



# Is Your Organisation Ageing Workforce Ready?

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The global workforce is ageing rapidly.

People are living longer, healthier lives thanks to medical advancements, meaning they stay employed for longer periods. At the same time, birth rates are declining, leading to a smaller pool of young workers entering the workforce.

Additionally, financial pressures and a desire to stay engaged means older Australians are delaying retirement or continuing to work part-time. This creates a workforce with a rising average age, presenting both challenges and opportunities for businesses.

- The ageing workforce is one of the six megatrends in work health and safety and workers compensation over the next 20 years. (CSIRO, 2018)
- Australians are increasingly working to older ages, with participation rates of older Australians having more than doubled in the past 20 years. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021)

## THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

Experienced workers bring strong work ethic, fostering greater innovation, increased productivity, and improved customer engagement. A mix of ages creates a positive workplace culture with experienced workers mentoring younger colleagues and contributing to a stable and supportive environment.

## WHY PREPARE?

By being proactive, you can avoid potential risks. Attract and retain experienced workers to fill critical roles, preventing skill shortages. Develop strategies to capture valuable knowledge before employees retire, mitigating knowledge loss. Foster a culture of inclusion to avoid age bias and discrimination claims. Offer flexible work options and career development programs to keep valuable employees engaged, preventing premature exits.

## SUPPORTING MENTAL WELLBEING

A happy and healthy workforce is key. Supporting an ageing workforce contributes to a mentally healthy workplace. Recognition and appreciation for experience boosts morale and job satisfaction, fostering a sense of value. Providing opportunities for ongoing learning and contribution combats feelings of isolation and increases purpose and engagement. Flexible work arrangements help employees manage personal commitments and reduce stress, promoting work-life balance.

RISKS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of experience and knowledge</li><li>• Skills shortages in labour markets</li><li>• Premature exit from the organisation</li><li>• High absenteeism and/or presenteeism</li><li>• Age discrimination and bias</li><li>• Safety, mental health and compensation claims</li><li>• Health and caring issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive organisational culture</li><li>• Social maturity, perspective and interpersonal skills</li><li>• Institutional knowledge</li><li>• Improved company reputation</li><li>• Stability and reduced turnover</li><li>• Connection with ageing customers</li><li>• Improved organisational diversity</li></ul>

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## THE 4RS: A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Transitioning Well's evidence-based research into Australia's ageing workforce led to the development of the 4Rs Framework. Organisations can use these pillars to review how well their older workers are being supported and assess their readiness for the future.

### 4 PILLARS OF BEING AGEING WORKFORCE READY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Recruitment:</b> Policy, practice and hiring outcomes in relation to older people.</li></ul>	<p>Unconscious bias against older workers hurts businesses. Negative stereotypes often lead to missed opportunities for experienced, reliable employees. Research shows older workers bring a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and loyalty, all of which benefit companies. By recognising these biases and the value of experienced workers, leaders can create a fairer system that attracts and retains top talent regardless of age.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Retention:</b> The extent to which people feel supported to stay productive and mentally healthy.</li></ul>	<p>Age discrimination harms mental health and can lead to depression and anxiety. To keep older workers happy and productive, organisations should offer flexible work options, training opportunities, and programs to share knowledge between younger and older employees. Additionally, workplaces should adjust physically demanding tasks to accommodate aging bodies. These practices benefit both workers and companies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Retirement:</b> Mechanisms to support a smooth transition from work, from the perspective of both the individual and the organisation.</li></ul>	<p>To help employees retire smoothly, organisations and their leaders should involve them in planning and offer phased retirement options. This reduces stress and allows a gradual work reduction. After retirement, maintaining ties through volunteer opportunities or alumni programs, benefits both the individual and the organisation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Roadmap:</b> the organisation uses to guide and adapt its approach to supporting older workers.</li></ul>	<p>Organisations can leverage an ageing workforce by analysing HR data to understand worker needs at different stages. Strong leadership support for programs targeting older workers is crucial. A strategic plan considering industry trends and both employer and employee needs is essential. Surprisingly, only 8% of diversity and inclusion programs factor in age. This proactive approach helps businesses retain valuable employees and thrive in an ageing workforce landscape.</p>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Ageing Workforce Ready (AWR) Project free resources:**  
<https://awrproject.com.au/>
- **Career Transition Guide: Late Career and Retirement, Mental Health Commission:**  
<https://www.transitioningwell.com.au/when-we-help/late-career-and-retirement/>
- **Maturity of Practice Index Quiz:**  
<https://awrproject.com.au/mpq/#/>
- **The Age Difference Whitepaper:**  
<https://awrproject.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Age-Difference.pdf>
- **Workwell Toolkit: Support Your Ageing Workforce:**  
<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/workwell-toolkit-support-your-ageing-workforce>
- **Mature Age Hub:**  
<https://www.dewr.gov.au/mature-age->
- **Support for businesses – Investing in Experience Tool Kit:**  
<https://www.dewr.gov.au/mature-age-hub/resources/support-businesses-investing-experience-tool-kit>
- **Centre For Ageing Better: Mid-life support: Insights for employers:**  
<https://ageing-better.org.uk/resources/mid-life-support-insights-employers>

We would like to thank [Transitioning Well](#) for their assistance in the compilation of this factsheet.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

Website: [cmhaa.org.au](http://cmhaa.org.au)

LinkedIn: [Corporate Mental Health Alliance Australia](#)

The Corporate Mental Health Alliance (CMHAA) is a group of Australian businesses dedicated to providing mentally healthy workplaces for their people.

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