

Older workers' perspectives on training and retention of older workers: Support document – Victorian aged care workers survey

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This document was produced by the authors based on their research for the report, *Older workers' perspectives on training and retention of older workers*. The report is available on NCVER's website: <<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>.

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Older Victorian aged care workers

Aged care in Victoria & the Health Services Union

The Health Services Union was the industry partner of the researchers and NCVET in this Victorian aged care workers survey project.

The Health Services Union (HSU) is a specialist health union with over 70,000 members in all areas of health care across the country. Members of the union comprise of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals such as physiotherapists and radiographers, ambulance officers, clerical and administrative staff, managers and support staff. Aged care workers are among the members of this union.

In 1998 a total of 2.3 million people acted as carers in some form or other to those needing help because of disability or ageing. While both males and females were well represented as carers, a majority were female (56 percent) (ABS 1998).

The HSU has a number of important policies in place including policies relating to workforce, training and education and aged care accreditation.

In the present study of older workers (aged 45 and above) and their perspectives on training and retention of older workers, total responses were 520 out of a national sample of union members in the age-group 45 and above. Of these responses, 477 (91.7 percent) were women, and 43 (8.3 percent) were men. These figures correspond to the national figures for employed persons in the Health and Community Services Industry where Aged Care workers come under. In 2003, the Industry comprised 44 percent of male workers, and 56 percent of female workers (ABS 2003).

The Victorian aged care workers survey

This study is an effort to discover and analyse workers' viewpoints to inform public and policy debates about that important aspect of the "ageing" workforce issues. While many commentators have argued that older workers will need to be persuaded to continue working longer, the views of older workers have been missing from the public discussion of these issues. Many of Australia's policy analysts in government, industry associations and 'think tanks', politicians and media commentators have argued that since older people make up an increasing share of Australia's population, older workers will need to continue working longer. The views of older workers have been missing from the public discussion of these issues.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse older worker's perspectives on training and retention of older workers, to determine what training and other complementary policy measures are likely to work best to foster retention of older workers as efficient and effective workforce participants.

This research into the perspectives of older workers (aged 45 and above) on training and retention of older workers encompasses survey-based studies of older workers in three industry categories represented by four union organizations. The research included:

- a national survey of older workers in the finance sector who are members of the Finance Sector Union;
- a Victorian state survey of aged care workers who are members of the Health Services Union of Australia;
- a South Australian survey-based case study of aged care workers who are members of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union in South Australia;
- a South Australian survey-based case study of construction industry workers who are members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union.

Respondents from these three industry categories consist of older workers in economically and socially important occupations with a VET-sector training base, a balanced gender mix and varied skill profiles, all substantially affected by technological change. The Health Services Union of Australia covers aged care workers in the Eastern states of Australia, and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, which covers aged care workers in the South Australia and Western Australia. Aged care workers are a skilled and predominantly middle-aged female health services occupation that will encounter increasing demand as the aged proportion of the Australian population increases. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union covers a cluster of construction industry occupations with a predominantly male workforce that has a varied skill profile. The occupations are of significant and growing importance as productive contributors to the Australian economy. The Finance Sector Union covers an economically strategic service sector with a more balanced gender mix and a diverse skill profile that is subject to particularly rapid technological change.

Given the impracticality of establishing names and addresses of the total population of older workers in the finance, aged care and construction industries, the target populations for this study were older workers in these industries who are members of four unions. The study is based on a national survey of older workers in the finance sector, a state survey of older workers in the Victorian aged care industry, and survey-based case studies of older workers in the South Australian aged care and construction industries.

The authors greatly appreciated the cooperation of the four unions. The formulation of the survey questionnaire (see Appendix A) and validation of the interpretation of survey findings was guided by qualitative focus group research. The project team considered the project to be one in which NCVER and participating union organisations had mutually complementary interests. For the union organisations, research that reports older worker's perspectives on training and retention of older workers will inform public policy on a dimension that is frequently overlooked, and NCVER had a report done that is probably otherwise neither affordable nor feasible. A national household survey seeking responses from older workers could avoid this bias, but it would be absurdly inefficient and expensive. The project team regarded union membership lists as the best available base for cost-effective survey research on older worker's perspectives on training and retention of older workers. The project team knew of no practicable alternative source of a population frame with occupation, age and contact details. Without such a means of access, survey research on older worker's perspectives could not be cost-effective and is probably not even practically feasible. Furthermore, the project team did not know of any reason why union membership lists should be systematically biased on any matter of relevance to the subject-matter this research, unlike some other issues (for example) workplace relations policies or political issues, in which such a bias would be a substantial consideration. The overall report's specific findings include particular training needs, and that most workers expect to continue working beyond retirement age, so that increasing retention requires removal of discriminatory policy disincentives, stronger measures against age discrimination, and attitudinal changes in age-

related stereotypes. These are matters on which it is likely that most older workers would agree, whether or not they are union members, but some younger people may differ from older people.

Taken together, these three industry categories provided an excellent basis for identifying and analysing older worker's perspectives on training and retention of older workers, in economically and socially important occupations with a VET-sector training base, a balanced gender mix and varied skill profiles that are all being substantially affected by technological change. This research can inform national policy debates by providing older worker's perspectives on what training and other complementary policy measures are likely to work best to foster retention of older workers as efficient and effective workforce participants.

This project methodology involved an inherently ethical approach to the participant older workers. The creative interaction between qualitative and quantitative research in the research design secured the benefits and minimised the effects of the limitations of each type of research. The initial round of focus groups shaped the specific issues addressed in the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire tested the generalisability of the first round focus group findings. Union membership lists for older workers provided a means of accessing samples of older workers in the three industry categories. The bias involved in surveying union members is unlikely to have had significant effects on issues of the type that this survey addressed. A second round of focus groups validated the interpretations of the survey data by the principal researchers and informed the overall findings of the research project.

The first stage, preparation and qualitative focus group research, consisted of liaison to finalise arrangements for participation by the four industry partners, a literature review of trends in employment and training of older workers, Australian labour market statistics on growing and declining industries, and worker profiles affecting the skill requirements and employment prospects of older workers and preparation of a draft questionnaire instrument. The issues addressed in the project were discussed with three focus groups, each consisting of a small selective sample of older workers from the participating industry partners. This tested the questionnaire for use in Stage 2, particularly the relevance of issues that we proposed to incorporate into the survey questionnaire, and provided input from older workers in the relevant occupation group to go beyond issues suggested by our literature review.

It was generally understood that while it might be precise, it would be entirely misplaced and false precision to purport to impose an arbitrary "one size fits all" definition of "retirement age" on respondents in contexts as diverse as those studied. The respondents could be expected to know the retirement age for people of their gender in their industry and they would respond in terms of what "retirement age" means for them.

The second stage, quantitative data collection, consisted of administration of the questionnaire instrument to four substantial samples of workers over 45 who are members of one of the four participating unions.

The procedure used for drawing the four survey samples was "systematic sample with a random start" (Babbie, 1990, 83-85). A number was selected by chance from a small set (a number from a small set was drawn from a bowl by an uninvolved person) and that number chosen by chance was used to determine the random start of a sample chosen systematically. For the Victorian aged care survey, the procedure was adapted and the sampling ratio was 4:5, so the sampling interval was that every fifth name after the random start was excluded. The samples drawn and the response rates in each of the four surveys or case studies are provided in the following survey samples and response rates table.

Survey samples and response rates

Participating unions	Finance Sector (FSU)	Aged Care (HSU)	Aged Care (LHMU)	Construction (CFMEU)
Scope:	National	Victoria	South Australia	South Australia
% sample size of membership over 45	17%	80%	65%	100%
Sample drawn (letters posted):	2,456	1,500	850	1,800
Returns to sender:	31	11	6	20
Adjusted sample:	2,425	1,489	844	1,780
Valid responses	1070	520	194	242
Response rate:	44.1%	34.9%	23.0%	13.6%

Note: The response rates are calculated as valid responses from the mail-out sample, adjusted for returns to sender.

Nationally, all three industry categories together comprise 21 percent of the total employed persons in the country (ABS 2003). Over 40 percent of employed persons in the in the health and community services industry sector, which includes aged care sector workers, are aged 45 and over (older workers as defined in this study). Other information suggests that a higher proportion of aged care sector workers are older than in the whole health and community services industry sector. With regard to gender, females comprised over 78 percent in the health and community Services industry (ABS 2003). The age and gender distribution of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample are comparable with the ABS data.

Post-ready envelopes with the survey questionnaire and reply paid envelopes were prepared by Document Services of the University of South Australia for each of the four samples. “Sticky labels” with the names and addresses of members over 45 years of age were provided by the four unions from which the sample was drawn and labels attached to post-ready envelopes and posted through the University of South Australia mail service. The responses were returned to the School of International Studies at the University of South Australia which did not have a copy of the names and addresses of the people included in the sample. A second mail-out was undertaken in relation to finance sector, the only national sample of union members. This will permit efficient survey administration while safeguarding the confidentiality of individual survey respondents, which is the most important research ethics consideration in surveys.

The third stage, data analysis, consisted of data entry on to Excel spreadsheets of the responses numbered and identified by the union sample in the top left corner of the cover sheet, and subsequent data analysis directed by the researchers of the Victorian aged care sample, using the SPSS package. Data entry was performed by the Adelaide Business Bureau with full verification of each survey response (two passes and checking of discrepancies).

The fourth stage, preparation of draft reports, consisted of preparation by the researchers of four union draft reports based on the four union survey samples, and focus group reviews, consisting of discussion by the researchers of the survey data and the interpretations placed upon it with three South Australian focus groups, each consisting of a small selective sample of older workers from the participating industry partners, to validate or correct the interpretations placed upon the data by the researchers and to discuss the implications of the survey for the issues addressed in the project.

The fifth stage, completion of final reports, including a comprehensive project report combining four union-specific reports and the overall findings and implications of the research lodged with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, with the union-specific reports for each of the four participating industry partners becoming supporting documents available separately on the internet.

Victorian aged care workers survey

Quantitative survey responses

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Gender categories	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Female	477	91.7
Male	43	8.3
Total	520	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was nil.

As Table 1 indicates, the gender mix of respondents in the Victorian aged care sample was a huge majority of females.

Table 2: Age range of respondents

Age ranges	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
45-49	107	20.6
50-54	167	32.2
55-59	160	30.8
60-64	75	14.5
65 and over	10	1.9
Total	519	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 1 or 0.2%

Table 2 indicates the age mix of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample.

Table 3: Respondent's expectations of dependants beyond respondent's retirement age

Respondent's dependants	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Will have several dependants	7	1.4
Will have one dependant	44	8.5
May have one or more dependants	37	7.2
Will have no dependants	344	66.5
Don't know	85	16.4
Total	517	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 3 or 0.6%

As Table 3 indicates, of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample, about a two-thirds majority did not expect to have dependants beyond retirement age. These low dependency rates might have been expected to lead to a reduced motivation for most respondents to work beyond retirement, but Tables 5 and 13 indicate that this is not the case.

Table 4: Respondent's expectations of retirement accommodation

Respondent's accommodation	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Own home paid off	284	54.6
Own home mortgaged	107	20.6
Renting home	61	11.7
Other	12	2.3
Don't know	56	10.8
Total	520	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was nil.

As Table 4 indicates, of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample, more than half have or expect to have their home paid off by the time of their retirement, and about a further fifth will be in mortgaged homes. Like the low dependency rates, high home ownership might have been expected to lead to a reduced motivation for most respondents to work beyond retirement, but Tables 5 and 13 indicate that this is not the case.

Table 5: Respondent's expectations of retirement income

Respondent's income	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Will need a retirement job	98	19.0
May need to work part-time	195	37.8
May work for better lifestyle	82	15.9
Will not need to work	51	9.9
Don't know	90	17.4
Total	516	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 4 or 0.8%.

As Table 5 indicates, of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample, less than one in ten believe or expect that they will not need to work beyond their retirement age. Most of the respondents in the sample believe that they will need to work. This suggests that policy does not need to focus on persuading or inducing older workers to continue working.

Table 6: Respondent's awareness of incentives or disincentives to work beyond retirement age

Respondent's awareness	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	46	8.9
No	137	26.6
Don't know	332	64.5
Total	515	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 5 or 1%

Tables 6 and 7 indicate that for most of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample there is a need for much more education of people about the incentives or disincentives to work beyond retirement age.

Table 7: Qualitative response rate on incentives or disincentives to work beyond retirement age

Incentives or disincentives	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Qualitative response given	30	5.8
No qualitative response	490	94.2
Total	520	100.0

Notes: The high non-response rate to this open-ended question was consistent with the low positive response to the previous question.

Qualitative responses by Victorian aged care worker respondents to question 7 on incentives to work beyond retirement age highlighted superannuation savings being insufficient, in one case for “a standard of living beyond the recognised poverty level”. Qualitative responses by Victorian aged care worker respondents to question 7 on disincentives to work beyond retirement age emphasised taxation, particularly withdrawal tax on superannuation.

Table 8: Respondent’s plans for activities other than work beyond retirement age

Respondent’s plans	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Caring for grandchildren	165	31.7
Home improvements	102	19.6
Travel	280	53.8
Other	111	21.3
No plans	146	28.1
Total	804	NA

Notes: This question permitted respondents to tick more than one option.

Table 8 indicates that for most of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample travel is a high priority for retirement activities. This suggests that workers will be seeking flexible working arrangements which will make travel possible, but also provides a motivation for older workers to continue working beyond their retirement age. Family and domestic activities also have substantial support, as literature on retirement indicates. About one in five have no retirement plans, which the literature indicates is usually a precursor to problems in adaptation.

Table 9: Attitude of colleagues or work-mates towards older workers working beyond retirement age

Perceived attitude	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Very negative	18	3.5
Negative	75	14.5
Don’t know	175	33.9
Positive	225	43.6
Strongly positive	23	4.5
Total	516	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 4 or 0.8%.

Table 9 indicates that for about two in five of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample there is ambivalence or uncertainty about the attitude of their colleagues to older workers continuing in work beyond retirement, although only about one in five of the sample see their colleagues’ attitudes as negative or very negative.

Table 10: Employer's attitude towards older workers working beyond retirement age

Perceived attitude	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Very negative	15	2.9
Negative	55	10.7
Don't know	251	48.6
Positive	175	33.9
Strongly positive	20	3.9
Total	516	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 4 or 0.8%

Like Table 9, Table 10 indicates that for more than two in five of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample there is ambivalence or uncertainty about the attitude of their employers to older workers continuing in work beyond retirement, although about one in five or of the sample see their employer's attitude as negative or very negative.

Table 11: Employer attitude to supporting training for older workers beyond retirement age

Perceived attitude	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Very negative	16	3.1
Negative	47	9.1
Don't know	285	55.3
Positive	152	29.5
Strongly positive	15	2.9
Total	515	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 5 or 1%.

Like Table 10, Table 11 indicates that for more than half of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample there is ambivalence or uncertainty about the attitude of their employers to older workers continuing in work beyond retirement, although about one in five of the sample see their employer's attitude as negative or very negative.

Table 12: Respondent's attitude towards older workers working beyond retirement age

Own attitude	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Very negative	9	1.7
Negative	11	2.1
Don't know	44	8.5
Positive	266	51.3
Strongly positive	189	36.4
Total	519	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 1 or 0.2%

Consistent with the post-retirement work expectations reported in Tables 5 and 13, Table 12 indicates that very large majorities of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample are personally positive or very positive about older workers continuing in work beyond retirement, with less than one in twenty being negative or very negative.

Table 13: Respondent's preferences if working beyond retirement age

Respondent's	responses	%
like different work	98	19.0
like similar work	147	28.4
like to keep my job	207	40.0
will not be working	39	7.5
Don't know	26	5.0
Total	517	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 3 or 0.6%

Table 13 indicates that between half and two thirds of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample would like to continue in their present job or similar work beyond retirement age, and about one in five would prefer different work. Less than one in ten of the Victorian aged care sample will not be continuing in work beyond retirement.

Table 13A: Q12 Own Attitude & Q13 Work Type Cross-tabulation

			Q13 Work Type					Total
			different work	similar work	keep present job	will not work	don't know	
Q12 Own Attitude	strongly disagree	<i>Count</i>	0	2	2	4	1	9
		<i>% of Total</i>	.0%	.4%	.4%	.8%	.2%	1.7%
	disagree	<i>Count</i>	2	2	1	3	3	11
		<i>% of Total</i>	.4%	.4%	.2%	.6%	.6%	2.1%
	neutral	<i>Count</i>	11	7	13	8	4	43
		<i>% of Total</i>	2.1%	1.4%	2.5%	1.6%	.8%	8.3%
	agree	<i>Count</i>	50	88	97	18	12	265
		<i>% of Total</i>	9.7%	17.1%	18.8%	3.5%	2.3%	51.4%
	strongly agree	<i>Count</i>	35	48	93	6	6	188
		<i>% of Total</i>	6.8%	9.3%	18.0%	1.2%	1.2%	36.4%
Total		<i>Count</i>	98	147	206	39	26	516
		<i>% of Total</i>	19.0%	28.5%	39.9%	7.6%	5.0%	100.0%

Notes: There were 4 non-responses, a rate of 0.8%. The Pearson Chi-Square has a value of 65.665, and is significant at 0.000. In the cross-tabulation, 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.45.

Table 13A reports a significant cross-tabulation that indicates that in the Victorian aged care sample the proportion of respondents who are personally positive or very positive about older workers continuing in work beyond retirement was associated with the respondents' preferences about the type of work they would like to do if they will themselves work beyond the "normal" retirement age.

Table 14 A: Qualitative response rate on respondent's current work

Current work	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Qualitative response given	167	32.1
No qualitative response	353	67.9
Total	520	100.0

Notes: The high non-response rate to this open-ended question was consistent with the question being conditional upon responses to question 13.

Tables 14A and 14B provide rates of open-ended qualitative response to questions asking respondents who replied in question 13 that they would like different work after they retire to indicate what their present job is and what kind of post-retirement work they would prefer.

Table 14 B: Qualitative response rate on respondent's preferred work beyond retirement

Preferred work	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Qualitative response given	144	27.7
No qualitative response	376	72.3
Total	520	100.0

Notes: The high non-response rate to this open-ended question was consistent with the question being conditional upon responses to question 13.

Qualitative responses by Victorian aged care worker respondents to question 14 on each respondent's current work and preferred work beyond retirement included becoming an auditor of nursing homes; a supervisor or co-ordinator or case manager; an enrolled nurse or registered nurse or psychiatric or palliative care or other nursing; physiotherapy; animal carer or pet minder; a shop assistant; a community worker; diversional therapist; nutritionist; a natural therapist; case manager; maintenance worker; community care worker; market research; a cook or kitchen assistant; a 'tea lady'; customer service centre; training Personal Care Workers or other an aged care training; craftwork or florist; a carer-companion; clothing designer/maker; a cleaner; laundry; a courier or other driver; tourism; lifestyle therapist; administration or office work or 'a desk job', in one case a medical receptionist; proof reader; a shop assistant or 'check out chick in a supermarket' or other retail industry work; a florist; a caretaker; a gardener, horticulture or plant nursery worker; a conservationist; financial counsellor; social worker; librarian; interpreter/translator for aged migrants; an aide for children with learning difficulties; a child care worker; a disabilities teacher aide; or "anything but aged care". One sought "anything my back can handle". One planned to become a missionary. Several Victorian aged care workers wanted to establish their own small business, one specifying a bed and breakfast or catering business, and others would become unpaid aged care volunteers after they retire.

Table 15: Respondent need training to work beyond retirement age

Respondent's	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	135	30.3
No	261	58.5
Don't know	50	11.2
Total	446	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 74 or 14.2%.

In Table 15 more than half of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample indicate that they do not, and less than one in three do, require training to continue working beyond retirement age.

Table 16: Qualitative response rate on training needs (of those who answered yes to question 15).

Effective training	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Qualitative response given	138	26.5
No qualitative response	382	73.5
Total	520	100.0

Notes: The high non-response rate to this open-ended question was consistent with the question being conditional upon responses to question 15.

Table 16 provide rates of open-ended qualitative response to questions asking respondents who replied ‘yes’ in question 15 that they would need training to obtain different work after they retire to indicate what kind of training they would require. Qualitative responses by this sub-group of Victorian aged care worker respondents to question 16 included update skills training in aged care; palliative care or psychiatric nurse training; ‘train the trainer’ training, (with one specifying a Certificate IV in Workplace Training); craft or florist work; case management; training in dementia care; diversional therapy; nutrition; case manager; lifestyle therapy; computer skills; Several wanted training to establish and operate their own business, one specifying a beauty/foot care business and another a bed and breakfast or catering business.

Some respondents appreciated existing training provisions where they worked. One reported that “Where I work we have refresher training every 12 months in most areas of our work”. Others would like to more formal training, such as a Certificate IV in aged care.

Table 17: Availability to the respondent of the types of training required to work beyond retirement

Respondent’s	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	90	57.7
No	24	15.4
Don’t know	42	26.9
Total	156	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was .364 or 70%. The high non-response rate to this question was consistent with the question being conditional upon responses to question 15.

Conditional upon responses to questions 15 and 16, Table 17 indicates that more than half of respondents who indicated that they would need training to obtain different work after they retire reported that the kind of training they would require was available to them, and less than one in five reported that the training they would need was not available to them.

Table 18: Training to increase respondent’s productivity in work beyond retirement age

Respondent’s	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	145	56.6
No	25	9.8
Don’t know	86	33.6
Total	256	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 264 or 50.8%. The high non-response rate to this question was consistent with respondents being invited to move from question 15 to question 20.

Table 18 indicates that more than half of respondents indicated that they would see value in training to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of older workers who continue to work beyond retirement age, and only about one in ten did not, except in the construction sample where about two in five saw value in training to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of older workers who continue to work beyond retirement age, and about one in four did not.

Table 19: Availability to the respondent of productivity-enhancing training

Respondent's	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	114	47.5
No	30	12.5
Don't know	96	40.0
Total	240	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was .280 or 53.8%. The high non-response rate to this question was consistent with the question being conditional upon responses to question 18.

Conditional upon responses to question 18, Table 19 indicates that about half of respondents who indicated that they saw value in training to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of older workers who continue to work beyond retirement age reported that the kind of training they would require was available to them, and less than one in five reported that the training was not available to them, except in the construction sample where about two in five reported that productivity and effectiveness training was available to them and one in five reported that such training was not available to them.

Table 20: Would a 'Train the trainer' courses assist older workers to train younger workers

Respondent's	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Very unlikely	14	2.7
Unlikely	28	5.5
Don't know	57	11.1
Likely	212	41.3
Very likely	202	39.4
Total	513	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was .7 or 1.3%

Table 20 indicates that around four in five of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample saw value in 'train the trainer' courses that would assist older workers to train or mentor younger workers and pass on to them the benefits of their experience.

Table 20A: Q12 Own Attitude & Q20 Trainer Cross-tabulation

			Q20 Trainer					Total
			very unlikely	unlikely	neutral	likely	very likely	
Q12 Own Attitude	strongly disagree	<i>Count</i>	1	1	0	1	6	9
		<i>% of Total</i>	.2%	.2%	.0%	.2%	1.2%	1.8%
	disagree	<i>Count</i>	2	1	2	2	4	11
		<i>% of Total</i>	.4%	.2%	.4%	.4%	.8%	2.1%
	neutral	<i>Count</i>	2	2	11	17	12	44
		<i>% of Total</i>	.4%	.4%	2.1%	3.3%	2.3%	8.6%
	agree	<i>Count</i>	4	17	30	132	79	262
		<i>% of Total</i>	.8%	3.3%	5.8%	25.7%	15.4%	51.1%
	strongly agree	<i>Count</i>	5	7	14	60	101	187
		<i>% of Total</i>	1.0%	1.4%	2.7%	11.7%	19.7%	36.5%
Total	<i>Count</i>	14	28	57	212	202	513	
	<i>% of Total</i>	2.7%	5.5%	11.1%	41.3%	39.4%	100.0%	

Notes: There were 7 non-responses, a rate of 1.3%. The Pearson Chi-Square has a value of 59.363, and is significant at 0.000. In the cross-tabulation, 13 cells (52.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.25.

Table 20A reports a significant cross-tabulation that indicates that in the Victorian aged care sample the proportion of respondents who are personally positive or very positive about older workers continuing in work beyond the “normal” retirement age were inclined to agree that “train the trainer” training would assist older workers to train or mentor younger workers and pass on to them the benefits of their experience.

Table 21: Gender differences in access to training and employment opportunities for older workers

Respondent's perception	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
strongly disagree	8	1.6
disagree	88	17.3
neutral	198	38.8
agree	144	28.2
strongly agree	72	14.1
Total	510	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was 10 or 1.9%.

Table 21 indicates that around two in five of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample perceived gender differences in access to training and employment opportunities for older workers, and about one in five did not.

Table 22: Need for training of supervisors and younger workers against age-biased stereotypes

Respondent's perception	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
strongly disagree	7	1.4
disagree	34	6.7
neutral	110	21.5
agree	241	47.2
strongly agree	119	23.3
Total	511	100.0

Notes: Non response rate was .9 or 1.7%.

Table 22 indicates that around seven in ten of the respondents in the Victorian aged care sample saw a need for training of supervisors and younger workers against age-biased stereotypes, and about one in ten did not. However, this is less persuasive than it would have been if the personal experience indicated by respondents in Tables 9, 10 and 11 were more clearly consistent with this view. The ambivalence or uncertainty evident in Tables 9, 10 and 11 somewhat diminishes the strength of the finding in Table 22, but it remains a notably strongly defined view on the specific issue.

Qualitative Responses to Question 23

Table 23: Qualitative response rate on most effective training for work beyond retirement age

Effective training	<i>responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Qualitative response given	377	72.5
No qualitative response	143	27.5
Total	520	100.0

Table 23 provide rates of open-ended qualitative response to questions asking respondents about their suggestions about the most effective training required for work beyond retirement age. Their qualitative responses are reported in the next section.

Q. 23 Based on your experience, what types of training programs would be most effective to equip older workers to acquire skills and knowledge to remain effective in the workforce beyond retirement age in your present line of work? Please specify:

- Computer skills (76)
- Skills update (55)
- OHS training (27)
- Manual handling (21)

Full training in manual handling would most equip older workers. As we age our bodies are unable to stand up to movement that was easier when younger. We need to be able to protect ourselves against any potential dangers.

- Refresher courses (14)

Training programs must consist of keeping abreast of current trends in the industry. Education should be mandatory.

- In-service, hands-on training (21)
Hands-on experience – best teacher.
- Fitness training (9)
My type of work requires a certain level of fitness as I am on my feet all day. A kitchen that is properly designed and equipped goes a long way to easing tired legs.
I am a cleaner, so I just hope my legs can keep me going.
Physical fitness training involving the proper use of one's body weight and strength in safe effective ways to avoid injury. Present manual handling policies are nonsense!
- Coping with behaviour problems of aged (8)
- Communication skills (5)
Communication skills are a must for getting on with people and making sure your rights are protected.
- Train employers (4)
Education of management to understand the need to make better use of older workers in light of the fact that retirement age must go up to at least 70 years soon.
- Train trainers course (3)
Care work physically demanding – train the trainer good idea – sharing values, respect of client, etc.
I did Train the Trainer course and now train Cert III in Aged Care, Community service, and am able to pass on all the experiences I have gained for 30 years. In Aged Care, it's one of the best things I have done. I'm 63 and can see myself working in this field for many years – 70+.
With all the experience older workers have, perhaps they can train new members of staff, do administration work, or just fill in work when anyone is away on leave.
- TAFE courses (3)
- Time management (3)
- Counselling skills (3)
- Culture awareness (2)
- Training to work in teams (2)
- How to handle younger workers (2)
The training of older people to handle the negative comments of smart-mouths younger workers & vice versa.

Qualitative Responses to Question 24

Table 24: Qualitative response rate on policy changes required for work beyond retirement age

Policy changes	responses	%
Qualitative response given	268	51.5
No qualitative response	252	48.5
Total	520	100.0

Table 24 provide rates of open-ended qualitative response to questions asking respondents about their suggestions on policy changes required for work beyond retirement age. Their qualitative responses are reported in the next section.

Q. 24 Are there policy changes that are needed to reinforce the effectiveness of training

- End discrimination of aged workers – from senior management/employers, recruitment agencies, younger workers (stated in various ways) (36)

Employers need some incentives to employ 50+ workers – ie a tax incentive because they see older workers as a liability in many cases.

I was made redundant because I had the most accrued entitlements, experience and qualifications and the employer did not want to pay the wages I was entitled to. It is very hard to find work at 50+ let alone 55+ - employers do not see experience as a plus.

Thanks to Government policy, 1 in 10 younger workers can cope adequately with work loads in aged care. How the hell do you expect older workers to cope? Throw inadequate training into the mix and older workers haven't got a prayer in aged care.

Access to training should be exactly the same for older people as is anti-discrimination/equal opportunity law. However, it is not law that govern opportunities; it is perceptions – in this case employer perceptions of when people are too old to do work.

Government should legislate against discrimination to older workers. Education programs to encourage employment of older workers.

A policy to cover the fact that even though older workers may be slower at their job they are still thorough, sometimes more so than younger staff, and are mentally able.

I think policy changes will need to be reinforced so that training needs are met by all workers regardless of age. This will mean that training is suitable for older workers as well as up and coming younger workers. Without a policy in place older workers would/will be disadvantaged.

I think that in general the younger generation don't respect or appreciate what older experienced people have to offer. In America, you see a lot of older workers waiting in cafes, restaurants etc. You don't see that here! It's about a young fresh face bringing in customers rather than what a person is capable of. People's attitudes to old age need to change somehow. Men in high paid corporate positions often work beyond retirement age. Women have a harder time as they have often been out of the workforce while bringing up family. They lack confidence and skills to acquire work.

Speaking as an older worker we should be valued more and respected more in the workforce by management and peers. Older workers have a lot to offer.

You need to train employers to take on older workers. Older workers often have the skills required to do the job. Employers don't want them as they see them as a threat to their own jobs.

From my experience of nearly 8 years, I see older workers who are very good workers leave because they physically can't keep going. No help is offered from management to retain these people. It seems the attitude is there are more younger people needing jobs, but unfortunately there is not the same feeling of care towards the residents from most of the new staff and the residents in care miss out in their final years of life.

Older people does not mean used by date has expired. Attitude shift required. Noticed a big difference of attitudes – started with an “old school” matron/don. It was her that encouraged me to consider uni for a better future. New don younger, 30/40 years of age. Very unsupportive of my studies, quite dismissive of it. I think she believed I was “past” it (would roster me when I was meant to be in lectures). Succeeded in averaging distinctions with the occasional HD thrown in for good luck! I am very proud of my achievements.

The training required is of younger staff of Centrelink and other agencies involved in employment to recognize and utilise the experience and skills of older workers – the treatment of older workers needs to be different from that of younger workers. My experience from dealing with “agencies” was that they wanted me to do useless courses to “fit me for employment” while totally ignoring the skills I had – Bed in communication, 15 years developing a farm and small business, extensive activity in community conservation, training, supervision and in ground work etc.

- Free or subsidized training (10)

Employers continuously come up with “not enough money”. Staff should not have to foot the bill for full training which the company benefits from.

- Incentives to employers to upskill workers (3)

I don't know that you can force employers to train older employees to train older employees. They would only do it if government were to offer them a financial incentive. Money is the only thing that talks.

- Train managers and policy writers (4)
- Policy re older workers aged 65+Eligibility for “Seniors Card” limited to 65 years and part-time workers
- Job flexibility (hours, P/T, job share) (5)

Perhaps flexibility in number of hours worked. Some older workers may like to remain in the workforce but with reduced hours. Any training would probably have to be at a slower pace but taking into account life experience.

Older workers often gave medical issues to take into consideration – physically, mentally slow down. Flexi times (P/T rather than F/T) may be a requirement.

Part-time work would benefit older workers to remain in the workforce until a stop-up pension and not solely rely on having to work full time.

- Deployment to less strenuous work (5)

Older workers are probably better off in less labour intensive jobs, allowing them to remain in the workforce longer.

- Training of younger workers (2)

Educate and encourage younger people in using skills and knowledge already intrinsic in older workers – ie older workers have a lot to offer – example reliability and common sense – they are worth looking after and lack of foresight within the management.

Older staff are well trained and have high standards of care and commitment. The problem is with the inadequate training of new and younger staff.

- Review retiring age (2)

The retirement age could be reviewed, because 60 is the new 50 now. Older people are still active, vibrant members who still have a lot to offer and experience to give.

Don't have an age limit for retiring. If an older person is fit they should be in the workforce for as long as they wish. I can't imagine trying to survive on the age pension.

Abolition of mandatory retirement age – this will eventually get rid of “worker” versus “retiree” stereotypes.

- Reinforcement of policies regarding training and retention of older workers (2)

There is a great need for “Who cares for the Carers” at all levels – from ward carers, nurses, doctors and administrators.

I find it disgusting that a “Seniors Card” is not available on an income/assets base but eligibility is related to the number of hours worked! (eligibility for permanent residents of Australia aged 60 years or over, and working no more than 20 hours per week in paid employment). It's certainly a disincentive to work.

Discussion of the issues

Q 23. *Training programs considered most effective*

A number of areas were stated as essential to equip older workers in the Aged Care industry in the Health Sector Union with skills and knowledge to remain effective in the workforce beyond retirement age. This sector includes a variety of health care professionals such as nurses, aged care workers, ward clerks, kitchen, cleaning and administrative staff in aged care facilities. The most salient points are discussed here, incorporating some statements from the responses of the questionnaire and from a discussion with HSU union officials in Victoria.

1. Computer skills

Training in computer skills rated high among the respondents of the Aged Care Union in the Health Sector. Computer skills in simple word-processing techniques were considered essential for report writing, filing reports, invoice preparations and day-to-day administration not only among those working in the administrative area but even among the general; aged care workers..

2. Skills update

Training in this area was ranked next from the responses to the question. This is an indication of the serious commitment aged care workers put into their occupation and their desire to ensure that their skills are updated constantly.

3. Training

A varied number of areas were stated and these include training relating specifically to the work involved such as manual handling, OHS training and refresher courses that keep them abreast of current trends in the industry. Fitness training was also considered a crucial training area for those working with aged care whether in the personal care of the aged, cleaners, cooks. A concern that came out was for a physical fitness training that involves “proper use of one’s body weight and strength in safe and effective ways to avoid injury”.

The methods suggested include hands-on-training, on-the-job training, and one-on-one training, indicating a preference for training that is practical rather than theoretical in orientation, and as one response stated “hands-on experience – the best teacher”. There was also a preference for “train the trainer” course as this enabled the workers to share their knowledge, skills and experience of working in the field. This response relates to another suggestion for a training course to train employers who would then understand the importance of valuing older workers as role models for younger and less experienced workers.

Other training suggestions relate more to personal development that would enhance their effectiveness in the workforce beyond retirement age, and include: training to cope with behavioural problems of the aged, communication skills, time management, counselling skills and cultural awareness. The culturally diverse workforce of this sector also indicates the need for effective communication skills in English language especially for those where English is a second language and miscommunications do take place not only between the worker and the client but between workers and between workers and the employers. As one response stated “communication skills are a must for getting on with people and making sure your rights are protected”.

Assertiveness training was also suggested particularly in relation to training older workers to deal with younger workers. There is an underlying indication of tension between older and younger workers and explain to some extent the suggestion for training of workers as team members.

Q 24 Policy Changes to reinforce effectiveness of training.

1. Policy to end age discrimination

As the various statements in relation to this issue indicate, age discrimination is a major barrier in the training and retention of older workers in the workforce. Negative perceptions regarding older workers come from senior management, employers, recruitment agencies and younger workers. Employers tend to view older workers as a liability rather than as assets, overlooking their years of experience in the field (see statements above).

This relates to suggestions that managers and policy writers be trained in managing older workforce. Discussions with HSU personnel in Victoria indicates this to be a serious suggestion and training of managers are already in place in the Health Sector

2. Training

Among the policy in regard to training, the suggestions include provision from the government to employers in the form of financial incentives and enable workers access to free or subsidized training.

3. Working hours

Consistent with concerns for fitness training, responses in regard to working hours range from flexibility of working hours to part-time work to job share. There were also suggestions that there be opportunities for deployment into less strenuous work.

The responses indicating that not all older workers wish to stay on beyond retirement age relate more to the concern with individual health and fitness in order to work effectively in this occupation (see statements above).

4. Retirement

Many respondents were of the opinion that there will be policy changes to review the retirement age. Some were of the opinion that there should be no age limit for retirement and that there should be a review of regulations relating to superannuation, workcover/workcare for workers over the age of 65. A particular point was made by one respondent regarding "Seniors Card" whereby eligibility is related to the number of hours worked and which does act as a disincentive to work.

In relation to issues relating to superannuation rules for workers in the over 65 age group, discussion with HSU personnel indicate that for workers over the age of 70 who are not eligible for superannuation contribution, a 9% employer contribution is paid directly into their bank account.

Overall, responses to this question indicate a strong demand for policy changes that would lead to an end in age discrimination. The problem is not with government providing incentives for older workers to continue working after retirement age; what is needed is attitudinal change from employers, senior management, and younger workers who tend to see older workers as liability in the workplace. Older workers are willing to continue working particularly if workcover regulations as well as superannuation rules make it possible for older workers beyond age 65 are not penalized through taxes for working.

Conclusions

The policy priority is to address the obstacles, constraints and disincentives that deter, constrain or prevent older workers from working beyond their “normal” retirement age. A substantial majority of older workers believe that older workers face discrimination in the workforce, but less of them report discriminatory attitudes from their colleagues and employers. Quantitative and qualitative findings strongly supported measures against age discrimination and age-biased stereotypes that limit opportunities for older workers. Rules and regulations relating to superannuation, work-cover policies need to be revised as current policies discriminate against older workers and act as disincentives for older workers to continue working. Since most older workers expect to continue working but a small minority do not, reviews of retirement ages need to enable individuals to have the options to continue working or to retire, depending on each individual’s health and circumstances. Older workers see themselves as needing fairer access to training programs to enable them to update their skills, and to keep up with developments in technology, especially in training in computing skills updating of existing skills, and professional development training programs that would enhance specific skills in their particular fields. The respondents strongly favour such programs, including “train the trainer” courses to equip older workers to train or mentor younger workers.

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Appendix A

VICTORIAN AGED CARE HSU

Older workers' perspectives on training and retention of older workers.

NATIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Your response matters. Why?

As you know, older people make up an increasing share of Australia's population. Some say this will mean older workers will need to continue working longer. The views of older workers have been missing from the public discussion of these issues. Four unions are cooperating with this project in an effort to inform public and policy debates by adding workers' viewpoints.

This is a survey of older workers in the **Aged Care, Construction and Finance** industries, who are members of four unions: the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU); Finance Sector Union; the Health Services Union; and the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union. These four unions urge their members to complete the survey.

The survey project is funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). The researchers are from the University of South Australia.

Your privacy and the confidentiality of your individual survey response are safe. The survey questionnaires are being posted to Union members by the Unions, to a sample of union members. Your **privacy** is protected because the researchers at the University of South Australia do not know your name or your address. All survey responses are to be returned to the researchers at the University of South Australia. The **confidentiality** of your individual survey response is protected because the Unions who have the names and addresses do not see any individual survey responses. The researchers at the University of South Australia will receive all of the survey responses and analyse them. The researchers will prepare summary reports for the Unions and NCVER.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions in this questionnaire and post the form back to the researchers at the University of South Australia in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Please tick one box for each question, unless another response is requested.

About you and your situation:

1. Are you male or female?

1. Female

2. Male

2. What age range includes your age?

1. 45-49

2. 50-54

3. 55-59

4. 60-64

5. 65 & over

3. Will you have dependants relying on you beyond your retirement age?

1. Will have several dependants

2. Will have one dependant

3. May have one or more dependants

4. Will have no dependants

5. Don't know

4. When you retire, where will you be living?

1. Own home paid off

2. Own home mortgaged

3. Renting home

4. Other

5. Don't know

5. Do you expect to have enough income and savings to live on when you retire, without needing to work?

1. Will need a retirement job

2. May need to work part-time

3. May work for better lifestyle

4. Will not need to work

5. Don't know

6. Are there financial incentives or disincentives in your superannuation scheme that may influence whether people in your industry work beyond retirement age?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

7. (If you answered 'No' to question 6, please go to question 8.) If you answered 'Yes' to question 6, please say what the financial incentives or disincentives are:

Your perspective on working after retirement age:

8. Do you have plans for what you will do in your retirement, not including paid work? (Tick as many boxes as apply in question 8).

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Caring for grandchildren | 2. Home improvements | 3. Travel | 4. Other | 5. No plans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. Do most of your colleagues or work-mates have a positive or negative attitude towards older workers continuing at work beyond retirement age?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Very negative | 2. Negative | 3. Don't know | 4. Positive | 5. Strongly positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. Does your employer have a positive or negative attitude towards older workers continuing at work beyond retirement age?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Very negative | 2. Negative | 3. Don't know | 4. Positive | 5. Strongly positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. Does your employer have a positive or negative attitude to supporting training for older workers if they continue at work beyond retirement age?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Very negative | 2. Negative | 3. Don't know | 4. Positive | 5. Strongly positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your perspective on training for work after retirement:

12. Do you agree or disagree that older workers can continue to participate effectively in the workforce beyond retirement age?

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

13. If you continue working beyond retirement age, would you like to keep your present job, or to do similar work or a different type of work?

1. I would like different work

Go to question 14

2. I would like similar work

Go to question 15

3. I would like to keep my job

4. I will not be working

Go to question 20

5. Don't know

14. If you will or might continue working beyond retirement age in a different type of job, what type of work would you prefer?

My job now is:

I would like to work as a:

--	--

15. If you would or might continue working beyond retirement age in the type of job you prefer, would you need training to do it?

1. Yes

Go to question 16

2. No

Go to question 20

3. Don't know

Go to question 20

16. If you answered yes to question 15, what kind of training would you need? Please specify:

--

17. Is the type of training you described at question 16 available to you?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

18. Whether you would prefer the work to be similar or different, are there training programs that would increase your productivity and effectiveness if you continue working beyond retirement age?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

19. Is the type of training referred to at question 18 available to you?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

**Please answer questions 20-24 whether you wish to do
continue in work or not.**

20. Would a 'Train the trainer' course be likely to improve the capacity of older workers to train younger workers and give them the benefit of their experience?

**1. Very
Unlikely**

2. Unlikely

3. Neutral

4. Likely

5. Very Likely

21. Do you agree or disagree that there are differences in access to training opportunities and employment participation for male and female older workers?

**1. Strongly
disagree**

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

**5. Strongly
agree**

22. Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for training of supervisors and younger workers against age-biased stereotypes of older workers?

**1. Strongly
disagree**

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

**5. Strongly
agree**

23. Based on your experience, what types of training programs would be most effective to equip older workers to acquire skills and knowledge to remain effective in the workforce beyond retirement age in your present line of work? Please specify:

24. Are there policy changes that are needed to reinforce the effectiveness of training in fostering retention of older workers as workforce participants? Please specify:

Thank you for your cooperation. Please return this form in the stamped addressed envelope provided.