

HR:PULSE



AHRI PULSE SURVEY OLDER WORKERS

Sponsored by:



Australian Government
Department of Employment





Australian Government
Department of Employment

The Australian Government's Restart Wage Subsidy provides an incentive of up to \$10,000 (GST inclusive) to employers if they hire and retain a full-time mature age job seeker aged 50 years or older who has been unemployed and receiving income support for 6 months or more. The Restart Wage Subsidy can also be claimed on a pro rata basis for part-time workers, for at least 15 hours a week.

Visit the Experience Pays website (www.experiencepays.gov.au) for more information about Restart and the benefits of employing mature age workers; or you can contact the Department of Employment at Restart@employment.gov.au.



The ageing population of Australia has influenced a range of government responses over the past decade or so, with successive governments developing policy initiatives to encourage the workforce participation of targeted cohorts, including older workers, and to alleviate some of the fiscal pressures associated with an older demographic that is highly employable but draws on the welfare budget if excluded from the labour market. While it has been encouraging to see governments send signals to remove age barriers and introduce incentives for the employment of older workers, on the whole the evidence is that of a mixed response by employers to own the issue of retaining older workers and recruiting them into vacancies.

The findings of this survey offers further evidence in support of that view, but it also offers some insights into the positive ways in which many Australian workplaces have responded to an ageing population.

The findings indicate that there is room for organisations to consider intergenerational management training, with more than three quarters of the sample (77%) reporting that line managers have seldom or never received training on how to manage different generations. Despite the data indicating that organisations are aware that departing older workers take valuable corporate knowledge and experience with them when they leave, the respondents report little being done to proactively capture that knowledge. For example, nearly two in three (63%) report that there are no mentoring programs offered that could assist in retaining some of that intellectual property, and 40% say their workplace seldom or never takes steps to capture corporate knowledge from older workers as they transition out of the workforce.

It is encouraging to see that only a small proportion (12%) of respondents believe that age-related bias is common in their workplace. However, with around a third (35%) of

respondents acknowledging bias sometimes occurs, it appears to be an issue which requires attention in many organisations. It is worth noting that of respondents who say age-related bias does occur, 64% report that it affects both older and younger workers, confirming that age-bias is not exclusively an older-worker issue. In terms of the survey respondents' perceptions of older workers compared with younger workers, a balanced view of the workplace merits of each group emerges. While a majority of the sample believe younger workers bring better technology skills to the workplace (77%) and are more physically capable (74%), older workers are perceived to be more loyal (80%) and reliable (69%). Perhaps the more significant finding, however, is that two thirds of the sample (67%) believe there is no discernible difference in job performance between older and younger workers.

On the whole, the findings present us with a mixed bag of results. While there is apparent recognition of the many skills and qualities older workers have to offer, the data also indicate that the full potential of older workers is not being harnessed. The lesson for individual older workers is that they need to ensure they are keeping their skills up-to-date, particularly with regards to advances in technology. At the same time, systematic discrimination and myths about older workers need to be countered.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Wilson".

Peter Wilson AM
Chairman
Australian Human Resources Institute



A total of 1931 respondents completed this survey, one of the better response rates AHRI has received for a HR Pulse survey in recent years. This response amounts to a 60% increase on the 1212 responses received for the 'Mature Age Workforce Participation' survey we conducted in 2012, indicating interest in this subject remains alive and well.

The survey offers an insight into the current state of play regarding older workers in Australia. The next steps will be to determine what game changing strategies can be undertaken to make an impact. In association with the Australian Human Rights Commission, during February 2015 AHRI will be exploring these questions at a business summit on Older Australians at Work and will be informed by the findings of this survey. The summit will further explore the ramifications of policy on older workers, and how best to maximise the ownership from all parts of the community on the issue, including employers. That work will no doubt continue into the future and I look forward to sharing the outcomes with you.

I would like to express my appreciation to those members who contributed to the survey and commend the findings to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lyn Goodear'.

Lyn Goodear
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Human Resources Institute

Acknowledgements

Project Sponsor: Peter Wilson
Project Director: Lyn Goodear
Research Coordinator: Dana Grgas
Authors: Paul Begley, Femi Hardwick-Slack
Design: Kelly McKillop

AHRI would also like to thank its Research Advisory Panel members for their input into this survey.

© Australian Human Resources Institute January 2015

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The survey was conducted online in November and December 2014 and communicated by email to a sample of members of the Australian Human Resources Institute.

A total of 1931 respondents completed the survey. Responses were treated anonymously.

“

The organisation focuses on employing graduates and younger employees to ensure the longevity of employment and flexibility for succession management purposes.”

AHRI survey respondent

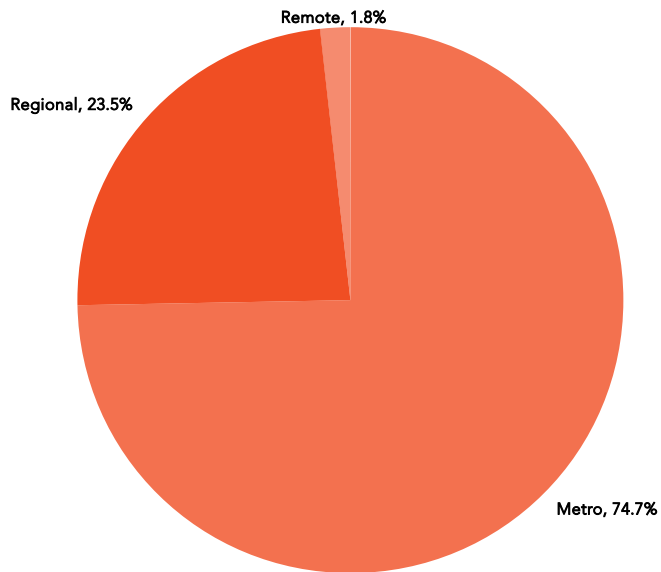


KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

- Respondents identified the main benefits of recruiting older workers as the experience they bring, the professional knowledge they have acquired, and their reliability.
- Respondents identified the main obstacles to recruiting older workers as the physical demands of the job, poor technology skills, and the fact that many older workers don't apply for vacancies.
- A majority of respondents believe older workers are more loyal, reliable, aware, committed and have better levels of attendance than younger workers. They also believe, however, that younger workers have more energy, career ambition, technology skills, creativity and are more physically capable than older workers.
- Retirement, redundancy, illness and injury are identified by respondents as the most common reasons why older workers leave the workplace.
- More than half of the sample (56%) say their workplace does not survey the workforce to gain information about future work intentions.
- Around three quarters (77%) of respondents say line managers in their workplace are not trained in ways to manage different generations.
- Slightly more than half the sample group (53%) say age-related bias seldom or never occurs in their workplace.
- Almost four out of ten respondents (38%) would classify a worker as old if the worker was between the ages of 50-55 (13%) or 56-60 (25%)
- Only 3% of respondents report that their workplace has ever considered menopause as a HR issue.
- Fewer than 3% of respondents say their workplace uses mature age specific job boards to advertise vacancies.
- Of those that say age-related bias does occur in their workplace, 64% say it affects both older and younger workers.

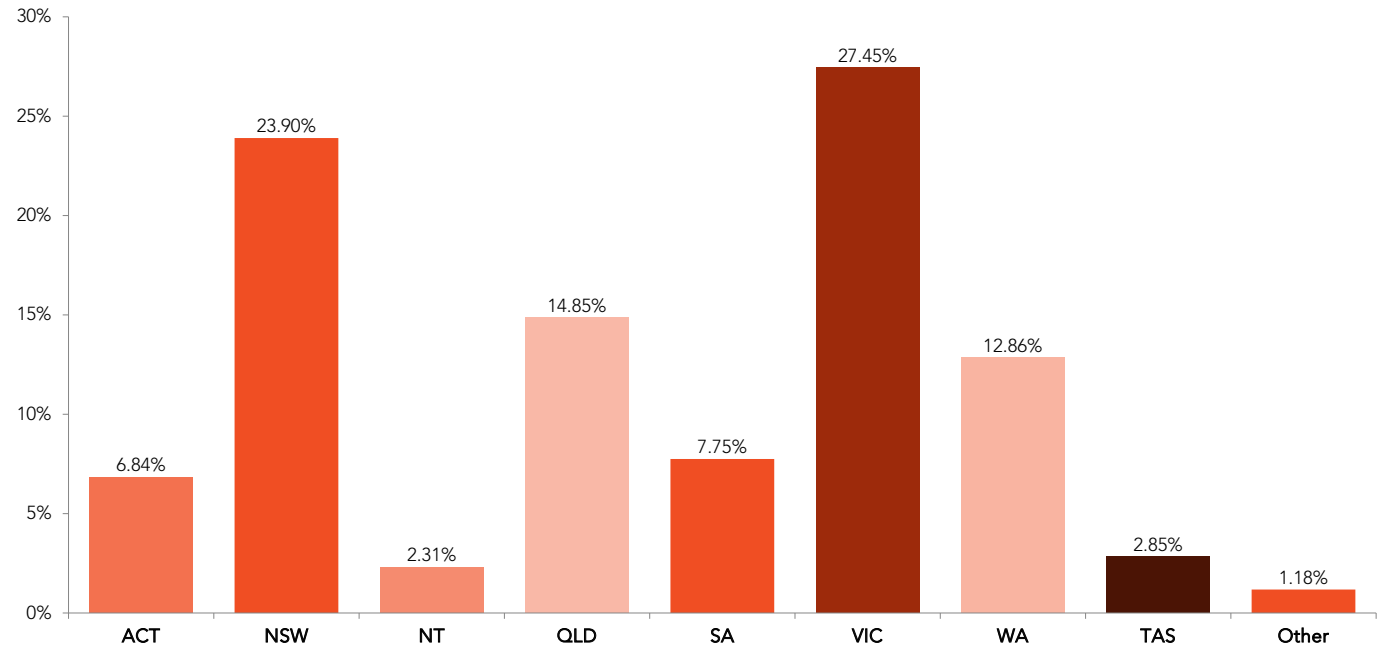
DEMOGRAPHICS

FIGURE 1. LOCATION
1850 RESPONSES



Almost three-quarters (74.7%) of respondents are based in metropolitan areas, while just under a quarter (23.51%) are in regional areas. Only 1.78% of respondents are located in remote areas.

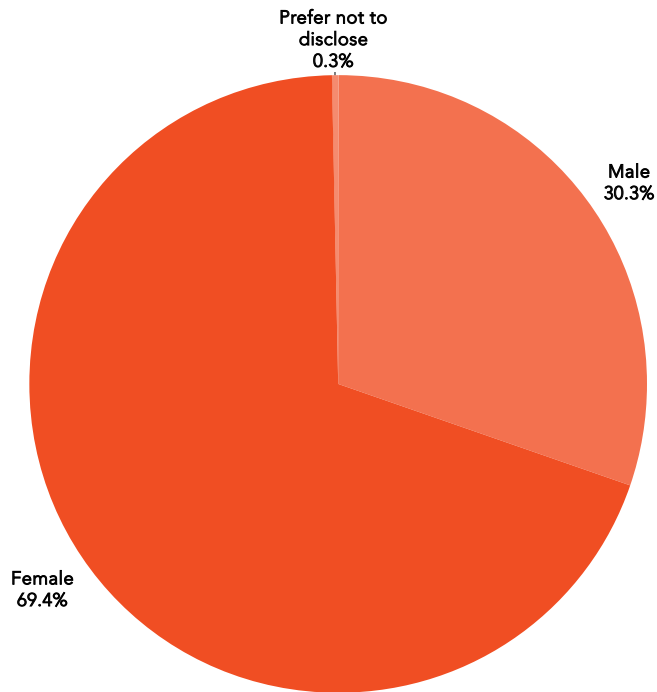
FIGURE 2. STATE OR TERRITORY
1858 RESPONSES



More than half (51.35%) of respondents are based in either Victoria (27.45%) or New South Wales (23.9%). Just over a quarter (27.71%) are located in either Queensland (14.85%) or Western Australia (12.86%). The remaining states and territories represent approximately a fifth of respondents (20.93%).

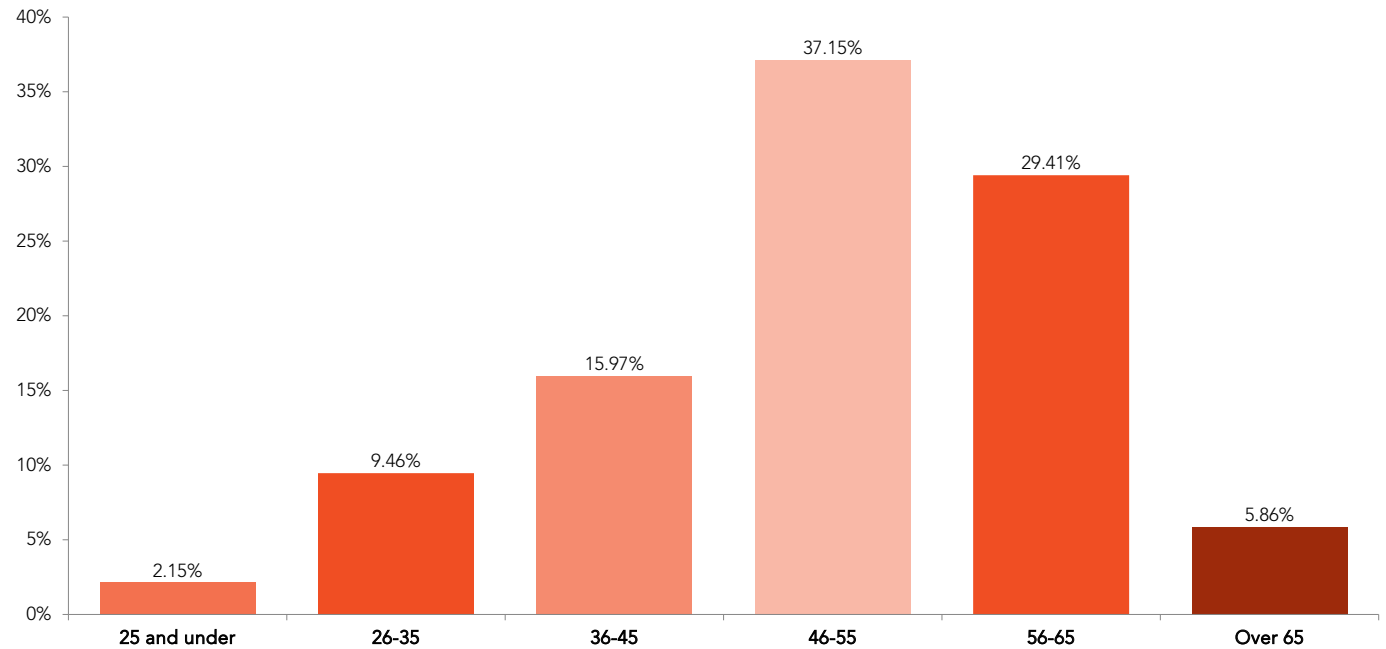
DEMOGRAPHICS

FIGURE 3: GENDER
1834 RESPONSES



More than two-thirds (69.36%) of respondents are female, while just under a third (30.32%) are male.

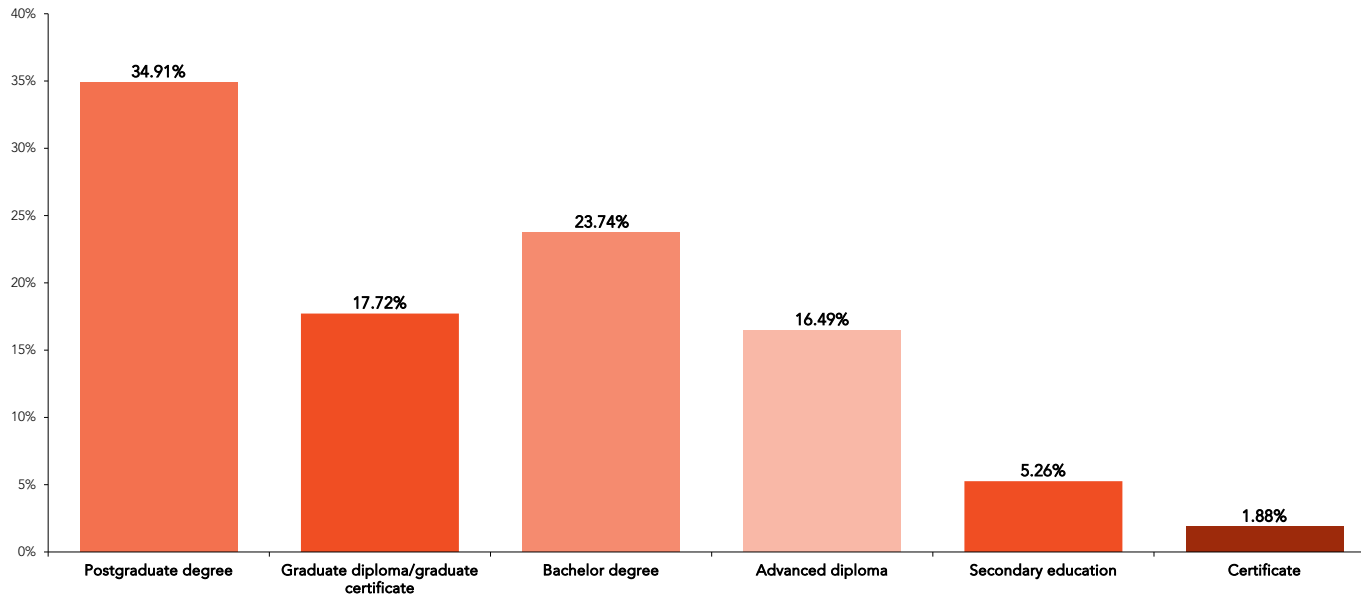
FIGURE 4: AGE
1860 RESPONSES



Almost three-quarters (72.42%) of respondents are 46 years old or over. The remaining quarter (27.58%) are under 45, of whom only 2.15% are younger than 25 years of age.

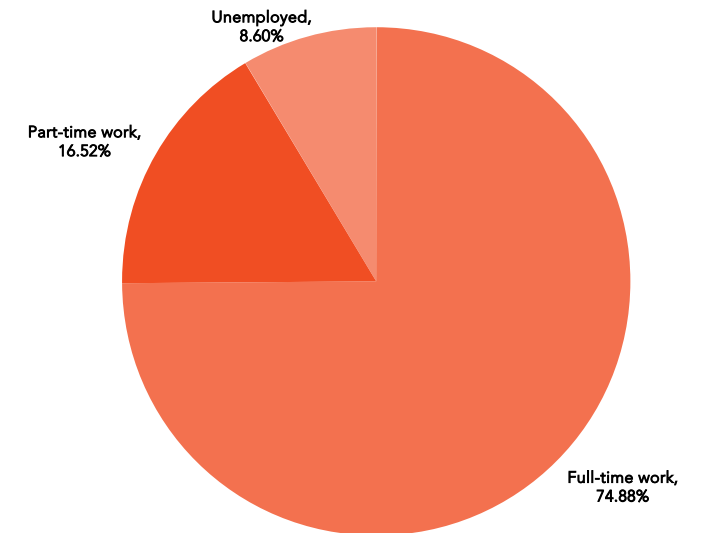
DEMOGRAPHICS

FIGURE 5: HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
1862 RESPONSES



More than a half (52.63%) of respondents have a postgraduate qualification, while around a quarter (23.74%) have a bachelor degree.

FIGURE 6: EMPLOYMENT STATUS
1931 RESPONSES



Approximately three-quarters (74.88%) of respondents are in full-time work, while fewer than one in six (16.52%) are in part-time work. The remaining 8.6% of respondents were unemployed when they responded to the survey.

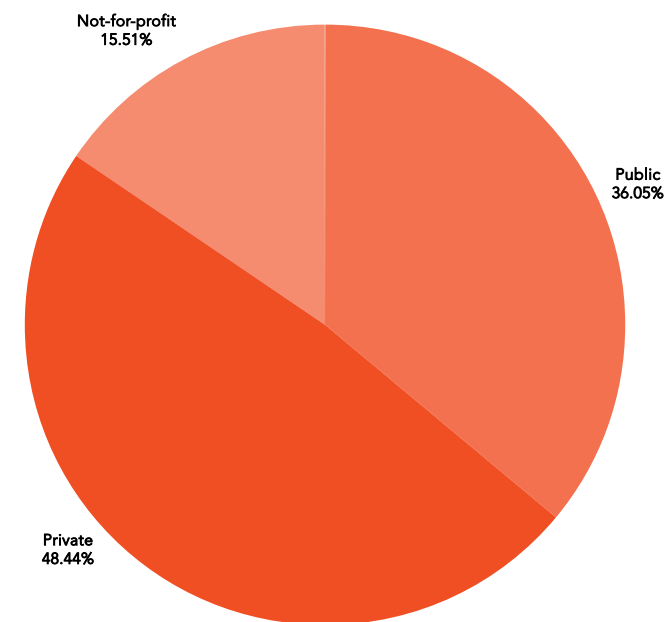
DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 1. OCCUPATION
1527 RESPONSES

ANSWER	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Academic	45	2.95%
Accountant/Finance	16	1.05%
Administrator	51	3.34%
Barrister/Solicitor	1	0.07%
Consultant	142	9.30%
HR Administrator	20	1.31%
HR Officer	70	4.58%
HR Coordinator	71	4.65%
HR Advisor	164	10.74%
HR Manager	308	20.17%
Senior HR Manager	139	9.10%
HR Director/GM	120	7.86%
Recruiter	16	1.05%
Supervisor/Team Leader	21	1.38%
Manager	93	6.09%
Senior Manager	61	3.99%
Director/GM/ CEO/Executive	67	4.39%
Other	122	7.99%

Middle level HR managers, HR advisors HR administrators, HR officers and HR coordinators account for the majority of the respondent sample (41.45%) with senior HR managers and HR directors making up 16.96% of the sample. Approximately four in ten (41.59%) respondents are in non-HR roles such as accountants, academics, managers, directors, executives, team leaders and administrators.

FIGURE 7: SECTOR
1728 RESPONSES



Almost half (48.44%) of respondents work in the private sector, while just over a third (36.05%) work in the public sector. The remaining 15.51% of respondents work in the not-for-profit sector.

DEMOGRAPHICS

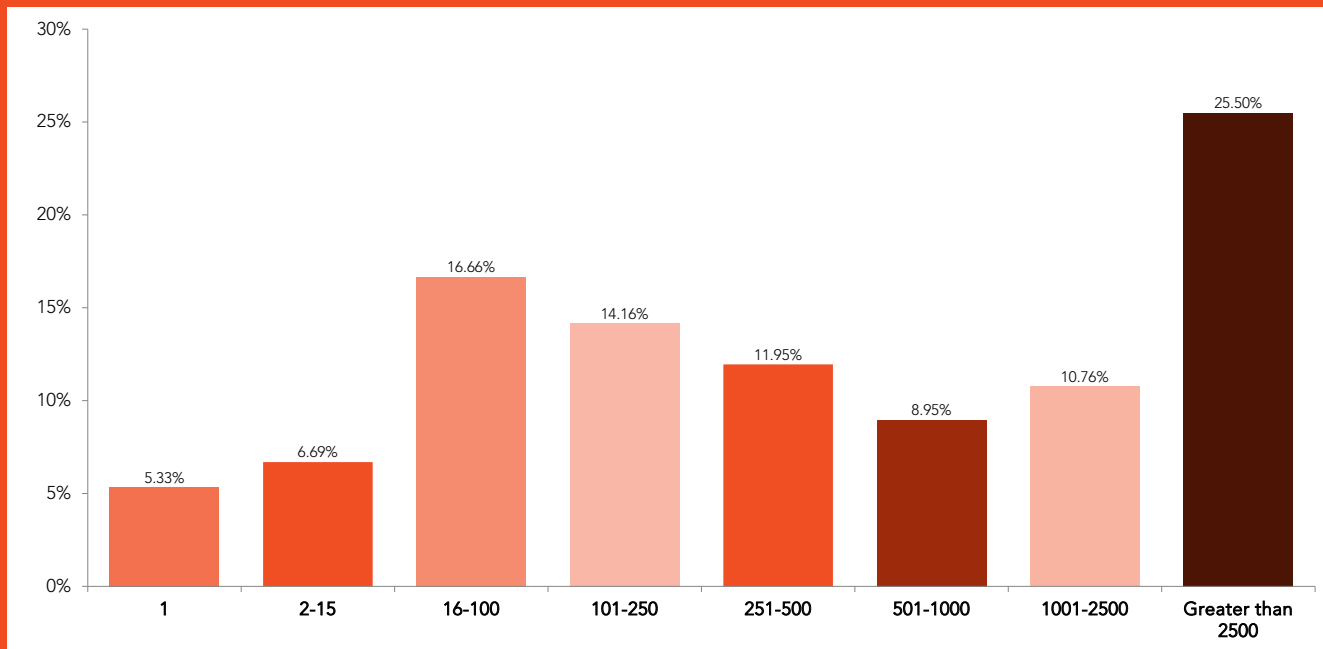
TABLE 2: INDUSTRY
1708 RESPONSES

ANSWER	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	20	1.17%
Mining	52	3.04%
Manufacturing	110	6.44%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	35	2.05%
Construction	42	2.46%
Wholesale Trade	14	0.82%
Retail Trade	50	2.93%
Accommodation and Food Services	20	1.17%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	57	3.34%
Information Media and Telecommunications	34	1.99%
Financial and Insurance Services	110	6.44%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	5	0.29%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	143	8.37%
Administrative and Support Services	52	3.04%
Public Administration and Safety	174	10.19%
Education and Training	248	14.52%
Health Care and Social Assistance	228	13.35%
Arts and Recreation Services	15	0.88%
Other	299	17.51%

The table above shows that respondents work in a broad range of industries. Education and training (14.52%), healthcare and social assistance (13.35%) and public administration and safety (10.19%) are the most highly represented industries, while rental, hiring and real estate (0.29%), wholesale trade (0.82%) arts and recreation services (0.88%) are represented the least.

DEMOGRAPHICS

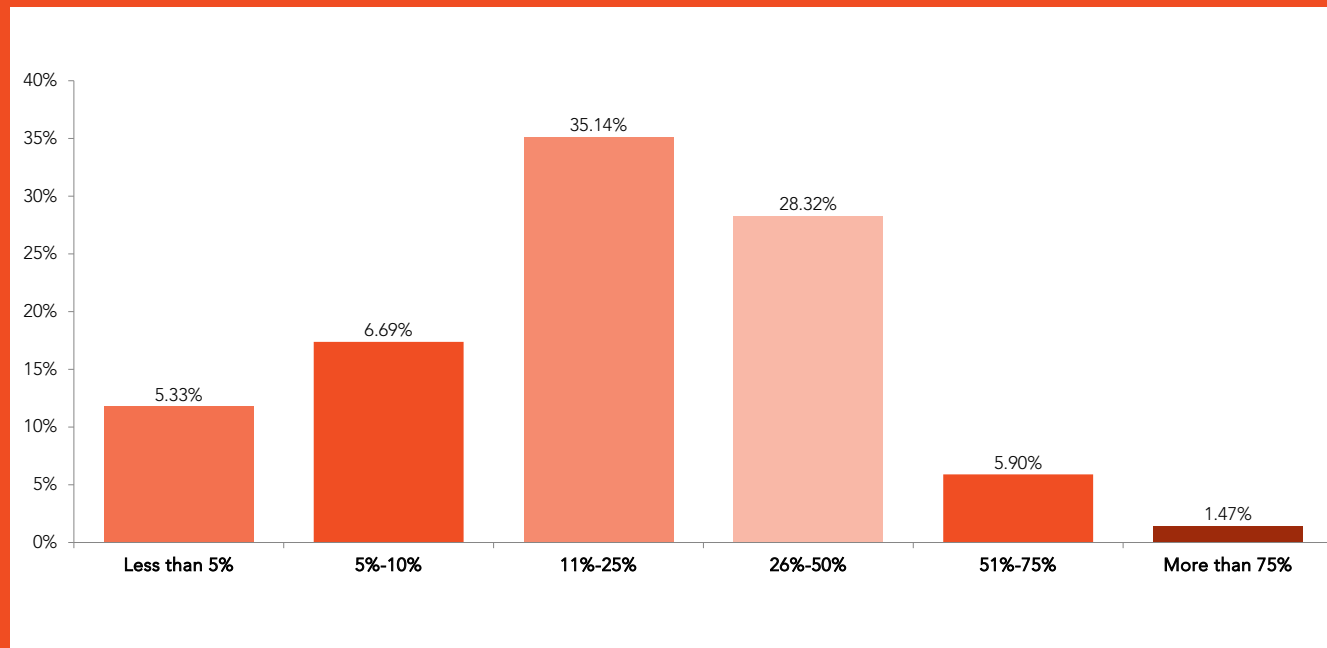
FIGURE 8: ORGANISATION SIZE
1765 RESPONSES



Approximately a quarter (25.5%) of respondents work in organisations of more than 2500 employees, while just under a third (31.66%) work in organisation of 251-2500 employees. A slightly larger proportion of respondents (37.51%) work in smaller organisations of 2-250 employees, while 5.33% work independently.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 9: APPROXIMATELY WHAT PROPORTION OF YOUR WORKFORCE IS OVER 55 YEARS OF AGE?
1628 RESPONSES



More than a third (35.14%) of respondents report that 11-25% of their workforce are over 55 years old, while more than a quarter (28.32%) report that 26-50% of their workforce is over 55. Just over one in ten (11.79%) respondents report that less than 5% of their workforce is over 55 years old. Only 5.9% of respondents report that half to three quarters (51-75%) of the workforce are over 55 years old.

“

Older workers often come with strange self-representation about being older, which then puts me off progressing them through the hiring process. They see themselves differently which makes me see them differently.”

AHRI survey respondent

DETAILED FINDINGS

TABLE 3: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR WORKPLACE TO EMPLOYEES IN THEIR LATE CAREERS?

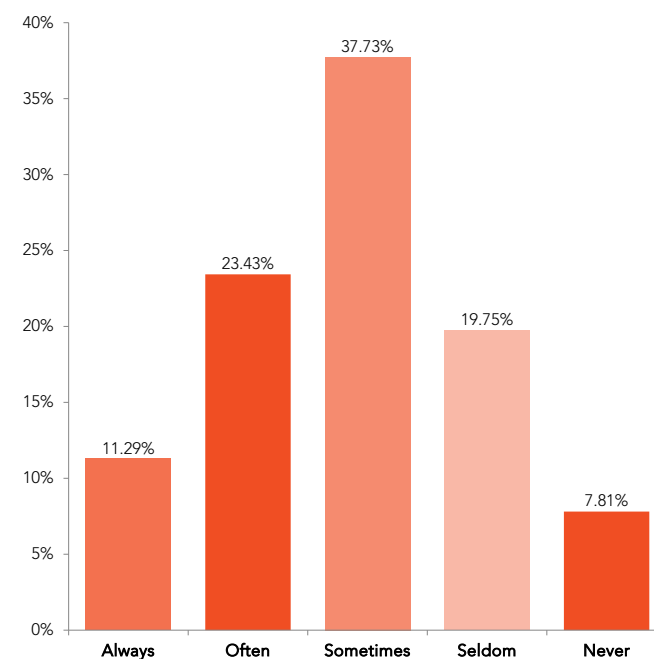
1652 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Flexible working hours	1233	74.63%
Part-time options	1190	72.03%
Continued access to training and development	1043	63.13%
Long-service awards and recognition	969	58.65%
Phased retirement	569	34.44%
Job-sharing options	546	33.05%
Flexible work locations	462	27.96%
Career planning and advice	408	24.69%
Elderly care leave	239	14.46%
Flexible job design policies	221	13.37%
Grandparental leave	154	9.32%
Return-to-work options for retirees	132	7.99%
Loyalty payments	94	5.69%
None of the above	126	7.62%

Almost three-quarters (74.63%) of respondents indicate that their workplaces offer flexible working hours to employees in their late careers. Slightly fewer (72.03%) report that part-time options are available, while just under two-thirds (63.13%) say that employees in their late careers have continued access to training and development. A fairly small proportion of respondents report that grandparental leave (9.32%), return-to-work options for retirees (7.99%) and loyalty payments (5.69%) are available to older workers in their workplace, while 7.62% report that none of the options listed are available.

FIGURE 10: ARE THESE OPTIONS PROACTIVELY COMMUNICATED TO EMPLOYEES IN THEIR LATE CAREER STAGE?

1524 RESPONSES



More than a third (34.72%) of respondents say that the options available to employees are often (23.43%) or always (11.29%) communicated to employees in their late career stages, while 37.73% report that they are sometimes communicated. More than a quarter (27.56%) report that these options are seldom (19.75%) or never (7.81%) communicated to older workers.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TABLE 4: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES DOES YOUR WORKPLACE PROVIDE SUPPORT OR INFORMATION TO EMPLOYEES ABOUT?

1636 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Financial planning	573	35.02%
Health and well-being in older age	504	30.80%
Working through bereavement	240	14.66%
Later-life work transitions	233	14.24%
Combining work and pension	154	9.41%
Menopause	40	2.44%
None of the above	756	46.21%

Slightly more than a third (35.02%) of respondents say that support or information on financial planning is provided to employees, but fewer (30.80%) report a similar offering for health and well-being in older age. Almost half (46.21%) of respondents report that their workplace does not provide support or information on any of the issues listed.

TABLE 5: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON REASONS WHY OLDER WORKERS LEAVE YOUR WORKPLACE?

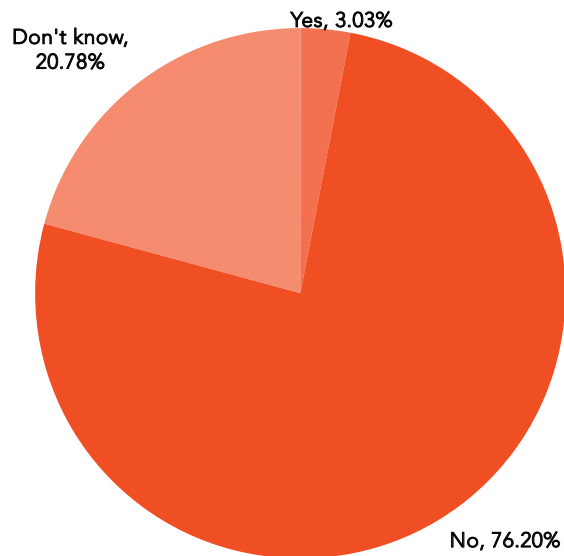
1635 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Retirement	1365	83.48%
Redundancy	524	32.04%
Illness or injury	446	27.27%
Job restructuring	329	20.12%
Work too physically demanding	299	18.28%
Access to superannuation	290	17.73%
Poor relationship with manager	245	14.98%
Caring for partner or older family member	244	14.92%
Lack of promotion opportunities	199	12.17%
Need for more flexibility	163	9.96%
Caring for children or grandchildren	153	9.35%
Other	103	6.29%

A large majority of respondents (83.48%) say retirement is one of the most common reasons why older workers leave their workplace. Approximately a third (32.04%) say redundancy is a common reason, while slightly fewer (27.27%) identify illness or injury as a common reason. Approximately one in five respondents say the need for more flexibility (9.96%) and caring for children or grandchildren (9.35%) are common reasons why older workers leave.

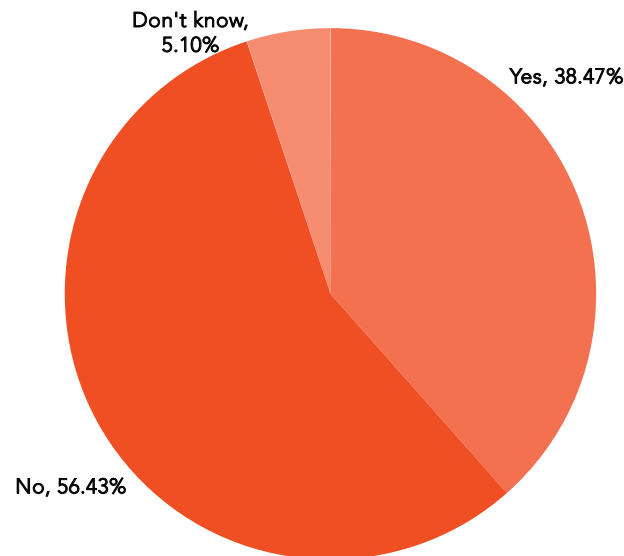
DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 11: HAS YOUR ORGANISATION EVER CONSIDERED MENOPAUSE AS A HR ISSUE?
1651 RESPONSES



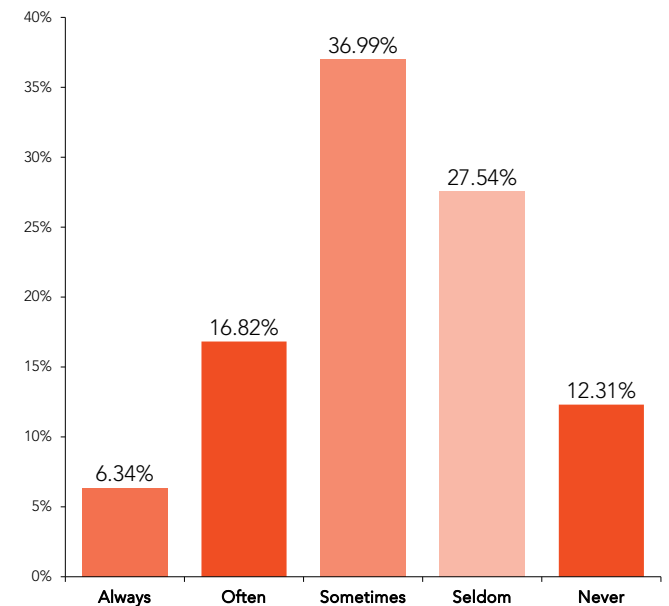
A tiny 3.03% of respondents say their workplace has considered menopause as a HR issue. More than three quarters (76.2%) report that their workplace has not considered the issue and around one in five (20.78%) don't know if menopause has been considered as a HR issue or not.

FIGURE 12: DOES YOUR WORKPLACE SURVEY ITS WORKFORCE TO GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT FUTURE WORK INTENTIONS?
1648 RESPONSES



More than half (56.43%) of respondents say their workplace does not survey the workforce to find out about their future work intentions, while 38.47% say they do.

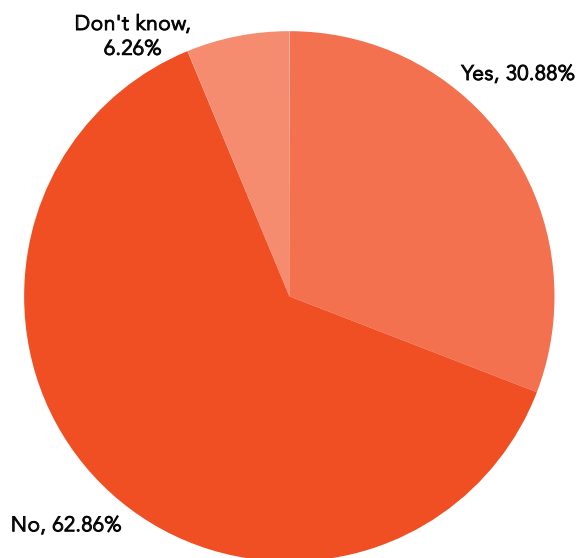
FIGURE 13: DOES YOUR WORKPLACE CAPTURE CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE FROM OLDER WORKERS AS THEY TRANSITION OUT OF THE WORKFORCE?
1641 RESPONSES



Fewer than a quarter (23.16%) of respondents report that their workplace always (6.34%) or often (16.82%) captures corporate knowledge from older workers as they transition out of the workforce. Around a third (36.99%) report that their workplace sometimes does this, while 39.85% report they seldom (27.54%) or never (12.31%) capture corporate knowledge from older workers.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 14: DOES YOUR WORKPLACE CONDUCT A MENTORING PROGRAM THAT FACILITATES KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FROM OLDER TO YOUNGER WORKERS?
1645 RESPONSES



Almost two thirds (62.86%) of respondents report that their workplace does not have a mentoring program to transition corporate knowledge, while fewer than a third (30.88%) report that their workplace does have such a program.

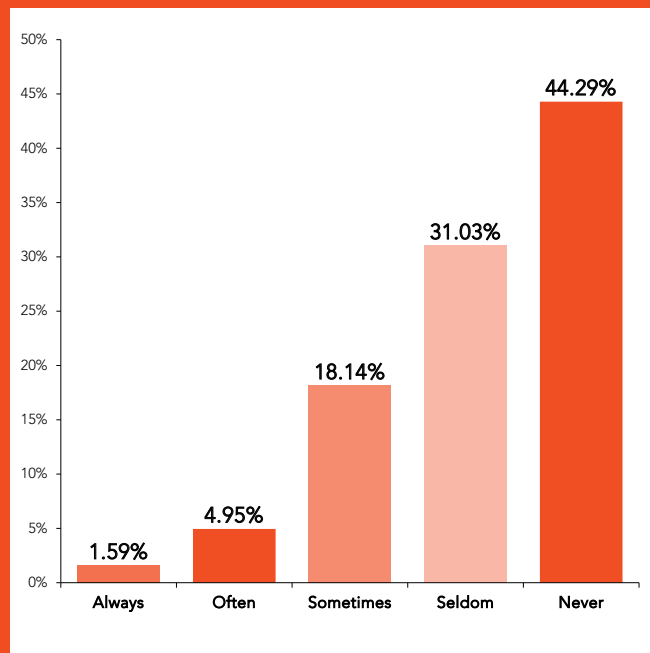
TABLE 6: WHAT PRACTICES DOES YOUR WORKPLACE UNDERTAKE TO ENSURE EMPLOYEES OF ALL AGES CAN ACCESS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES?
1639 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Regular review of training needs for all employees	1007	61.43%
Line managers required to encourage employees of all ages to participate in training	777	47.40%
Offer a diverse range of training options relevant to employees of all ages	576	35.14%
Promoting opportunities to specific groups through demographically-based communications	126	7.68%
Monitor participation rates in training schemes by age	65	3.96%
No practices undertaken	266	16.22%
Other	51	3.11%

Almost two thirds (61.43%) of respondents report that their workplace regularly reviews the training needs of employees of all ages. Fewer than half (47.40%) say that line managers in their workplace are required to encourage employees of all ages to participate in training, while more than a third (35.14%) say their workplace offers a diverse range of training options relevant to employees of all ages. Around one in six (16.22%) report that none of the practices listed are undertaken in their workplace.

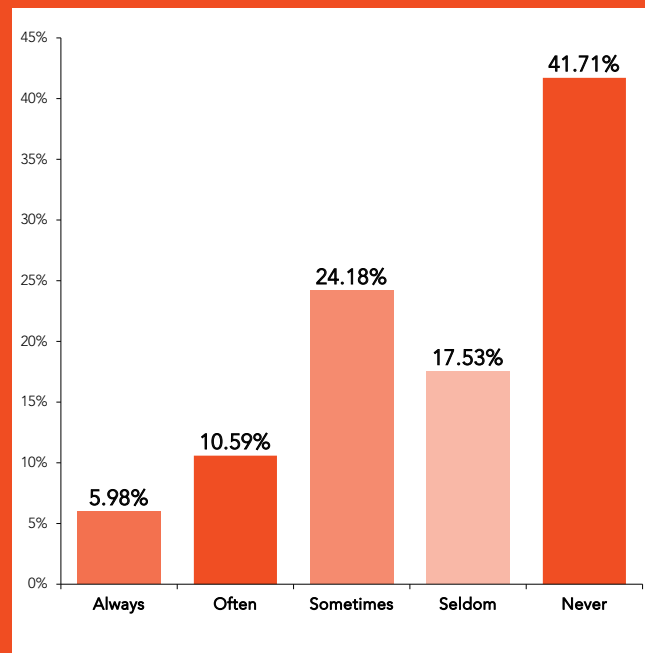
DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 15: HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR WORKPLACE STRUCTURE OR DESIGN TRAINING WITH SPECIFIC AGE GROUPS IN MIND?
1637 RESPONSES



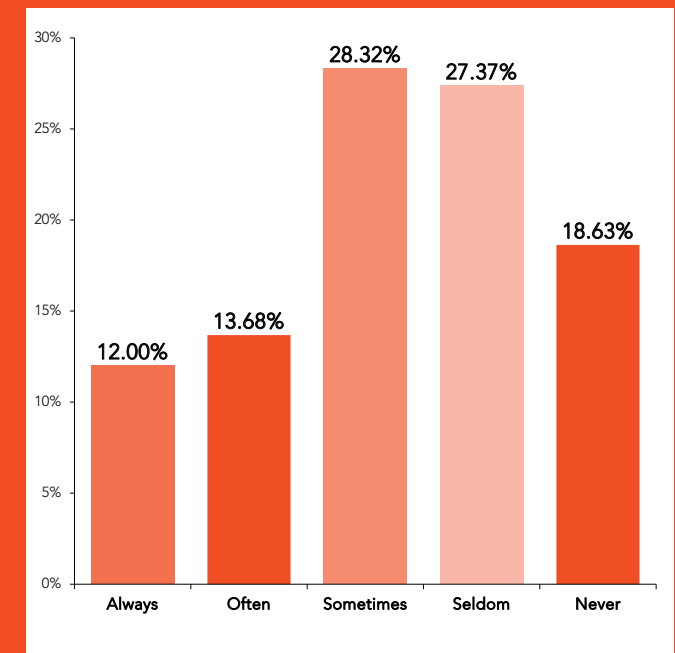
Approximately three quarters (75.32%) of respondents report that their workplace seldom (31.03%) or never (44.29%) structures or designs training with specific age groups in mind. Fewer than a fifth (18.14%) of respondents report that training is sometimes structured with specific age groups in mind, while 6.54% report this is always (1.59%) or often (4.95%) the case.

FIGURE 16: ARE EMPLOYEES IN YOUR WORKPLACE GIVEN TRAINING ON UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?
1671 RESPONSES



More than half (59.24%) of respondents report that employees in their workplace are seldom (17.53%) or never (41.71%) given training on unconscious bias. Approximately a sixth (16.57%) report that employees are often (10.59%) or always (5.98%) given training on unconscious bias, and a quarter (24.18%) report that bias training is sometimes given.

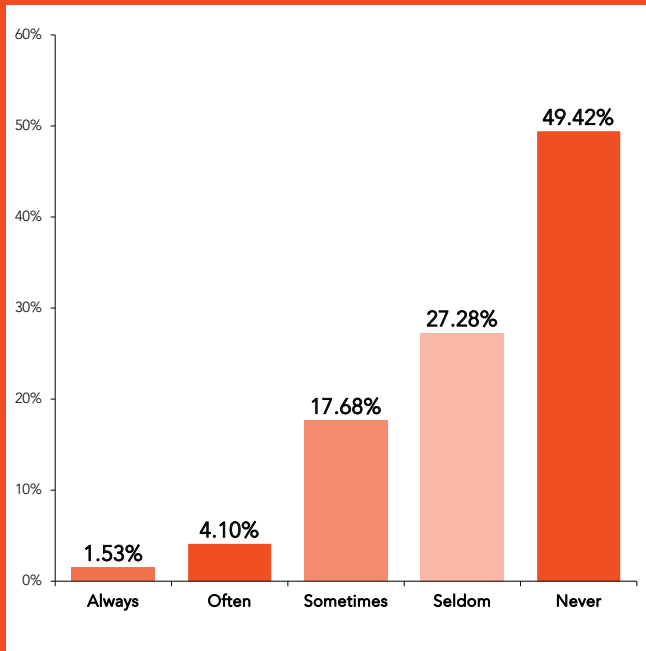
FIGURE 17: DOES THIS TRAINING INCLUDE AGE-RELATED BIAS?
950 RESPONSES



Of the respondents whose workplace offers training on unconscious bias, fewer than half (46%) report that the training seldom (27.37%) or never (18.63%) includes age-related bias. Just over a quarter (25.68%) of respondents report that age-related bias is often (13.68%) or always (12%) offered, while 28.32% report that it is sometimes included.

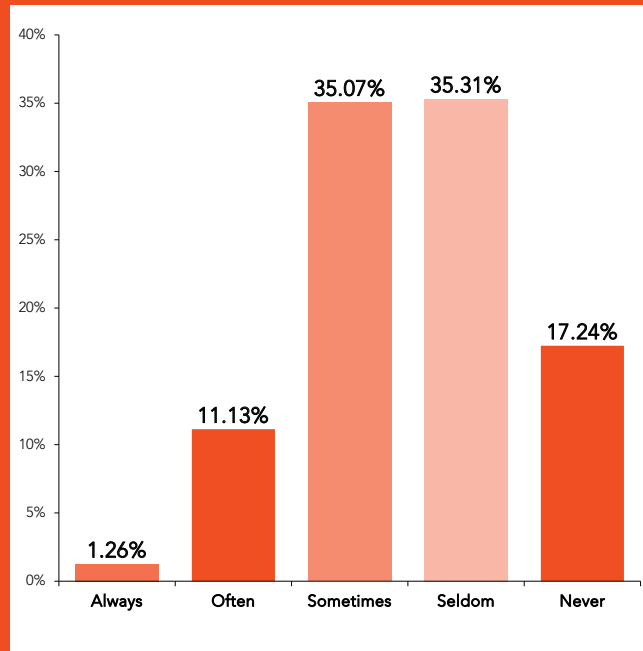
DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 18: ARE LINE MANAGERS IN YOUR WORKPLACE GIVEN TRAINING ON HOW TO MANAGE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS?
1635 RESPONSES



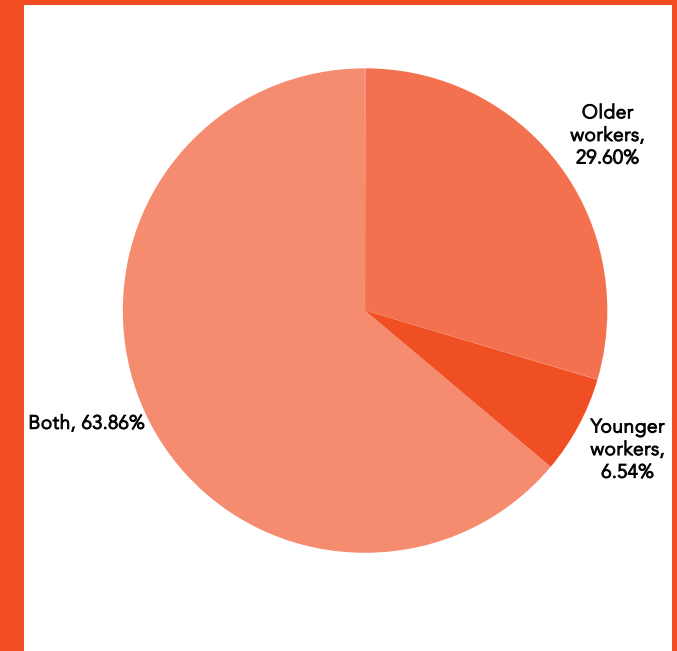
Approximately three quarters (76.7%) of respondents say line managers in their workplace are never (49.42%) or seldom (27.28%) trained on how to manage different generations. Only 5.83% of respondents report that line managers are always (1.53%) or often (4.1%) trained in this area of management.

FIGURE 19: HOW FREQUENTLY, IF AT ALL, DOES AGE-RELATED BIAS OCCUR IN YOUR WORKPLACE?
1671 RESPONSES



More than half (52.55%) of respondents report that age-related bias seldom (35.31%) or never (17.24%) occurs in their workplace. Just over a third (35.07%) report that age-related bias sometime occurs, while only 12.39% report bias commonly occurs.

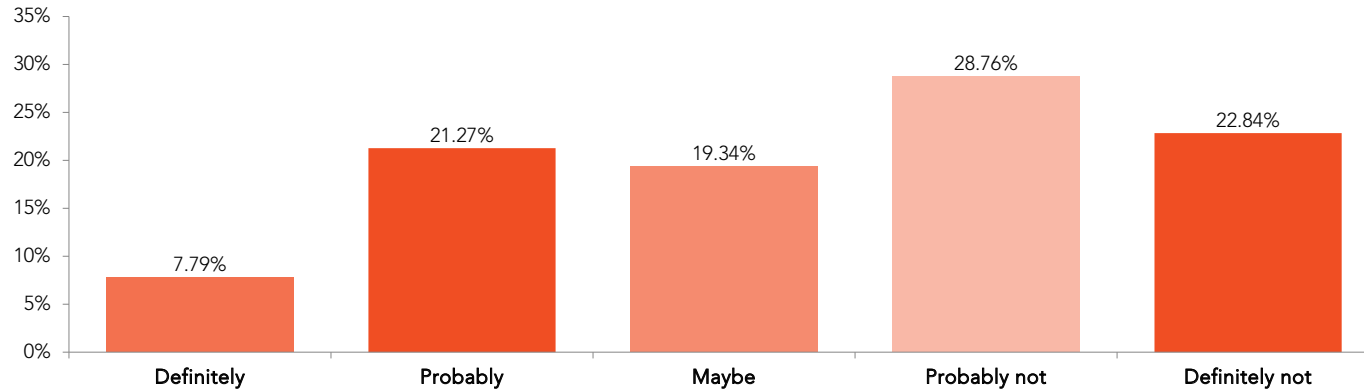
FIGURE 20: WHO IS AFFECTED BY AGE-RELATED BIAS IN YOUR WORKPLACE?
1331 RESPONSES



Almost two-thirds (63.86%) of respondents who say age-related bias occurs in their workplace report that both older and younger workers are affected. Just under a third (29.6%) report that only older workers are affected, while 6.54% report that it affects only younger workers.

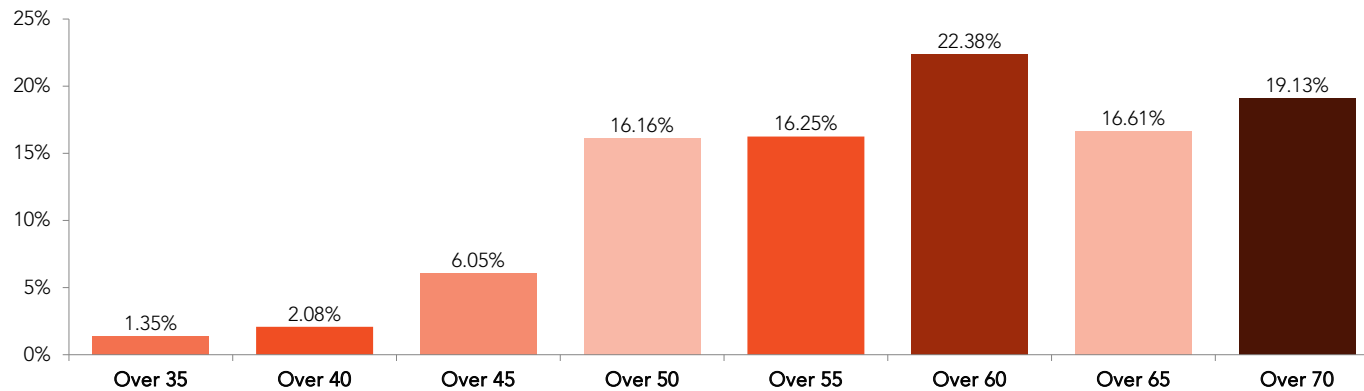
DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 21: IS THERE AN AGE OVER WHICH YOUR WORKPLACE IS RELUCTANT TO RECRUIT WORKERS?
1655 RESPONSES



More than half (51.6%) of respondents say there is definitely not (22.84%) or probably not (28.76%) an age over which their workplace is reluctant to recruit workers. Around a third (29.06%) of respondents report that there is definitely (7.79%) or probably (21.27%) an age over which their workplace is reluctant to recruit workers. One in five respondents (19.34%) say that maybe it happens in their workplace

FIGURE 22: IF SO, OVER APPROXIMATELY WHAT AGE IS YOUR WORKPLACE RELUCTANT TO RECRUIT WORKERS?
1108 RESPONSES



The most frequently identified age at which workplaces are reluctant to recruit workers is over 60 years old (22.38%). Approximately a sixth (16.61%) of respondents say their workplace is reluctant to recruit those over 65, and a fifth (19.31%) say over 70. Around a third (32.41%) of respondents report their workplace would be reluctant to recruit workers in their 50s, either from 50 upwards (16.16%) or 55 upwards (16.25%).

DETAILED FINDINGS

TABLE 7. WHAT ARE THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES FOR YOUR WORKPLACE IN RECRUITING OLDER WORKERS?
1624 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Experience	1206	74.26%
Professional knowledge	1043	64.34%
Reliability	586	36.08%
Reduced turnover	339	20.87%
Age diversity	335	20.62%
Better attendance	265	16.31%
Leadership	263	16.19%
Reflects customer base in workforce	174	10.71%
Communication skills	163	10.03%
No advantages	40	2.46%
Other	21	1.29%

The three most mentioned advantages of recruiting older workers identified by respondents are experience (74.26%), professional knowledge (64.34%), and reliability (36.08%). Communication skills (10.03%) is mentioned the least. Only 2.46% of respondents say there are no advantages for their workplace in recruiting older workers.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TABLE 8. WHAT ARE THE GREATEST OBSTACLES FOR YOUR WORKPLACE IN RECRUITING OLDER WORKERS?
1607 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Roles available are too physically demanding	475	29.55%
Older workers lack the technology skills required	435	27.06%
Lack of applicants from older workers	420	26.13%
Salary expectations are too high	332	20.65%
Older workers have too much experience for the roles available	259	16.11%
Older workers do not fit in with the organisation's culture	202	12.57%
Older workers' qualifications are out-dated	174	10.82%
Older workers lack the qualifications required	91	5.66%
No obstacles	435	27.06%
Other	93	5.78%

The three most mentioned obstacles in recruiting older workers identified by respondents are that the roles available are too physically demanding (29.55%), older workers lack the technology skills required (27.06%), and a lack of applications are received from older workers (26.13%). More than a quarter (27.06%) of respondents report that there are no obstacles in their workplace preventing them from recruiting older workers.



Organisations want younger under 35-year-old workers, preferably male. In part this has to do with salary levels but is also connected to unfounded bias and issues in respect to additional protected entitlements and greater workplace knowledge base of older workers who are less likely to accept bad behaviour and bullying.”

AHRI survey respondent

DETAILED FINDINGS

TABLE 9. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RECRUITMENT PRACTICES, IF ANY, DOES YOUR WORKPLACE UNDERTAKE TO ENCOURAGE AN AGE DIVERSE WORKFORCE?

1600 RESPONSES

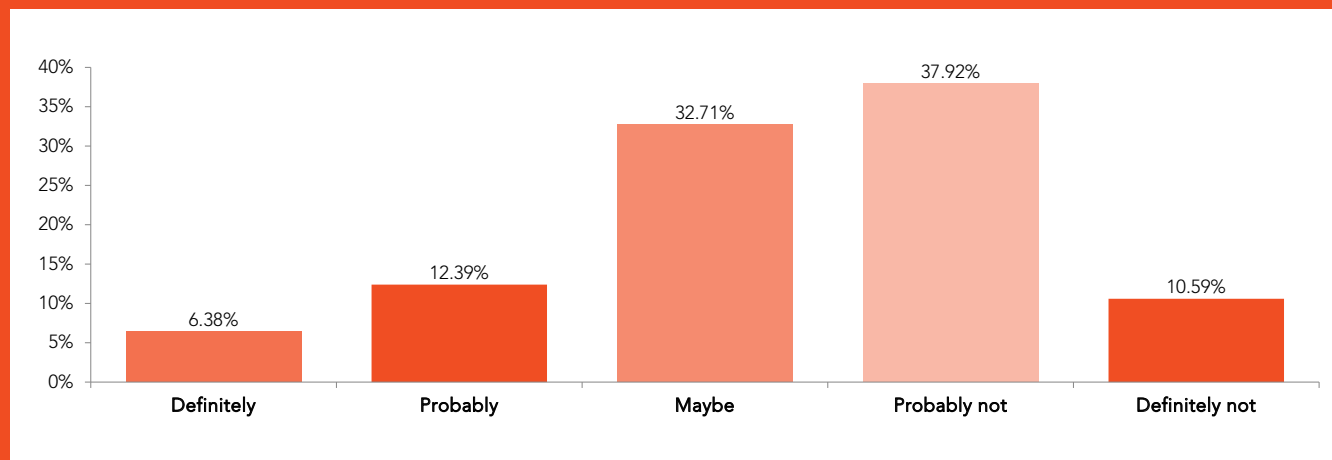
ANSWERS (MULTIPLE OPTIONS ALLOWED)	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Ensure the content of adverts attract the full range of age groups	696	43.50%
Offer flexible working arrangements	537	33.56%
Exclude date of birth from application forms	518	32.37%
Train staff with recruitment responsibilities to ensure all recruitment practices are free of age bias	452	28.25%
Ensure the location of adverts attracts the full range of age groups	361	22.56%
Brief recruitment agents to ensure that processes do not disadvantage different age groups	222	13.87%
Ensure recruitment suppliers have a Diversity & Inclusion policy	190	11.87%
Proactively recruit older workers into a range of positions	92	5.75%
Use mature age specific job boards to advertise vacancies	42	2.62%
No practices undertaken	474	29.62%
Other	21	1.31%

Table 9 reveals that fewer than half (43.50%) of respondents report that their workplace ensures that the content of job adverts attracts the full range of age groups. Approximately a third (33.56%) of respondents report that their workplace offers flexible work arrangements as a recruitment practice, or excludes date of birth from application forms (32.37%). Only 2.62% report that their workplaces use mature age specific job boards to advertise vacancies. Around a third (29.62%) of respondents say that none of the recruitment practices listed are undertaken in their workplace.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 23: DO YOU THINK THE GOVERNMENT-FUNDED RESTART WAGE SUBSIDY OF \$10,000 FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF JOBSEEKERS OVER THE AGE OF 50 WILL ENCOURAGE YOUR WORKPLACE TO EMPLOY OLDER WORKERS?

1614 RESPONSES



Almost half (48.51%) of respondents report that the Restart Wage Subsidy will probably not (37.92%) or definitely not (10.59%) encourage their workplace to employ older workers. Approximately a third (32.71%) report that their workplace may be encouraged to employ older workers by the subsidy. Less than a fifth (18.77%) of respondents report that the subsidies will probably (12.39%) or definitely (6.38%) encourage their workplace to employ older workers.

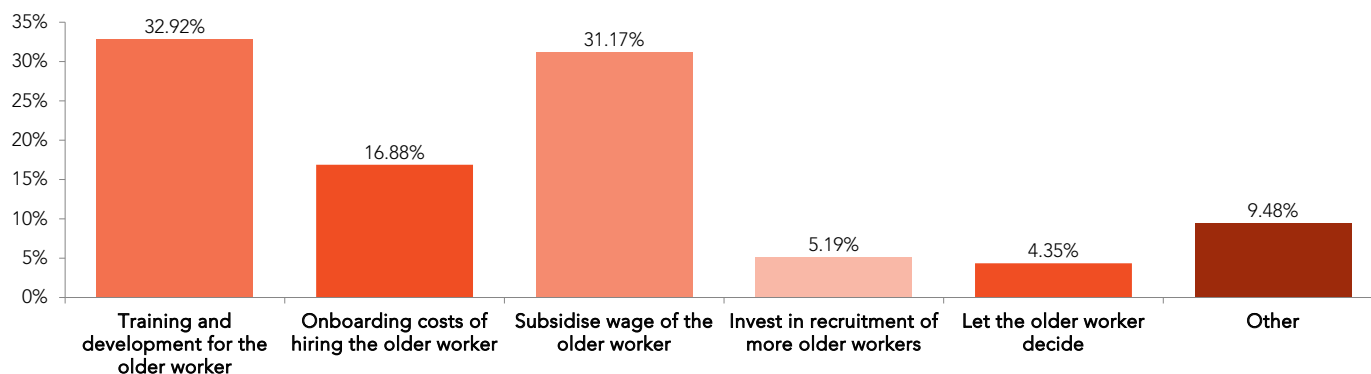
TABLE 10. IF YOU WERE TO RECEIVE THE RESTART WAGE SUBSIDY FOR A MATURE AGE WORKER, RANK IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION
1500 RESPONSES

ANSWERS	RANK
The ease of application for the wage subsidy for employers	1
The amount of the wage subsidy available to employers	2
The payment timing of the wage subsidy to employers (for example monthly, quarterly, six monthly payments)	3

Table 10 shows that the ease of application is ranked highest by respondents in terms of importance, followed by the amount of wage subsidy available to employers, and finally the timing of payment.

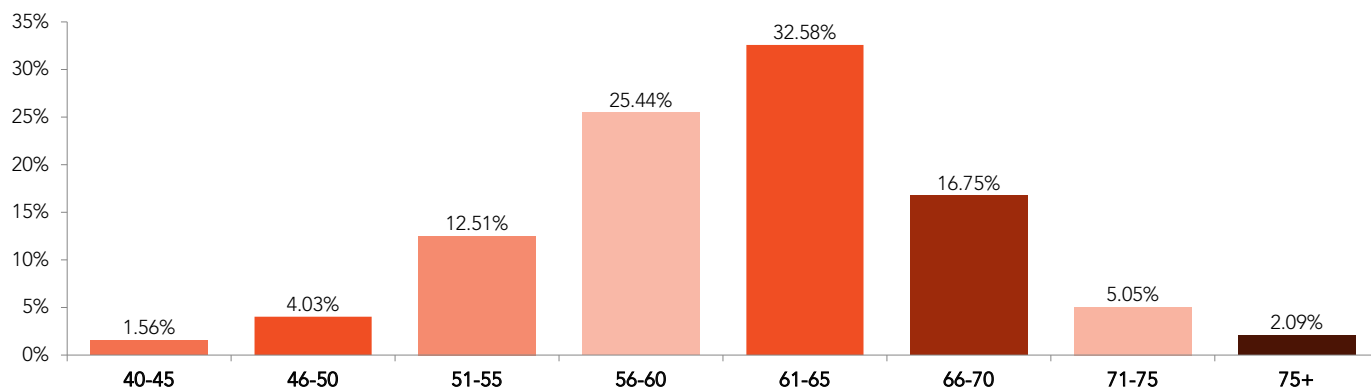
DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 24: IF YOU WERE TO RECEIVE THE \$10,000 GRANT, HOW WOULD YOUR WORKPLACE UTILISE IT?
1540 RESPONSES



Almost a third (32.92%) of respondents report that if their workplace were to receive the \$10k grant, it would be spent on training and development for the older worker. Slightly fewer (31.17%) report it would be spent on subsidising the wage of the older worker, while just over a sixth (16.88%) say it would be spent on onboarding costs. Only a small minority of respondents report it would be invested in the recruitment of more older workers (5.19%) or that the workplace would let the older worker decide (4.35%)

FIGURE 25: AT WHAT AGE WOULD YOU CLASSIFY SOMEONE AS AN OLDER WORKER?
1863 RESPONSES



Approximately a third (32.58%) of respondents would classify someone as an older worker from the age of 61-65, while a quarter (25.44%) would make the call at 56-60. Only a tiny percentage would classify someone as an older worker from 40-45 (1.56%), or from the age of 46-50 (4.03%). More than one in ten (12.61%) would classify a worker as old at age 50.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TABLE 11. PLEASE LOOK AT THE LIST OF TRAITS AND INDICATE HOW YOU BELIEVE OLDER AND YOUNGER WORKERS COMPARE
1862 RESPONSES

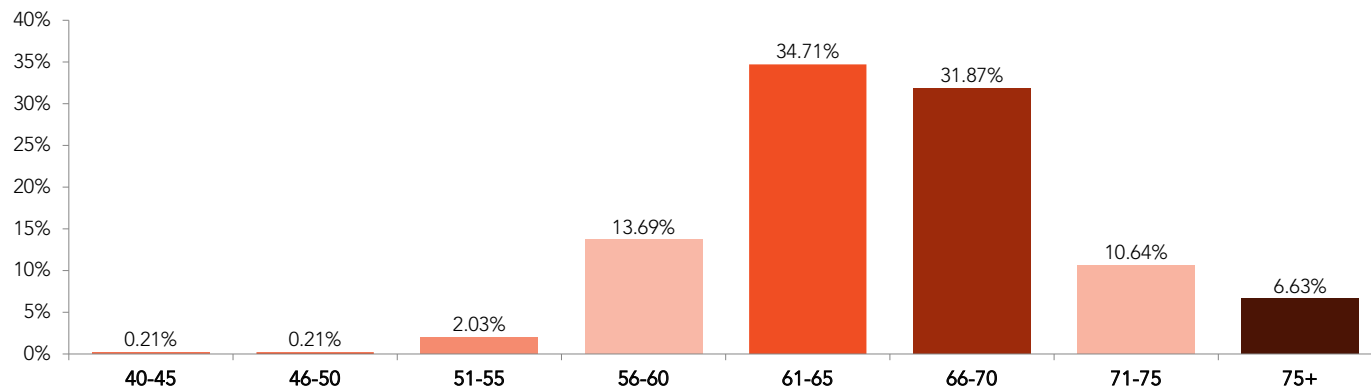
ANSWERS	OLDER WORKERS	YOUNGER WORKERS	NO DIFFERENCE
More reliable	69.06%	0.43%	30.51%
Higher job performance	23.40%	9.15%	67.44%
More creative	5.03%	53.03%	41.94%
Greater concentration	43.32%	7.82%	48.86%
More loyal	80.32%	0.54%	19.14%
Higher energy levels	2.06%	62.93%	35.01%
More committed	54.13%	1.19%	44.68%
Greater awareness	58.02%	5.25%	36.73%
More physically capable	0.70%	73.53%	25.70%
Greater career ambition	1.68%	74.53%	23.80%
More adaptable to change	7.74%	48.08%	44.18%
Higher attendance levels	60.65%	1.14%	38.22%
Better technology skills	1.89%	77.38%	20.73%
More able to cope with stress	44.17%	6.50%	49.32%

Table 11 shows that a majority of respondents believe that older workers are more loyal (80.32%), more reliable (69.06%), have higher attendance levels (60.65%), greater awareness (58.02%) and are more committed (54.13%) than younger workers. However, a majority also believe younger workers have better technology skills (77.38%), are more physically capable (73.59%), have greater career ambition (74.53%), higher energy levels (62.93%) and are more creative (53.03%) than older workers. A majority of respondents believe there is no difference between older and younger workers in terms of job performance (67.44%).

DETAILED FINDINGS

FIGURE 26: AT WHAT AGE DO YOU PERSONALLY EXPECT TO RETIRE?

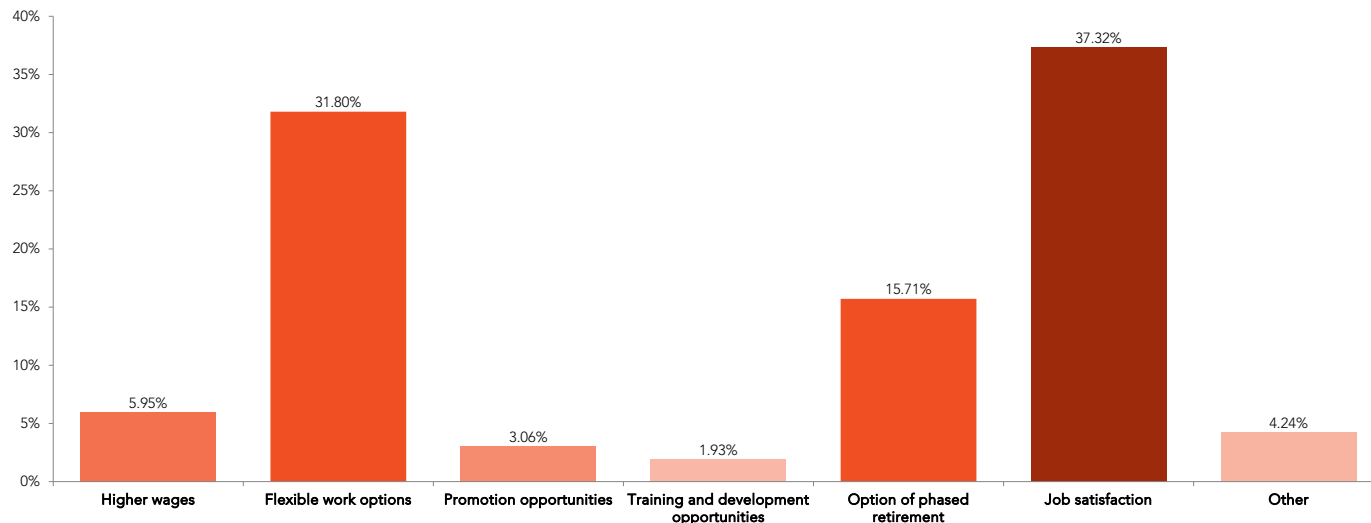
1870 RESPONSES



Just over a third (34.71%) of respondents expect to retire between 61-65, while just under a third (31.87%) expect to retire between 66-70. Only a tiny percentage of respondents expect to retire between 40-45 (0.21%), 46-50 (0.21%) or 51-55 (2.03%). However, nearly one in five (17.27%) expect to retire between 71-75 years of age (10.64%) or after they turn 75 (6.63%).

FIGURE 27: WHAT WOULD MOST ENCOURAGE YOU TO REMAIN IN THE WORKFORCE FOR LONGER?

1865 RESPONSES



Job satisfaction (37.32%) is the most highly represented answer given by respondents for wanting to remain in the workforce longer, followed by flexible work options (31.8%). Only 5.95% of respondents indicate that higher wages would encourage them to remain in the workforce, and even fewer say promotion opportunities (3.06%) or training and development opportunities (1.93%) would encourage them to keep working. Phased retirement rates well at 15.71% of respondents.

DETAILED FINDINGS

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE OLDER WORKER ISSUES THAT ARE OF SPECIFIC CONCERN TO YOUR WORKPLACE?

Respondents were invited to provide open text answers to this question. A sample of responses is set out below.

"The majority of our work is very physically demanding and roles such as pearl divers are subject to yearly medicals. This limits older workers to office, yard and mechanical/ engineering roles rather than deckhands, boat skippers and farm managers."

"The hospitality industry is generally known for unsociable hours of work. Some of our venues open till 3am in the morning, This is way too late for a 65+ year old to be working. Also depending on the area of work, you could be required to be on your feet / standing up for 5 hours to 8 hours, again way too long for an older person to be able to sustain."

"Responsibilities tend to increase with tenure and promotion; older workers have no more hours in the day than younger workers but are expected to produce more."

"In a smaller organisation there is less opportunity for higher paying, senior positions in the organisation which can lead to frustration for older employees who are highly experienced and skilled. It also means that older highly experienced and skilled candidates are less likely to apply for positions in the organisation"

"Caring responsibilities given our workforce is predominantly female. These responsibilities can often range from the need to care for grandchildren to elderly parents."

"Lack of part-time or flexible hour options"

"There is an incredible bias to giving younger workers opportunities and experiences while older workers are left to beaver away at existing jobs. There is a young professionals network that gets access to senior managers, secondments and job rotations."

"Some older people are reluctant to relocate; some older people want "part time" work. Our jobs are full time. Some older people have too much an entitlement culture"

"Older workers sometimes feel they would not be employed elsewhere and stay even if unhappy"

"Physical health is important to be able to carry out duties in a nursing role. There are more hands-on nursing roles than administrative. The culture of nursing in the past that older workers hang on to is not amenable to integrating the younger nurses into the workplace"

"There is no facility for flexible work hours, job sharing etc. Older workers aren't valued. A recent reform program saw a lot of older workers take payouts. All the knowledge and experience went with them - others who wanted to stay had to fight for employment."

"Organisation's unconscious blind spots to age discrimination and indirect discrimination"



It is a young culture. Older people are looked over and feel left behind."

AHRI survey respondent

DETAILED FINDINGS

"The organisation focuses on employing graduates and younger employees to ensure the longevity of employment and flexibility for succession management purposes."

"Managing flexibility and leave requests required for dual caring roles, e.g. ageing parents and teenage children. Being able to provide promotional and development opportunities where ageing workers are part-time."

"It is a young culture. Older people are looked over and feel left behind"

"Organisations want younger under 35-year-old workers, preferably male. In part this has to do with salary levels but is also connected to unfounded bias and issues in respect to additional protected entitlements and greater workplace knowledge base of older workers who are less likely to accept bad behaviour and bullying"

"In a smaller organisation there is less opportunity for higher paying, senior position in the organisation which can lead to frustration for older employees who are higher experienced and skilled. It also means that older highly experienced and skilled candidates are less likely to apply for positions in the organisation."

"The problem in academia is that we don't have enough young people, as it is now difficult to get into, and the older workers are not retiring. With the tightening of the budgets this has created a somewhat stale environment"

"The inability to keep up with modern technology"

"Working in a family law firm older staff are regarded highly because of their experience but it is sometimes difficult to provide flexibility due to client demands and expectations"

"Disrespect from younger workers who go out of their way to discredit older workers."

"Here the culture values older people generally and offers them respect. There are few issues relating to older workers here with the possible exception of additional training in technology - IT etc"

"There is a real bias against qualifications that are more than 5-10 years old which makes it hard if you did your degree 20-30 years ago, even if your degree was a First Class Honours and you have an impeccable employment record"

Older workers often come with strange self-representation about being older, which then puts me off progressing them through the hiring process. They see themselves differently which makes me see them differently."



Older workers sometimes feel they would not be employed elsewhere and stay even if unhappy"

AHRI survey respondent



AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RESOURCES INSTITUTE LIMITED

ABN 44 120 687 149

Level 13, 565 Bourke Street

Melbourne Victoria 3000

T (+613) 9918 9200

F (+613) 9918 9201

WWW.AHRI.COM.AU



Search: AHRI



@AHRItweets



/AHRIAustralia



/ahriphotos



hrmonline.com.au

Disclaimer: This publication represents a sample of the views and perspectives of the AHRI member respondents who contributed to the workplace survey on which it was based. Although AHRI has exercised due care and skill in its preparation, it does not warrant its accuracy, completeness, currency or suitability for any purpose.