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Optimum employment participation for mature age people and people with disability

The Australian Experience
The Australian Experience

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• Demographics
• Challenges faced by mature job seekers in Australia
• Australian Employment Services

Solutions

• Measures to increase mature job seekers’ reintegration
• Reducing age-discrimination
‘Baby Boomer’ Generation

“mature age” = 45+

The “baby boomers” (b. 1946-1965, now 51-70)
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“Baby boomers are the largest, healthiest, best educated population of Australians ever to move through and beyond their fifties.”

BeNext website (www.benext.com.au)

High expectations of full participation in employment and in the economic and social fabric of society
Optimum participation is also important for all of Australia.
Optimum participation is also important for all of Australia.
The Australian Experience

Barriers: Facing mature job seekers

Non-currency or redundancy of professional skills

Even highly qualified and experienced workers might find their skills are no longer considered relevant

Outdated job search practices

Changing technology and recruitment systems might exclude or discourage mature-age jobseekers

Age discrimination in employment and training

Perception that older people are less adaptable, harder to train and technologically incompetent
Mature-age ‘displaced’ workers are at greater risk of long term unemployment.
The Australian Contracted public employment services system

AIMS
- to increase employment participation
- to build needed skills
- to help individual job seekers
The Australian contracted public employment services system is ideally placed to:

- address barriers to employment for mature age job seekers with flexible and tailored support options
- respond to structural adjustment with local area contracts and a place-based approach to labour markets and employer engagement
Individual Job plans

- Outlines agreed activities to be undertaken by the job seeker to become work ready

- Tailored to the job seeker’s circumstances and local labour market conditions

- Provision for support to overcome or manage non vocational issues

- Can include work experience, part-time work, part-time study in an eligible course, participation in accredited language, literacy and numeracy training or volunteer work

- Mutual obligations (related to benefit payments) are more flexible if you are aged 55 years or older, are a principal carer, or have a medical condition

Over 200 5 year contracts
44 providers cover about 1700 local area sites and 51 regions
# The Australian Experience

## Solutions: Optimising employment for mature job seekers

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Work-place support: Adjustments, mentoring, flexibility, equipment etc
• Many mature workers are eligible for Disability Employment Services (DES) which can provide ongoing post placement support and more intensive support if required.

• Currently more than 180,000 people are registered in the programme and about 134,000 are active participants at any one time.

• 132 non-government organisations are funded by DES to provide employment support to people with a disability across Australia.

• Job-seekers have choice of providers within ‘market areas’ (choice will increase in reforms).
A recent report from the Australian National University Press suggests society should reconsider the concept of retirement.

- Expecting retraining and continued education into old age

- Treating change and transition in work as an opportunity and a process (often requiring support) - not a crisis

- Expanding flexible work options without a fixed idea of retirement

- Cultural change in attitudes
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