work practices, job redesign and phased retirement	34
8	Other strategies	36
9	Labour market programs for unemployed mature workers	37
10	Further resources	42

Introduction

MATURE age workers are a vital human resource for businesses and organisations in NSW, and they will become even more so in future as changing demographics leads to a drop in the availability of younger workers. Yet various factors such as the pace of technological change, structural change within industry, lack of training to keep skills up to date, past encouragement of early retirement, and inaccurate assumptions about mature workers' abilities mean that mature workers are being displaced from the workforce in unprecedented numbers.

More than a quarter of a million mature age people in NSW want more work

The percentage of men in NSW in the 45-64 age group in employment is at an all time low. Only 70% of men age 55-59 are in employment and 41% of those aged 60-64. Among mature age women, the picture is different. Their employment rates are growing but still less than half of women in their late fifties are in work, dropping to 18% of women aged 60-64. Very few men or women remain in work after the age of 65.

It is estimated that in August 2000 there were more than 260,000 people in NSW aged 45 and over who wanted more work than they were currently doing. This includes people who were unemployed, people who were not in the labour force according to official definitions but wanted work, and people who were part time but wanted full time work.

Julia Perry 2001, Too Young to Go: Mature age unemployment and early retirement in NSW, NSW Committee on Ageing

However, it is increasingly being recognised that unemployment and early retirement (both voluntary and involuntary) among mature age people in NSW represents a major cost at several levels – to the individuals concerned and their families, to the community, to business and to the economy.

From the perspective of individual companies, laying off or not recruiting mature age workers leaves companies vulnerable to loss of access to important skills, loss of experience in dealing with different phases of the business cycle and higher costs associated with turnover of staff and redundancy payouts. It also means that they are drawing on an unnecessarily limited pool from which to find the best people for the job.

Companies that maintain an 'age diverse workforce'... are better equipped to adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities, and to maintain their competitive edge in an ageing population.

By contrast, companies that maintain an 'age diverse workforce', with an appropriate balance of young and mature workers, are better equipped to adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities, and to maintain their competitive edge in an ageing population. While the particular economic and labour market that a company operates in influences whether there are labour shortages or surpluses, the changing demographics of NSW means that the overall pool of younger workers is shrinking and companies can no longer assume an endless supply of younger workers.

What is good practice?

SO WHAT is 'good' or 'best practice' as regards the employment of mature workers?

Firstly, there are policies, programs and strategies that employers can undertake to ensure that they maintain an age diverse workforce and help avoid the premature exclusion of mature workers from the workforce.

Secondly, there are policies, programs and strategies that can assist mature age people who are already unemployed (or who are about to become so) to get back into the workforce.

Some such strategies may not be aimed exclusively at mature or older workers and may not be thought of as good practice in relation to mature workers. However in actual fact they may be of particular value in maintaining an age diverse workforce. For example, the offering of flexible work practices, policies to assist employers with caring responsibilities and a commitment to avoid basing recruitment decisions on prejudices or stereotypes, may be in this category.

Knowledge about what works best is still evolving and it may be difficult to disentangle the impact of particular human resource strategies from those of underlying economic and business trends. What works in one industry, or type of company or geographical area may be less significant in another.

However, there appears to be an emerging consensus about the elements of good practice, in the areas of:

- recruitment and selection
- performance review and promotion
- training and education
- flexible work practices and job redesign, and
- phased retirement options.

A wide range of players need to be involved if best practice is to be

successfully introduced and if the removal of age barriers and concrete improvements to mature workers' workforce participation are to be achieved. These players include governments, employers, industry associations, recruitment agencies, trade unions, human resources professionals, industrial relations advisers, community sector organisations, providers of labour market programs, and training and educational providers. Importantly, mature workers themselves need to come to terms with changes in the workplace and the implications of a likely long period in retirement.

This report focusses on good practice by employers towards maintaining an age balance in their workforce.

A broad range of public policies clearly also have an impact on mature age employment, but largely fall outside the scope of this paper. They include:

- adjustments to public and company based pension and superannuation schemes and rules to remove any incentives for early retirement or disincentives for phased retirement
- adjustment of vocational education and training policies and programs to better meet the changing needs of industry and of individuals
- government industry assistance, structural adjustment and regional assistance programs, in which assistance for displaced mature age workers may be an element.

In Section 9 on page 37, there is a brief description of some of the government financed programs that aim to assist unemployed mature workers back into the workforce. There is also an overview of some of the main public policies targetting mature workers in Australia and overseas.

More information

THERE are a number of detailed recent reports in which international public policy and company-based approaches to the employment of mature workers are described and compared. The most comprehensive of these are listed on page 42 under Further Resources.

For a more in-depth analysis and discussion of the drivers behind the low labour force participation of mature age people and public policy responses, see the Committee's companion publication, *Too Young to Go: Mature age unemployment and early retirement in NSW*, December 2001, written by Julia Perry.

The changing demographics of NSW means that the overall pool of younger workers is shrinking and companies can no longer assume an endless supply of younger workers.

Strategies to promote the employment of mature workers

THIS section provides a checklist of some of the steps employers can take to maintain an age diverse workforce.

Recruitment, selection and promotion

Strategies include:

- age diversity human resources policies/statements
- reviewing recruitment and promotion methods, to identify areas of inadvertent discrimination
- competency based recruitment and skills recognition, rather than recruitment based on formal qualifications alone
- recognition and valuing of the particular skills that mature workers can bring to an organisation, for example, acting as a sounding board for younger workers, mentoring, coaching, bringing the wisdom of hindsight and long experience, in-depth knowledge of the particular company
- succession planning.

Training and development

Strategies include:

- tailoring the training of mature workers to their preferred learning methods and experience
- plugging skills gaps among mature age staff
- offering training to maintain and upgrade mature age workers' technical skills, for example IT skills
- building mature workers' confidence in their ability to undertake training, and the value of doing so
- life and skills evaluation
- training and education of management and supervisory staff, to raise

their awareness of the benefits of an age diverse workforce and of inadvertent forms of age discrimination.

Flexible work practices and phased retirement options

Strategies include:

- introducing flexible work practices such as shorter hours, part time work
- offering mature workers the chance to move to jobs with reduced pay and responsibilities, sometimes called 'bridge jobs'
- offering gradual retirement by reducing hours or increasing leave (without affecting superannuation entitlements)
- re-employing 'retired' employees on a contract basis
- encouraging 'late' retirement (eg post age pension age, or post preservation age)
- offering and encouraging a variety of opportunities to keep mature workers interested or to discourage them from retiring completely from the company, for example, secondment opportunities, serving on boards of other organisations, volunteer work
- offering preparation for retirement.

Job design/redesign

Strategies include:

- redesigning jobs, equipment and physical working conditions, so that mature workers can stay in the job longer.

Redundancy arrangements

When downsizing and retrenchments are inevitable, good practice in redundancy policies can make a difference to the extent to which companies lose or retain vital skills, and to the redundant mature employees' future prospects.

Strategies include:

- offering comprehensive outplacement services for retrenched staff

- ensuring that the terms of any voluntary redundancy offer are attractive to staff of all ages
- avoiding putting undue pressure on mature staff to take 'voluntary' redundancy
- ensuring that mandatory redundancy decisions are not made on the basis of age.

Other

Other strategies include:

- running campaigns to change employer and employee attitudes towards mature workers
- offering elder-care programs, in house or through established programs in the community
- health screening and advice
- establishing and supporting associations for retired employees.

Why employ mature workers

THERE are many advantages to companies of retaining mature workers and of maintaining a mix of youth and maturity in their workforce.

The benefits include:

- avoidance of skills shortages
- maintenance of core skills, networks and corporate experience
- reductions in staff turnover, and associated training and recruitment costs
- maximisation of recruitment potential, by not artificially limiting the field of candidates to those within a certain age
- a better match with the age range of the customer base
- being better placed to respond to changing circumstances, the peaks and troughs of the business cycle
- having access to mentoring and coaching skills, for younger staff
- avoiding loss of skilled staff with detailed company knowledge to a competitor.

There is evidence also that mature workers have lower accident rates and better safety consciousness than younger workers.

Some employers are realising that there can be competitive advantages in employing mature workers, especially in particular parts of their business such as customer service. There is evidence, for example, that people much prefer to receive financial advice from mature workers than from young workers. Similarly, many people would feel much more comfortable making a complaint to a mature worker, than to a much younger person.

Companies have found that recruiting mature workers contributes to a more stable workforce and therefore reduced turnover costs. Certainly, if the costs of recruiting and hiring are the same per person hired, when annualised over a longer period of employment, the costs for mature workers will be lower.

Recruiting mature workers contributes to a more stable workforce and therefore reduced turnover costs.

Reducing costs

The recruitment, training, absenteeism and work injury costs of mature workers are conservatively estimated to be nearly \$2000 less per worker than those of younger workers.

Dr Libby Brooke's research at La Trobe University for the Australian Employers Convention, has estimated that the costs and benefits of employing workers aged 45 or over (aged 50 or over in the case of injury costs) compared to the rest of the workforce, are:

Net recruitment benefits = \$1424

Net training benefits = \$987

Net absenteeism costs per worker = \$116

Net work injury costs = \$339

Overall benefit per mature worker = \$1956.

Australian Employers Convention, *The Human Resource Costs and Benefits of Maintaining an Age Balanced Workforce*; Melbourne, 2001. The data used as the basis of the analysis in this report was from HRM Consulting's Australian Human Resource Benchmarking Report 1999 edition.

Business leaders speak

"We're hearing it from people like [Peter] Drucker that, because of the nature of work in the 21st century, firms which understand early they should use the knowledge and the talent of the workers they already employ will develop significant advantages.

They will avoid skill shortages, maximise their recruitment potential and help promote diversity in their company. And a company with diverse ages - a mixture of youth and maturity - can best respond to radically changing circumstances. Some employers have already understood the benefits of adjusting the age range of their employees to better reflect the age composition of their customers."

Mike Baltzell, CEO of Alcoa World Alumina Australia, quoted in Jones, A, *The rock of ages*, *AFR Boss*, August 2001, No.8

Wiser older heads

According to a recent BRW article, companies are coming back to an appreciation of older executives with experience of business cycles, both peaks and troughs. Companies were wrongly equating youth with flexibility and overlooking the value of experience.

Grant Sexton of Leadership Management Australia (LMA) agrees. "In the wake of the tech-wreck of the last eighteen months and the current economic uncertainty, workers and executive are looking to older, wiser colleagues who've already survived one or two recessions, to help calm the waters."

Mature workers can be a great asset when staff are facing pressure. In the LMA survey of 492 staff (all ages and levels), 72% said that colleagues over 50 'help me when I am under work or non-work related stress or conflict.'

Eighty six per cent said that over 50s workers 'provide wisdom that is not available from younger colleagues.' Workers under 30 concurred, with 76% agreeing.

Companies cannot assume, however, that older workers will want to continue to work full time. To persuade them to stay companies may need to be more alert to their needs to keep them engaged, ensure that they are receiving training and be open to different ways of working.

Tabakoff N and Skeffington R, The wise old heads are back, *Business Review Weekly*, 3/11/00

Leadership Management Australia, *Perception of Older Workers Survey: Older workers not on the scrap heap but hard working, provide wisdom and alleviate pressure*, News Release, 7/08/01

Gaining a competitive edge

B & Q, a chain of English DIY stores, was encountering problems staffing its stores with entry-level workers so it opened a new store staffed only with mature workers. Not only did the store experience increased work force stability (i.e., compared to comparable stores, six times less employee turnover and 40% less absenteeism) and improved customer relations, it was 18 times as profitable as other similar stores in the chain.

Similarly, major UK newsagent and book store, WH Smith, went on a recruitment drive of older workers as it discovered through its market research that its shoppers preferred to be served by staff their own age. It worked, resulting in more customers. It also resulted in a reduced turnover rate, with older workers having a turnover rate four times less than employees in their 20s, reportedly saving the company \$2.2million.

Good for business, www.seek.com.au/editorial Update 28 Feb 00 (02/04/01)
<http://www.sremploy.org/olderw.html> (28/08/01)

Employers Forum on Age (UK) – The business case for age diversity

By basing employment decisions on the grounds of ability NOT age, and employing an age diverse workforce, you will:

create a more efficient workforce:

- overcome skills shortages and recruit from a wider pool of talent, skills and experience
- use existing knowledge and skills to the full
- improve stability, loyalty and motivation and in turn, productivity
- maintain 'corporate memory'
- benefit from improved staff development through the effective involvement of all employees in the training process

reduce unnecessary business costs:

- minimise recruitment expenses (search costs, and other costs associated with filling vacancies)

- avoid the effects of inefficient recruitment decisions and inexperience of new employees
- reduce turnover and absenteeism
- reduce early retirement costs
- cut expenses associated with discrimination

Improve your corporate image and market awareness:

- project your image as an 'employer of choice' and enjoy an enhanced corporate reputation attractive to investors, customers and potential employees
- reflect and expand your market through successful marketing strategies and improved customer satisfaction

Employers Forum on Age (EFA):

The *Employers Forum on Age* is a UK network of employers that provides practical business solutions to age-related human resource issues. It is an employer-led initiative that confronts the changes needed to achieve the business benefit of a mixed-age workforce. It currently has 170 members, representing nearly 3 million employees amounting to over 10% of the total workforce in the UK. The Forum has three main purposes:

- to support member organisations in managing the skills and age mix of their workforces to obtain maximum business benefit
- to remove barriers to achieving an age-balanced workforce by influencing key decision makers, notably in Government, education, training, recruitment and the trade union movement
- to inform all employers of the benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

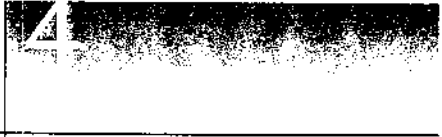
<http://www.efa.org.uk/>

Loss of skills with downsizing

A recent Melbourne Institute study found a marked relationship between downsizing and deskilling – that is loss of skills and knowledge within an organisation. Companies that downsize frequently, with cost reductions based on reducing staff numbers, fare worse than those that use restructuring as part of a broader growth strategy with downsizing as a one-off event.

Older workers are significantly more likely to be affected than younger workers. They are both more likely to be employed in downsizing organisations and to have significantly lower chance of re-employment.

Dawkins, P and Lillter GR, Eds, *Downsizing: Is it working for Australia?* Melbourne Institute and Committee for Economic Development of Australia, www.ceda.com.au/publications, July 2001



Introducing good practice into organisations

THE European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions identified four main guidelines for the introduction and implementation of good practice:

- backing from senior management
- a supportive human resources environment
- commitment from the mature workers involved
- careful and flexible implementation.¹

It is unlikely that real changes will occur unless management becomes committed to them and they become embedded in company policies. Sometimes the backing of senior management may need to be actively campaigned for and championed.

Public policies favouring longer but flexible employment also clearly need to be cognisant of the difficulties and opportunities in the business world.²

Careful and flexible implementation of good practice involves the following nine steps:

- preparation and research, for example, on recruitment trends and age profiles
- open communication with staff
- early involvement of trade unions, staff associations, etc
- early involvement of mature workers themselves
- education of line managers
- staged implementation, regular monitoring and feedback
- periodic assessment of impact
- constant communication with all employees
- attention to other aspects of the working environment which may inhibit the uptake of good practice.

Walker A, *Managing an Ageing Workforce, A Guide to Good Practice*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities; Luxembourg, 1998

Dealing with barriers to implementation

THERE may be challenges associated with maintaining an age diverse workforce that companies will need to recognise and deal with – for example, challenges associated with older workers reporting to younger managers, or part-time older workers working alongside full-time younger workers.

The actions of line managers can be a barrier to the implementation of good practice, even when the human resources environment is generally positive, deriving from line managers' discriminatory attitudes or actual or perceived pressure to achieve specific business goals. Techniques used to overcome such problems include introducing comprehensive age aware HR strategies across the company and human resources departments insisting that mature workers be tried out in positions which line managers have perhaps assumed to be unsuitable.

Where the human resources culture is not initially overtly older worker friendly, an HR environment that values training is important. The commitment of mature workers themselves may not always be forthcoming initially but can be fostered by consulting them and developing training courses with them.

Many mature workers themselves still think in terms of early retirement and may need encouragement to keep working. They may also need to be supported to make the necessary adaptations to the changing nature of careers and the workplace, in order that they remain employable.

Younger managers v older workers

Downsizing can have a long term impact on the age balance of companies. During the downsizing of the 80s and 90s it was mainly older workers who were asked to leave.

One result is that many of the people in key management positions are now relatively young and seem to prefer employing people their age, or younger. They may even fear the greater knowledge and expertise of older people.

Many older workers will inevitably be subordinates, but they can't be treated the same way you treat 30 year olds.

BM Baltzell, President of Alcoa World Alumina Australia, *Implications of an Ageing Population*, 2000 Fulbright Symposium, Perth, September 2000

THERE are lessons to be learnt from attempts to introduce 'work and family' policies into Australia companies, recognising also that family friendly policies such as reduced working hours, job sharing and support for carers are themselves important in maintaining an age diverse workforce.³

While off-the-shelf programs and options about best practice offered by human resources/employee relations companies may be attractive because of their promise of quick and easy implementation, they are often unsuccessful because they do not meet the needs of staff and management, nor reflect the organisational culture of the company.

Family friendly policies that are implemented only through human resource policies, tend not to have the clout of nor send the same message as policies embedded in workplace agreements or in the company's strategic goals. Leading family friendly workplaces ensure that all levels of management and supervisory staff understand the policies and see them as part of business strategies to gain competitive advantage and meet business objectives.

For employers there are probably a number of key actions that they can take to develop good practice in age management⁴. They include the:

- development of an age awareness policy at all levels of the organisation
- introduction of age awareness training for human resources personnel, managers and other key personnel
- involvement of mature workers in discussions about age barriers and how to overcome them
- supporting staff who want to develop initiatives to combat age barriers.

IT HAS also been suggested that some companies may find it more useful to develop and implement an across the board 'diversity policy', rather than separate workplace policies covering the different EEO categories (women, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, members of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups, and people with a physical disability) age, sexual orientation and other groups against whom it is illegal to discriminate.

A 'diversity policy' is about capitalising on the opportunities that a diverse workforce can bring. Typically when an organisation commits itself to a 'diversity policy', it commits itself to creating opportunities for all employees to use their knowledge and skills, to monitoring policies and actual practice and to removing barriers to participation. It means addressing the particular needs of disadvantaged groups, but doing so within the context of an overall 'diversity policy'.

Lessons from the introduction of family friendly policies

All levels of management and supervisory staff need to understand the policies and see them as part of business strategies to gain competitive advantage and meet business objectives.

Diversity policies

Research and innovation with Australian companies

Jobs East, a federally funded regional economic development agency in Melbourne's east, has pioneered a range of research and innovation projects. These include a 'best practice' pilot project in age diversity human resource management with several major Australian employers; a study of the economic benefits of age balance in the workforce; and a project relating to the effectiveness of age discrimination legislation in the state of Victoria.

Jobs East has worked with RACV Club and Australia Post. Over the last 18 months, RACV has established a number of specific programs from mentoring to training to recruitment. Since revamping its membership department and training older workers to handle calls, more people have been renewing their membership. While older workers took longer to handle calls, they were more thorough because they engaged callers in conversations and collected more sales information, which meant less time wasted on follow up calls.

Jobs East and LaTrobe University recently also looked at the age dynamics of Australia Post's IT division. The study covers issues such as career management, training, mentoring, changing job roles within the organisation and a super scheme that encourages people to retire at 55.

Gettler, L, It's time for employers to start using grey matter, *The Age*, 10/08/01

Involving and talking to older staff during major change

The recent formation of the NSW Department of Information Technology and Management (DITM) involved the merging of several very different Offices, and great change for many of the Department's employees.

A committee was formed to look at ways to inform employees and to obtain their involvement in contributing their ideas towards the success of the new business enterprise. There were fifteen members of this Committee, ten were over 40 years of age. This recognised the experience and work knowledge that people in this group could contribute to the enterprise. Following this, a series of workshops, involving all staff, were held.

During these processes there was an understanding of the difficulties that change may bring to a lot of staff, particularly older employees. Staff were encouraged to voice their concerns. These concerns were acknowledged and addressed. This was particularly important considering the age profile of DITM. Of a staff of 1072 people, 774 or 72.2% are over 40 years of age. 309 or 28.9% are aged over 50.

The ever increasing advance of technology and particularly electronic work processes required the retraining and/or re-skilling of staff, particularly in relation to Land and Property Information NSW. It was recognised within DITM that this also often brings doubts and insecurities to many older staff. Consequently the training sessions have taken this into account. Older staff members have been trained in the new processes and are still valuable members of the workforce.

Correspondence to the NSW Committee on Ageing from Warwick Watkins, Director General of the NSW Department of Information and Technology Management, May 2001

Recruitment, selection and promotion

Avoid making assumptions about ability based on people's age or to imply certain age requirements.

MAKING employment decisions on the basis of age contravenes age discrimination legislation. Discriminatory practice may, however, be inadvertent and not deliberate.

Good practice in the areas of recruitment, selection and promotion means, firstly, taking steps to identify the skills and abilities needed by the company to carry out particular jobs both now and into the future.

Decisions about recruitment and selection should be based on merit and the particular requirements of the job, taking care to avoid making assumptions about ability based on people's age or to imply certain age requirements.

The Mature Worker Guidelines published by the Premier's Department in 1998 suggest (among other strategies):

- regularly reviewing recruiting processes to ensure they do not intimidate or frustrate mature applicants
- ensuring that references to age (actual or implied) are removed from job descriptions and advertisements, and are not used in interviews
- sensitising managers to the value of hiring mature age staff and to the importance of recognising their experience and skills (rather than formal qualifications)
- targetting recruitment advertising accordingly.⁶

It is important also to examine seniority rules (especially those governing pay) and to offer and encourage horizontal as well as vertical career moves.

Removing age-based recruitment barriers

Trainers at the Corrective Services Academy have reported the positive influence of more mature officers and the value of their greater life experience when dealing with young offenders. As a result the Department of Corrective Services has made special efforts to overcome practices that may discriminate against mature ageworkers, for example, by lowering the minimum educational requirements for mature age workers.

Corrective Services Commissioner, Correspondence to NSW Committee on Ageing,
May 2001

The call centre advantage

The Days Inn hotel chain in the US employed older workers in their call centre to handle reservations. When compared to younger workers, older workers fared well. They took no longer and were no more expensive to train than younger workers. After one year, 87% of workers aged 45 and over who had completed training were still there, as compared to only 30% of younger workers. While older workers took slightly longer to book reservations, they were more likely to complete a call with a successful reservation.

In Australia, call centres largely employ young people yet are plagued by high staff turnover. According to a report from recruitment specialists Hallis, in 1999/2000, employees aged over 40 remained in the job on average 52 months compared to 17.5 months for those under 30.

Australian Employers Convention, *The human resource costs and benefits of an age-balanced workforce*, 2001

Long, S, High staff turnover plagues call centres, *Australian Financial Review*, 21/11/00.

Marshall, K, Employee studies prove oldies are goodies, *Australian Financial Review*, 6/12/00

Avoiding unconscious age discrimination

In the UK, the Nationwide Building Society does its initial assessment of job applicants by telephone, in order to avoid any visual prejudice. The result was an increase in the number of over 50s being recruited.

Nationwide found that while the method does not replace the more traditional face to face interviews, it can be a more cost effective method for initial shortlisting when there are a larger number of vacancies to be filled.

Telephone interviewing considerably broadened the age range of new employees and enabled Nationwide to successfully recruit people in their 50s who traditionally might have been rejected at the shortlisting stage.

Managers had admitted that previously they might not have considered these individuals at the preliminary stages, but having then conducted a face to face interviews with suitable candidates, issues such as age were irrelevant. Managers receive training in the day to day issues involved in a mixed-age workforce.

Nationwide believe that a mixed age workforce is able to respond to and reflect their customer profile efficiently and effectively. This selection procedure has further allowed consistency in recruitment

>

across the country and has upped the calibre and quality of recruits. Line managers report a significant increase in productivity, performance and service.

Business benefits

Reduced turnover and recruitment costs

Larger pool from which to recruit

Reduced business costs through increased productivity

www.efa.org.uk (28/09/01)

Recruitment and employment service agencies

RECRUITMENT and employment service agencies could also take a more active role to promote age balance in the workforce to Australian employers.⁹ They could develop protocols to ensure compliance with age discrimination legislation and recognition of the value which mature workers bring to organisations. Agencies themselves should become more responsive to age-related recruitment disadvantages. They should also provide appropriate feedback to mature age applicants for positions, to enable applicants to take steps to improve their employability.

Recruitment agencies that specialise in matching mature workers with employers (or specialist divisions of larger agencies) are now widespread in the UK and US, both commercial and not for profit agencies.

One Mature Workers Program provider set up a successful office staff temp agency for graduates of its Mature Workers Program training courses, in a regional area of NSW with high unemployment.¹⁰

Training and education

"MANY of today's older adult workers who are in need of training are casualties of a failure of industry, over many decades, to carry out future-focused training programs."⁸

This comment was made by an American commentator, but may also be applicable in Australia. What is certainly true in Australia is that mature workers receive much less employer provided or sponsored training than younger workers.

When people stayed in the one company most of their working lives, it made sense for employers to focus their investment in training on young workers rather than on people much closer to retirement. However, looked at from this point of view, it now makes more sense to invest in training older workers as they are more likely to remain in the company than are younger workers.

Good practice means ensuring that all workers, regardless of age, have access to training and career development and action is taken to compensate for older workers' past lack of access to training and learning opportunities. Age-related barriers to participation in training should be challenged and removed and notions of flexibility in work and mid life training should be fostered. Employees of all ages need to get used to the idea of lifetime learning.

The marketing and promoting of training to older workers may need to be done largely through traditional mediums, not the Internet.

Training should also be tailored to an assessment of the needs of the local labour market. If large numbers of workers are made redundant good practice might involve enlisting an external company to manage the redundancy, determine skills gaps in the area, assess and determine workers' skills and how to update them.

The APESMA pilot program

A consortium of professional associations led by Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia (APESMA) has been working with the Victorian Government and Jobs East to develop an pilot IT training program to meet the needs of un- or under-employed engineering and science professionals.

The first program commenced in March 2001 in Melbourne and was followed by programs in Ballarat and again in Melbourne later in 2001. >

It now makes more sense to invest in training older workers as they are more likely to remain in the company than are younger workers.

The program takes students through an intensive 26-week training course during which they receive vendor level certified training in Oracle and Microsoft applications and academic training in Java, C and C++ programming.

The Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment provided over \$400,000 to support the four pilot programs through the TAFE system. Box Hill Institute of TAFE conducted the first Melbourne pilot.

Mr John Vines, APESMA's CEO, said the initiative highlighted the fact that a primary vocational qualification – even in specialist fields like engineering – can date very quickly if new skills relevant to changing workplace demands are not acquired.

"There is a significant talent pool of specialist engineers and scientists who, for one reason or another, moved out of the workforce in the late 1990s," Mr Vines said. "Ironically, the problem they have in moving back into the workforce is their specialisation."

Over 300 people turned up to an evening information session about the pilot program, with 182 of these formally applying for the 15 places on the first pilot. The response suggests that there is significant pool of highly-skilled people in mid-career cohorts who are moving between unemployment and underemployment.

While the program does not have an age based entry criteria, in practice many of the participants in the first course were mature workers. The age range was 23-58.

The course involves 14 weeks of classroom tuition followed by a 12-week work placement phase to bed down the skills learned. Work placements have been arranged with some of Melbourne's leading IT skills employers including IBM GSA, Fujitsu, Australia Post, Telstra and the Bureau of Meteorology.

Applicants have to have been un- or under-employed for at least six weeks. Underemployed is defined as working less than an average of 15 hours per week over the previous six weeks. The course fee for participants is \$2,300, considerably less than for comparable training elsewhere.

<http://www.apesma.asn.au/>

A REPORT commissioned by the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) and undertaken by social research consultants, Keys Young, in 2000 reviewed and analysed best practice in meeting the education and training needs of mature age workers.⁹ The research involved consultations with employers, Mature Workers Program¹⁰ providers and industry key informants.

The report found that a number of approaches have been used with some success, in overcoming the barriers to education and training of mature workers. They include:

- an empathic response to the difficulties facing mature workers, showing how existing skills are transferable and still valid and recognising those gained outside formal education
- collaborating with mature age workers so that they see themselves as agents of change
- adjusting education and training delivery methods.

Training methods which best suit mature age adults:

- involve experiential learning
- are provided in familiar surrounds, if possible
- combine in-class and on the job training
- are self-paced
- are specifically tailored to their needs
- are practical and hands on
- provide extra time for those having difficulty keeping up.

Training programs should be based on careful analyses so that they will be relevant to the job, and so that the training is arranged in an appropriate sequence. The task or material should be carefully introduced presenting easier aspects first. After these are mastered, more difficult aspects should be introduced. Trainers should, if possible, use the former skills of trainees and build on their past experience and abilities.

Trainers need to bear in mind that mature workers are least likely to volunteer for training, so they may need more encouragement than others.

Training methods should take account of the fact that many mature adults have not had any recent experience of education and training, and as a result trainers may need to assist them to develop their learning skills and boost their confidence in their ability to learn. They may fear failure and feel inadequate compared to younger workers.

Designing effective training programs for mature workers

Trainers need to bear in mind that mature workers are least likely to volunteer for training, so they may need more encouragement than others.

One-to-one encouragement, persistence, patience and confidence building by employer and trainer have successfully overcome negative attitudes held by mature workers' about training and the difficulties they may face in undergoing training. Trainers should also ensure that the older workers' managers and co-workers are also giving them support.

Other elements of effective training for older adults include:

- creating environments in which there is no direct comparison with young people
- allowing more time for training
- having older adults work in pairs or groups
- promoting peer support.

One-on-one assistance (at least to start with) is probably the most appropriate way of assisting mature workers who are fearful of or having difficulties with computers.

Training for retrenched and unemployed mature workers

TRAINING for retrenched and unemployed mature workers should address any gaps they may have in:

- computer skills
- numeracy and literacy
- licensing for vehicles and machinery (to meet WorkCover or insurance requirements)
- communication skills
- problem solving
- presentation skills, and
- job search skills for the modern labour market.

Training needs should be identified when it first becomes apparent that older employees' skills do not match the current or projected needs of the company.

Good practice also involves early intervention to identify and meet mature workers' training needs. Thus training needs should be identified when it first becomes apparent that older employees' skills do not match the current or projected needs of the company or when a restructure is first decided upon.

Ideally, companies should provide, or arrange, training for employees likely to be retrenched well before a restructure or closure occurs. It is recognised that this may be difficult as doing so could signal possible future insolvency.

However, counselling about (re)training and post-redundancy training should be provided as soon as possible after loss of employment as the acquisition of new skills and the transfer of existing ones is most successful when done early. Training programs that mature workers can only access once they have been unemployed and on social security benefits for a certain length of time are less likely to be successful in assisting mature workers back into the workforce.

Training and education offered in redundancy packages should also remain available to the workers for at least 3 to 6 months. In the shock of being made redundant, the workers themselves may not be responsive to education and training immediately after being made redundant.

Moreover, unemployed mature workers may be ill-equipped to choose appropriate training themselves and need active guidance as to the types of training that are most likely to assist them gain employment. They may not see it as in their own interest to undergo training, or they may not see it as their responsibility and may assume that a future employer will provide them with any necessary training.

Unfortunately, the BVET study mentioned above reported that employers too do not generally see it as their responsibility to train mature workers with gaps in their skills. Exceptions were reported to be more likely among larger organisations. For example, one was reported to have initiated a program for workers who needed to update their computer skills by providing them with home computers at minimum cost.

Employer provided education and training provided to older workers after downsizing

Education and training provided by one organisation, (in mining) included payment of up to \$500 for workers' reskilling (eg to secure licences for forklifts, trucks, cranes) access to their job centre (providing training in job search skills, interviewing techniques, resumes and how to adjust to a change in lifestyle) and facilities such as providing Internet access to the job market.

Another, a steel manufacturer, provided workers with a 13 week career transition program that involved education and training for a new job on full pay. This employer also forged partnerships with educational institutions and paid half fees for workers interested in re-training at these institutions. Ongoing seminars in small business were also provided, as was a two day program designed to assist workers in coming to grips with their situation and which was an introduction to the 13 week program.

Training should be provided as soon as possible after loss of employment as the acquisition of new skills and the transfer of existing ones is most successful when done early.

Trainers may also require professional development in training mature workers so that they can gain a better understanding of mature workers' needs and the barriers and fears they may face, how to motivate older adults and how to put them at their ease in a new learning environment.

Some trade unions have successfully advocated for the inclusion of training and recruitment measures in agreements with employers, to rectify the disadvantage experienced by mature workers. They can also assist their older members advocate for access to training and career development advice and recognise the need for traditional career development patterns to change.

International best practice on mature workers and training

- recognising the importance of life long learning
- tailoring training to the learning styles, need and existing skill level of mature adults
- fostering a learning climate and ethos in the workplace
- positioning training firmly in the context of the needs of the local labour market
- collaboration between key stakeholders such as training institutions, government, trade unions and employers
- early intervention preferably occurring before the worker is stood down
- linking mature workers existing skills and experience with the new skills to be acquired
- applying new skills and knowledge to the workplace as the new skills and knowledge are acquired.

Keys Young, *Older Workers and Education and Training: Final Report*. NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training, September 2000

Mature Workers Program and TAFE training – Their experience with mature workers

A 1998 report by TAFE highlighted some effective training strategies used by some TAFE colleges and other training providers¹¹.

The most highly appreciated benefits of the training provided to mature workers were increased self confidence and self esteem. Other important aspects of the training included:

- offering work experience
- teaching learning skills

- assisting workers come to a better appreciation of their skills and experience, works options and educational opportunities
- improving interpersonal communication skills (especially for those from non-English-speaking backgrounds)
- courses tailored to individuals' literacy and numeracy
- courses offering access to computer skills

Intensive specific full time courses may be inappropriate or impossible for many mature age students, for whom education can prove very traumatic. The provision of a range of part time courses can give participants an opportunity to try different subjects, to see what they are good at and enjoy, plus time to gain information about realistic options and to establish goals.

Several Mature Worker Program providers report that mature age men prefer individual job-seeking advice rather than longer group sessions. The Adult Basic Education section of a TAFE college reported that mature age students from non-English speaking backgrounds tend to come into the courses with set ideas about their abilities or lack of abilities and an important part of the course is to broaden their understanding of their ability to learn.

Small group English language and literacy and sessions for mature age women of non-English speaking background, many of whom have not maintained or developed their writing skills since leaving school, have proved valuable. Such students, men and women, often say they see TAFE as a poor option as they do not believe they have adequate literacy and learning skills to cope with TAFE levels of training.

Courses that combine vocational aspects and the relevant English language skills (eg Introduction to Child Care/English for Special Purposes) are popular, and more such combinations may be valuable over wider vocational areas.

The Adult Basic Education section of one TAFE college reported that continuous enrolment at any time of the year and flexible delivery options including on Saturdays and weeknights helps cater for the complex needs of mature age workers.

In rural areas training providers have provided self paced training packages to make it easier for students without transport who then need make fewer trips to the training centre. The cost of training courses will be a factor for unemployed mature workers. The fact that courses offered through Mature Worker Program providers are free contributes to their successful take-up by unemployed mature workers, who may not be able to afford to pay the fees associated with TAFE courses.

Mature age students from non-English speaking backgrounds tend to come into the courses with set ideas about their abilities or lack of abilities and an important part of the course is to broaden their understanding of their ability to learn.

Flexible work practices, job redesign and phased retirement

The chance to move to jobs with reduced pay and responsibilities rather than leave the company or retire altogether may be an attractive option for some mature workers. For their employers it means they do not suddenly lose total access to the person's skills, networks and experience.

THERE are relatively few reports of companies setting out to offer flexible work practices specifically in order to retain older workers, or to facilitate phased retirement. However, some companies are coming to an increasing realisation of the importance of flexible work practices in this regard.

Flexible work practices of particular relevance to mature workers include:

- shorter working hours or part time work
- job sharing
- increasing unpaid leave
- leave for carer or family responsibilities.

The redesign of jobs and of equipment to cope with gender differences (in for example physical strength), may have the added advantage of enabling both men and women to work for longer.¹²

The chance to move to jobs with reduced pay and responsibilities rather than leave the company or retire altogether may be an attractive option for some mature workers, and for their employers it means they do not suddenly lose total access to the person's skills, networks and experience. These are sometimes called 'bridge jobs'. During this pre-retirement period, it may then good make sense to involve such employees in mentoring and coaching of younger staff and other strategies to take advantage of mature employees' often wider and more in-depth knowledge of the company.

Some companies re-employ 'retired' professional employees on a different basis than previously, usually on a contract basis. For employees in defined benefit superannuation schemes in which entitlements are based on final salaries, re-employing people on contract basis may offer a way of not affecting their superannuation.

Flexible work options/phased retirement

Faced with the need to cut staff costs, and having decided to concentrate on 55-60 year olds, IBM in Belgium set up a separate company called SkillTeam which re-employed any of the early retired who wanted to go on working up to the age of 60. An employee who joined SkillTeam at the age of 55 on a five year contract would work for 58% of his time, over the full period, for 88% of his last IBM salary. The company offered service to IBM, thus allowing it to retain some of the intellectual capital it would have lost.

Similarly, Ford in the UK contracts work out to Ford professionals who have retired. They continue to work on a semi-retired basis and Ford continues to tap into their skills and experience.

Anon, Ageing workers: A full life, *The Economist*, Sep 4 1999

Access Economics Pty Ltd, *Population Ageing and the Economy*. Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care; Canberra, 2001

Maintaining corporate experience

Several UK companies are realising the benefits of retaining access to the experience and skills of older workers. Examples include:


- Cadbury which has started to re-employ recently retired sales managers on short term contracts and sending them to Eastern Europe to provide advice on establishing confectionery operations. They also use mature workers in the training, coaching and mentoring of less experienced staff, at both management and shop floor levels.
- Prudential instituted more balanced practices, having found that sacking of workers aged 45 and over had led to some loss of product knowledge.

Australian Employers Convention, *The Human Resource Costs and Benefits of Maintaining an Age Balanced Workforce*; Melbourne, 2001

Other strategies

AS HAS been noted earlier, mature workers can be at a time in their life when they have caring responsibilities towards parents or other older family members (possibly on top of responsibilities for younger dependents). A number of employers provide assistance to their employees in such situations, in the form of information and advice (eg eldercare kits, guides, access to telephone based information) or in the form of eldercare centres. Some major overseas companies, for example, IBM and American Express, are reported to have eldercare centres.

As examples of the former, the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority has an Aged Care Referral Service for staff with older relatives and the Department of Fair Trading has an Elder Care Information Kit for staff.



Labour market programs for unemployed mature workers

IN MOST Australian states and in other developed countries there are a range of government supported labour market and related programs, usually run through community organisations or local government. They typically offer one or more elements of the following:

- subsidies to employers to recruit unemployed mature workers
- training (organised or provided, or training grants or subsidies)
- counselling and assistance to individuals in jobseeking etc
- job matching schemes, job fairs, introductions
- work trials
- assistance for mature workers to set up small businesses and become self-employed
- skills recognition
- campaigns to change employer and employee attitudes towards mature workers.

The first major program of this kind in Australia was the NSW Mature Workers Program, established in 1989. The Department of Education and Training funds 46 projects through community organisations across the state. They provide assistance to people over 40 who are unemployed, retrenched (or about to be), mid life career changers, early retirees or people returning to the workforce with:

- job search and interview skills
- career path and training advice
- building self confidence
- access to training courses (and a training coupon of up to \$200)
- finding suitable job vacancies
- work experience placements with employers

Participants must not be receiving Intensive Assistance and/or Job Search Training services through Job Network. This is an unusual feature as similar programs elsewhere (including Job Network) tend to be open to people with low incomes and assets only. As a result mature age

people may have to wait until any savings they have are exhausted before they become eligible for labour market assistance.

For more information on the NSW Mature Workers Program and related schemes in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, see www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/mature/ and the Committee on Ageing's companion publication, *Too Young to Go: Mature age unemployment and early retirement in NSW*.

Public policies – some examples from overseas

IN A recent review of public policies in Australia, the USA, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the Nordic Countries, Taylor summarises the main public policies that target older workers as follows:

Comprehensive policy on the employment and retirement of older workers	Finland
Programs of research and development on the issue of age and employment	Finland, Germany, Norway
Pension and social security reforms aimed at encouraging later retirement	France, Germany, Nordic countries, Netherlands, USA
Age discrimination legislation and/or abolition of mandatory retirement	Australia, Finland, USA
Awareness raising campaigns among business and the general public	Australia, USA, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway
Labour market programs targeting older workers	Australia, Finland, USA
Support to employers, for example, advice and guidance or employment placements	Australia, Nordic countries, USA
Wage subsidy and other incentive schemes	Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands

Taylor P, *Comparative policy approaches towards older workers: A report for Scottish Enterprise*, Open University Business School, June 2001

California's Senior Worker Advocate Office in the Employment Development Department

The aims of the Senior Worker Advocate Office are to improve employment and training opportunities for workers aged 40 and over to raise public awareness of the issues and problems that confront mature workers. The office works directly with the public and private sectors to increase mature workers' access to employment opportunities.

Major activities:

- Promotes coordination and cooperation among agencies and organisations providing employment information, recruitment, training and placement services for senior workers.
- Provides information to employers, job applicants and various public and private agencies regarding employment of senior workers.
- Develops and distributes educational materials relating to the job abilities and job needs of senior workers.
- Sponsors an annual statewide awards program to acknowledge outstanding individuals and organisations contributing to the employment of senior workers.
- Maintains liaison with other states' similar offices.

Employment Development Department, *Senior Worker Advocate Office Fact Sheet*, State of California, <http://www.edd.ca.gov/de8714ss.pdf> (04/09/01)

UK New Deal 50 Plus

This is a relatively new national labour market program for people aged 50 and over who have been out of work for six months or more. Its main components are one-to-one job search support, an employment credit (wage top-up) for one year and a training grant. Participation is voluntary.

Unusually for wage subsidy programs, the employers are not informed that participants are receiving the wage top-up.

Some preliminary evaluation, based on interviews with participants, found that many saw the employment credit as an incentive to take low paid jobs. In areas of low wages some saw it as enabling them to afford to go to work, or to take on a low paid job as a transition to something better. Others who had obtained a higher paid job relative to their expenses or who were partly supported by a partner, saw it as boosting their self esteem. It also helped with transitional costs and enabled them to pay off debts incurred while unemployed.

The employment credit was least attractive to people where the cost of living was high, for individuals with more fixed ideas of the type of work they would accept or who were facing more severe barriers to employment. The take up of the training grant has been very low.

A second preliminary evaluation conducted with Employment Service staff found that certain aspects of the program were highly valued - the simplicity of the program (eg simple eligibility criteria and modest paperwork requirements), its voluntary nature which helped build productive relationships with clients and a national advertising campaign at the start of the program. The year long duration of the credit was long enough to make clients take it seriously as offering them a prospect of finding their feet again in the labour market.

Kodz J, Eccles J Evaluation of New Deal 50 Plus, Institute of Employment Studies Report ESR70 and ESR68 , March 2001 www.employment-studies.co.uk/summary/esr70sum.html

Norway's All-out Effort Plan for Older Workers

This aims to support changes to working conditions and personnel policies that increase the attractiveness for workers and companies of prolonging working life. The intention is to initiate co-operation between all relevant parties at the national, regional and local levels, and to stimulate senior policy activities within each organisation.

The Plan includes:

- Active dissemination of information and good practice through key organisations.
- Joint projects with enterprises to, for example, pilot activities and models in the areas of management, work organisation, job design, competency development, company culture, and attitudes.
- Conferences for target groups, for example, managers.
- Training of trade union representatives.
- Funding to finance the use of consultants by companies that want to implement age-aware HR policies.
- Funding for concrete measures within companies.
- Encouraging older workers to participate in educational programs and training.
- Exploring the teaching of age-aware human resource management and how this can be increased.
- A handbook on age-related human resource management for managers, supervisors and union representatives.
- Education campaigns to raise general public awareness of issues surrounding age.

Adapted from Taylor P, *Comparative policy approaches towards older workers: A report for Scottish Enterprise*, Open University Business School, June 2001

<http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/researchdocs/olderworkers.pdf>

Further resources

More about the benefits and costs

- Australian Employers Convention, *The Human Resource Costs and Benefits of Maintaining an Age Balanced Workforce*; Melbourne, 2001

A website of clearly presented good practice information and advice for employers

- Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Mature Workers Wage Subsidy - Experience Pays Program: Information for Employers*
<http://www.employment.qld.gov.au/labour/mature/index.htm>

Guides to good practice

- Premier's Department New South Wales, *Mature Workforce: Policy and Guidelines*, NSW Public Sector Management Office; Sydney 1998
- Work and Family Unit, Department of Employment, Workplace Relations, *Guide to Issues for Older Workers*. Department of Employment, Workplace Relations; Canberra, 1999
- Walker A, *Managing an Ageing Workforce, A Guide to Good Practice*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities; Luxembourg, 1998
<http://www.eurofound.ie/publications/EF9865.htm>

Comprehensive descriptions of international practice and policy approaches (including Australia)

- Taylor P, *Comparative policy approaches towards older workers: A report for Scottish Enterprise*, Open University Business School, June 2001
<http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/researchdocs/olderworkers.pdf>
- Taylor P, Tillsley C, Beausoleil J, Wilson R, and Walker A, *Factors Affecting Retirement*, RR236a-k, Research Report in eleven parts and Research Brief, UK Department for Education and Employment, November 2000
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/re_search.cfm

Includes separate reports on Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Nordic Countries, United Kingdom and USA. Examines push/pull factors in early retirement, role of labour market policies in reducing early exit, role of human resource policies.

- Taylor P, Steinberg M and Walley L, "Mature age employment: recent developments in public policy in Australia and the UK" , *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, August 2000; Vol 19 (3), p125-129

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<http://www.eurofound.ie/publications/EF9718.htm>
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http://www.premiers.nsw.gov.au/pubs_dload_part3/psmo/matureworkforce.html
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- 7 See section 9 for information about the Mature Workers Program.
- 8 Stern HL, Integrating Work and Learning: A key to older employee success, *The Business and Aging Networker*, Winter 2001,
www.asaging.org/networks/bfa/networker-087
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- 11 Access Educational Services Division, *Breaking The Age Barrier*, NSW TAFE Commission Access Educational Services Division; Sydney, 1998
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Previous publications from the NSW Committee on Ageing

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Men's Health Information and Resource Centre

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Margaret Tucker

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Sarah Fogg

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Sarah Fogg

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Sol Encel, Margaret Kay and George Zdenkowski

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Sol Encel and Penny Nelson

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Sol Encel and Helen Studencki

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