AHRI
Australian HR Institute®

EMPLOYING OLDER WORKERS

RESEARCH REPORT

Australian
Human Rights
Commission

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project Patron:	Peter Wilson AM & Dr Kay Patterson AO
Project Director:	Lyn Goodear, CEO AHRI
Report Authors:	Paul Begley, Liz Dunne & Joanna Maxwell
Design:	Ross Tsai

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the Chairman and National President of the Australian HR Institute, Peter Wilson AM, I am delighted to be reporting on the findings of this 2018 study in association with the Age Discrimination Commissioner, the Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

It is pleasing to see some bright signs in the findings that have come out of this research, one being an increase since our 2014 study in the advantages seen in recruiting older workers. More than three quarters of the sample see the experience that older workers bring as a main advantage (76 per cent) and more than two-thirds see the professional knowledge they have acquired as an advantage in recruiting older workers (68 per cent).

With research showing that people are now living increasingly longer lives, purposeful employment is one way to ensure they remain connected and energised. In addition, governments of all stripes are keen to alleviate the fiscal pressures associated with a large cohort of older works drawing on the welfare budget. Hence raising the age at which workers are entitled to claim a pension, is an increasingly mooted policy direction.

Despite those imperatives, there is evidence in this study that employers are not owning that bipartisan policy direction. A sizable minority of around a third of the sample (30 per cent) indicate that their organisation sets an age over which they are reluctant to recruit workers. Somewhat more disquieting is that nearly seven out of ten of that cohort (68 per cent) see 50 years of age or older as the age at which they are unwilling to recruit workers. Contemporary advances in medicine and knowledge about healthy lifestyles mean that many workers aged 50 in today's workforce are relatively young compared with previous generations, and could be expected to work productively for a few more decades. Yet despite a majority of respondents (63 per cent) classifying an older worker as 60 years of age or older, there appears to be a disconnect between that perception and organisations' willingness to recruit.

The data also shows that around two-thirds of respondents (63 per cent) report a loss of knowledge and key skills with the departure of older workers, only a quarter (26 per cent) report efforts made to capture their knowledge before they exit.

The demographic group leaving the workforce in significant numbers at present is largely made up of the baby-boomer cohort born after the Second World War. That is a disproportionately large cohort, as the name implies, yet only 21 per cent of respondents to this study report their organisation engages in phased retirement practices as a way to manage the loss of intellectual capital.

Workforce planning that includes succession planning is regarded as a core strategic human resource activity, yet the data in this study leads to the conclusion that organisations may not be giving it the attention it deserves. If that is true, it's a conclusion that should sound an alarm signal to HR practitioners with respect to organisational sustainability.

A valued HR partner to the business is responsible for alerting the organisation to the risks involved in neglecting to correct a workforce planning gap, for exercising the influence to make it an imperative for action, and for making it happen. To the extent that there are gaps in this area of practice, AHRI's answer is to ensure that HR practitioners we certify are equipped with the judgement to foresee workforce planning gaps, and the expertise to ensure corrective action is taken.

Lyn Goodear, FAHRI GAICD
Chief Executive Officer
Australian HR Institute

FOREWORD

It has been a pleasure for the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to support this research project.

Ageism and workplace age discrimination were the key focus of the AHRC's 2015 National Prevalence Survey of Age Discrimination in the Workplace, which found over a quarter of Australians aged 50 plus had experienced some form of age discrimination in the preceding two years. Our 2016 Willing To Work Report report identified recruitment practices and HR policies as key levers for change in this area.

For these reasons it is particularly encouraging to note some positive shifts emerging from this research in the relatively short time since the 2014 AHRI study.

There has been an increase in the percentage of respondents saying there was no difference between the generations at work across a range of categories. Markers included a 14 per cent increase in people indicating no difference between older and younger workers on technology skills and abilities, a positive sign that the so-called 'digital divide' is shrinking.

Almost a third of respondents still disclose that there is an age above which they will not recruit, with over two thirds of those respondents suggesting that age is 50. However, it is good to see that the number of respondents indicating no age restriction at all has jumped in the four years between surveys from 29 per cent to 55 per cent. This is a good sign.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents define an 'older' worker as a person aged 61 years or more, an important upwards trend since 2014 given that Australian Bureau of Statistics data show that increasing numbers of people want to retire later (if at all). As we live longer and healthier lives it is crucial for people to be able to contribute through the paid workforce for financial reasons and because such engagement contributes to a sense of meaning or purpose. It is also valuable more broadly, as research shows that an increase of only 3 per cent in paid employment of Australians over the age of 55 would result in a $33 billion impact on the national economy every year.

These findings are encouraging. However, a number of indicators are not so positive.

For example, it was disappointing that more than half of the respondents said their organisation has no transition to retirement strategy in place for their workers and that very few offer intergenerational management or unconscious bias training to staff. This is significant because we know that flexible work is key to retaining older workers and also that both workers and managers often find it difficult to have conversations about 'what's next'. We need more change in this area.

It is also of concern that only 26 per cent of organisations capture corporate knowledge when older workers leave, although roughly two-thirds of respondents acknowledge older worker departures have caused a loss of key skills and knowledge in their organisation (an increase of 17 per cent over the 2014 results).

Overall there are some solid gains, but much remains to be done. We look forward to further collaboration with AHRI to build on these improvements.

Dr Kay Patterson, AO
Age Discrimination Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission

KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

This report is based on a survey of AHRI members conducted in July – August 2018 in association with the Australian Human Rights Commission. Similar surveys were conducted in 2012 and 2014 by AHRI.

- A majority (63 per cent) of respondents classify an older worker as 61 years of age or older, an upwards shift since 2014.
- More than one in three respondents (34 per cent) believe there is no difference between older and younger workers technology skills and abilities, 14 per cent more than in 2014.
- While more than a third of respondents in 2014 (35 per cent) expect to retire between 60–65 years of age, 37 per cent in 2018 expect to retire between 66–70 years of age. Across all categories, there was an increase in responses indicating no differences between generations.
- Flexible work is the top reason respondents cite that would encourage them to remain in the workforce, increasing 8 per cent since 2014.
- Flexible working hours is the most common tool organisations use to retain older workers (76 per cent).
- More than half (56 per cent) of respondent organisations do not have a transition-to-retirement strategy in place.
- Respondents indicate the main advantages of recruiting older workers are the experience they bring (76 per cent) and the professional knowledge they have acquired (68 per cent).
- Fewer 2018 respondents than 2014 report their organisation ensures that job advertising content attracts a full range of ages, and that date of birth details are excluded from job application forms.
- The most common recruitment practices for attracting older workers are reported as offering flexible work arrangements (42 per cent), and training recruitment staff to ensure practices are free of age bias (32 per cent).
- Since 2014, there has been a 5 per cent increase in the number of responses indicating no obstacles in recruiting older workers.
- Almost a third (30 per cent) of respondents indicate their organisation has an age above which they are reluctant to recruit workers. The majority (68 per cent) of respondents disclosing reluctance indicate that there is an unwillingness to hire workers over the age of 50.
- In 2018, the most common reason older workers leave respondent organisations is retirement (77 per cent), a reduction of 6 per cent since 2014.
- Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of respondents indicate older worker departures have caused a loss of key skills and knowledge in their organisation (an increase of 17 per cent), although only 26 per cent report capturing corporate knowledge from exiting older workers.
- An 8 per cent reduction since 2014 is reported in the 2018 findings respondent organisations using mentoring programs to facilitate knowledge transfer between older and younger workers.
- Only 8 per cent of respondents report that line managers in their organisation are given training on how to manage different generations, though 22 per cent are given training on unconscious bias.
- There is a reported increase of 8 per cent in organisations that seldom or never address age-related bias as part of unconscious bias training since 2014.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This survey was distributed to the member database of the Australian HR Institute (AHRI) during July and August 2018. It attracted a total of 922 respondents. Respondents were treated anonymously. The survey follows a similar set of questions put to the AHRI database in 2012 and 2014.

The majority of respondents live in a metropolitan area (81 per cent) with approximately two thirds aged between 46 and 65 (62 per cent), as indicated in Figures 1 and 2.

FIGURE 1: LOCATION (911 RESPONSES)

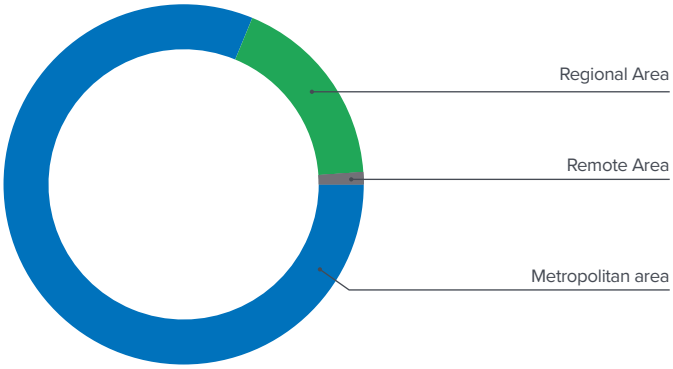
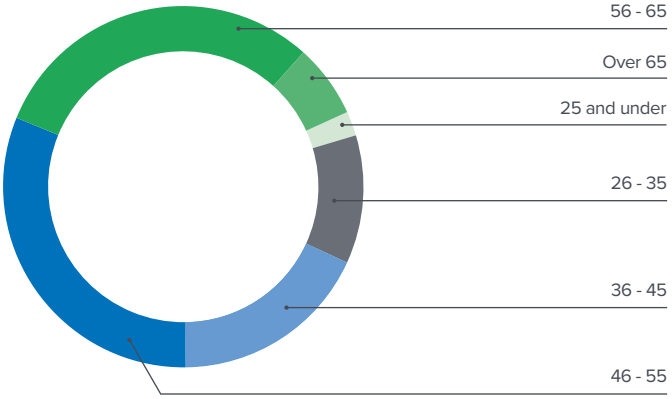


FIGURE 2: AGE (914 RESPONSES)



Nearly eight out of ten respondents identified themselves as female (76 per cent), 23 per cent as male, and 1 percent as other or preferred not to identify, as shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: GENDER (913 RESPONSES)

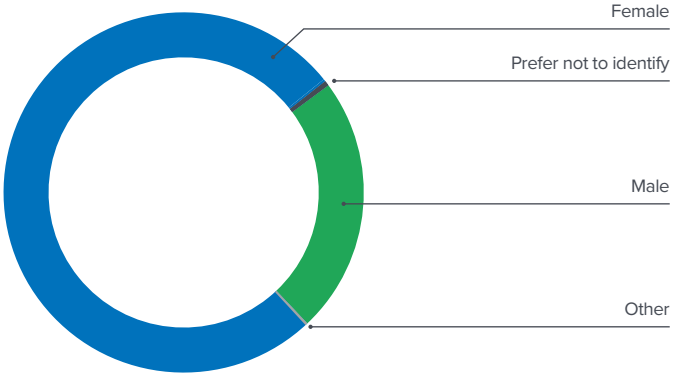
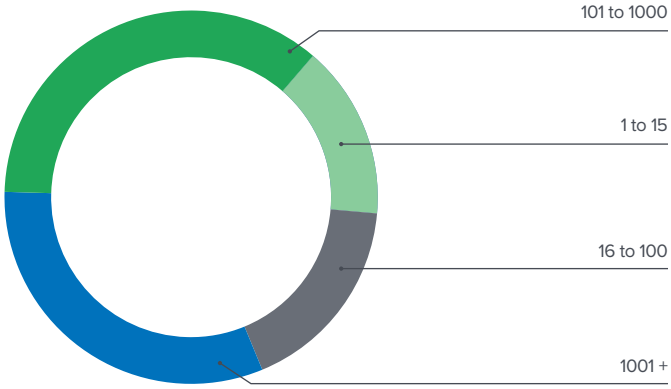


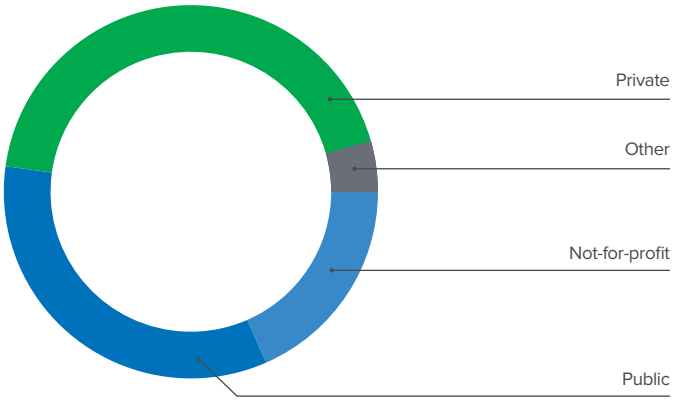
Figure 4 shows that the largest group of respondents work in organisations with more than 1001 employees (36 per cent), 32 per cent work in organisations with between 101 – 1000 employees, almost a fifth (17 per cent) from organisations between 16 – 100, and a smaller proportion are sole proprietors or small organisations (15 per cent).

FIGURE 4: SIZE OF ORGANISATION (909 RESPONSES)



The majority of respondents (44 per cent) work in the private sector, over a third (34 per cent) work in the public sector, almost a fifth (18 per cent) work in the Not-for-Profit sector, and 4 per cent in other sectors shown in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5: ORGANISATIONAL SECTOR (912 RESPONSES)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 6 shows three quarters (76 per cent) of respondents work full time, a quarter (20 per cent) work part-time or casually, and the remaining 4 per cent unemployed.

FIGURE 6: EMPLOYMENT STATUS (913 RESPONSES)

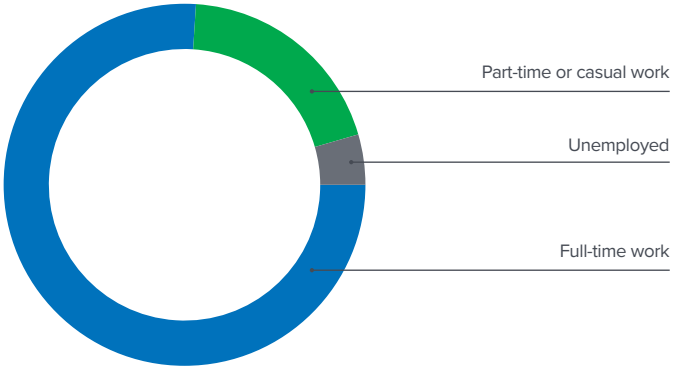


Table 1 shows a wide spread of industry sectors among respondents, with the largest groups being health care and social assistance (15 per cent), education and training (14 per cent), and professional, scientific and technical services (14 per cent).

TABLE 1: INDUSTRY SECTOR (910 RESPONSES)

Answer	Percent
Health Care and Social Assistance	14.84%
Education and Training	13.96%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	13.63%
Public Administration and Safety	9.78%
Financial and Insurance Services	5.60%
Manufacturing	4.62%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3.52%
Construction	3.30%
Administration and Support Services	3.08%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	2.20%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.09%
Information Media and Telecommunications	1.98%
Arts and Recreation Services	1.87%
Retail Trade	1.76%
Accommodation and Food Services	1.43%
Mining	0.77%
Wholesale Trade	0.77%
Rental, Hiring and Retails Estate Services	0.66%
Other Services	14.18%

DETAILED FINDINGS

ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS

Table 2 shows that the majority (36 per cent) of respondents classify an older worker as aged between 61 – 65 years old, an increase of 3 per cent from the 2014 survey results. Responses indicate a shift in what is considered an older worker, with a reduction in responses between 40 – 60 years old from 44 per cent in 2014, to 37 per cent in 2018. Responses indicate an increase in classifying older workers as 61 years old or above from 56 per cent in 2014, to 63 per cent in 2018.

TABLE 2: AT WHAT AGE WOULD YOU CLASIFY SOMEONE AS AN OLDER WORKER? (834 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
40 - 45	1.56%	0.72%
46 - 50	4.03%	5.04%
51 - 55	12.51%	10.79%
56 - 60	25.44%	20.50%
61 - 65	32.58%	35.97%
66 - 70	16.75%	18.82%
71 - 75	5.05%	5.40%
75+	2.09%	2.76%

Table 3 shows that approximately a third (32 per cent) of the respondent's workforces comprise of between 11 – 25 per cent of workers over 55 years old, consistent with trends in 2012 (32 per cent), and 2014 (35 per cent). Responses indicate an increase in organisations with workforces comprising of less than 5 per cent of workers over 55 years old in 2018 (13 per cent) since 2014 (5 per cent). Responses for the 26 – 50 per cent range remained stable between 2014 (28 per cent) and 2018 (27 per cent).

TABLE 3: APPROXIMATELY WHAT PROPORTION OF YOUR ORGANISATION'S CURRENT WORKFORCE IS OVER 55 YEARS OF AGE? (824 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2012	2014	2018
Less than 5%	14.13%	5.33%	13.11%
5% - 10%	20.34%	6.69%	16.99%
11% - 25%	32.05%	35.14%	31.80%
26% - 50%	23.23%	28.32%	27.43%
51% - 75%	7.32%	5.90%	5.70%
More than 75%	2.13%	1.47%	4.98%

DETAILED FINDINGS

ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS

As shown in table 4, there is a general trend of more respondents indicating no difference between workplace behaviours of older and younger workers in 2018 compared to responses in 2014. Workplace behaviours that experienced the largest increase in responses indicating no difference between the age groups included better technology skills (14 per cent), higher energy levels (12 per cent), and more physically capable (11 per cent). Respondents indicated a reduction in older workers being considered more reliable, having greater concentration abilities, and higher attendance compared to younger workers in favour of increased responses to no difference between the two groups.

TABLE 4: LOOKING AT THIS LIST OF TRAITS, INDICATE HOW YOU BELIEVE OLDER AND YOUNGER WORKERS COMPARE (841 RESPONSES)

	OLDER WORKERS		YOUNGER WORKERS		NO DIFFERENCE	
ANSWER	2014	2018	2014	2018	2014	2018
More reliable	69.06%	59.69%	0.43%	1.07%	30.51%	39.24%
More loyal	80.32%	73.84%	0.54%	0.48%	19.14%	25.68%
Higher job performance	23.40%	16.05%	9.15%	9.87%	67.44%	74.08%
More creative	5.03%	3.45%	53.03%	50.77%	41.94%	45.78%
Greater concentration	43.32%	35.08%	7.82%	6.78%	48.86%	58.15%
More committed	54.13%	50.89%	1.19%	1.90%	44.68%	47.09%
Higher energy levels	2.06%	2.73%	62.93%	50.18%	35.01%	47.09%
Greater awareness	58.02%	54.70%	5.25%	6.18%	36.73%	39.12%
More able to adapt to change	7.74%	6.90%	48.08%	46.61%	44.18%	46.49%
More physically capable	0.07%	1.31%	73.53%	62.07%	25.70%	36.62%
Greater career ambition	1.68%	1.43%	74.53%	66.71%	23.80%	31.87%
Higher attendance	60.65%	51.61%	1.14%	1.90%	38.22%	46.49%
Better technology skills	1.89%	0.59%	77.38%	64.80%	20.73%	34.60%
More able to cope with stress	44.17%	44.11%	6.50%	4.88%	49.32%	51.01%

DETAILED FINDINGS

ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS

Responses in table 5 indicate an upwards trend in expected retirement ages from a majority (35 per cent) determining 61 – 65 years old in 2014, to 37 per cent indicating 66 – 70 years old in 2018.

TABLE 5: AT WHAT AGE DO YOU PERSONALLY EXPECT TO RETIRE? (837 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
40 - 45	0.21%	0.12%
46 - 50	0.21%	0.48%
51 - 55	2.03%	1.43%
56 - 60	13.69%	10.75%
61 - 65	34.71%	29.51%
66 - 70	31.87%	37.40%
71 - 75	10.64%	12.78%
75+	6.63%	7.53%

When asked what would most encourage you to remain in the workforce for longer, the trends evident in 2014 were the same for 2018 responses as shown in table 6. Flexible work options (40 per cent), job satisfaction (28 per cent), and the option of phased retirement (15 per cent) remained the top three reasons to remain working. Responses to flexible work options increased by 8 per cent since 2014, with job satisfaction declining by 9 per cent.

TABLE 6: PERSONALLY, WHAT WOULD MOST ENCOURAGE YOU TO REMAIN IN THE WORKFORCE FOR LONGER? (835 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Flexible work options	31.80%	39.76%
Job satisfaction	37.32%	28.14%
Option of phased retirement	15.71%	15.21%
Higher wages	5.95%	4.67%
Promotion opportunities	3.06%	3.83%
Training and development opportunities	1.93%	2.63%
Other	4.24%	5.75%

DETAILED FINDINGS

ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS

As seen in table 7, this year participants were asked if their organisation consults with older workers on issues that are of specific concern to their workplace. More than half (52 per cent) of respondents indicated their organisations does not consult with older workers, with 18 per cent unsure. A fifth (21 per cent) of respondents indicate their workplace does consult with older workers, with 9 per cent planning to in the future.

TABLE 7: DOES YOUR ORGANISATION CONSULT WITH OLDER WORKERS ON ISSUES THAT ARE OF SPECIFIC CONCERN TO YOUR WORKPLACE? (833 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2018
Yes	21.25%
No	51.98%
Don't know	18.13%
Plans to in future	8.64%

Respondents were invited to share what older workers described as issues of specific concern in their workplace. Sample comments from the 222 participants who provided insights are set out below:

"Flexible working arrangements"

"Flexibility to attend medical appointments, more annual leave to enjoy time with family, reduced working hours, requiring more time to learn new processes and systems than younger people"

"Discrimination for promotion and feeling undervalued"

"Not given options for phased retirement"

"Transition to retirement, financial planning, access to legal advice"

"Flexible working arrangements policy is not adhered to in principle, there is still suspicion by managers that staff who work from home are not actually working the required 7:30hrs per day"

"Career opportunities removed over 50+ regardless of current classification level. No tailoring of development or concern for older workers. Appalling culture of expected retirement"

"Recent survey responses indicate a desire for more L&D opportunities"

"The rate of change and ability to adapt as a stress point"

"Transition to retirement options, information about superannuation and information about pension and income"

"Workplace safety and higher incidence of manual handling issues due to age related wear and tear"

DETAILED FINDINGS

RECRUITMENT

Table 8 shows a similar trend in the greatest advantages of recruiting older workers between 2014 and 2018 responses. Experience (76 per cent) and professional knowledge (68 per cent) were regarded as the top reasons for employing older workers, with age diversity (36 per cent) the third greatest reason. Responses to reflection of the customer base in the workforce has increased by 4 per cent since 2014, whilst reliability decreased by 13 per cent and better attendance by 10 per cent since 2014.

TABLE 8: WHAT ARE THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES OF RECRUITING OLDER WORKERS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION? (812 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Experience	74.26%	75.74%
Professional knowledge	64.34%	68.35%
Age diversity	20.62%	35.47%
Reliability	36.08%	22.66%
Reduced turnover	20.87%	20.07%
Leadership	16.19%	16.63%
Reflects customer base in workforce	10.71%	15.27%
Communication skills	10.03%	8.50%
Better attendance	16.31%	6.77%
Other	1.29%	4.19%
No advantages	2.46%	1.60%

DETAILED FINDINGS

RECRUITMENT

With respect to recruitment practices, compared with 2014, 9 per cent more respondents indicated offering flexible work arrangements to encourage an age diverse workforce, as seen in table 9. The practice of training staff with recruitment responsibilities to ensure an absence of age bias increased from 28 per cent in 2014 to 32 per cent in 2018.

Since 2014 results, table 9 shows there has been an 11 per cent reported decrease in ensuring recruitment adverts are in locations that attract a full range of age groups. There was a reported decrease of 5 per cent in ensuring the content of adverts attracts a full range of age groups, a 5 percent decrease in excluding date of birth details from application forms, and a 3 percent decrease in ensuring recruitment suppliers have a diversity and inclusion policy.

TABLE 9: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RECRUITMENT PRACTICES, IF ANY, DOES YOUR ORGANISATION UNDERTAKE TO ENCOURAGE AN AGE DIVERSE WORKFORCE? (812 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Offer flexible working arrangements	33.56%	42.49%
Ensure the content of adverts attract the full range of age groups	43.50%	38.30%
Train staff with recruitment responsibilities to ensure all recruitment practices are free of age bias	28.25%	32.14%
Exclude date of birth from application forms	32.37%	27.34%
Ensure the location of adverts attracts the full range of age groups	22.56%	11.58%
Ensure recruitment suppliers have a Diversity & Inclusion policy	11.87%	9.37%
Brief recruitment agents to ensure that processes do no disadvantage different age groups	13.87%	9.61%
Proactively recruit older workers into a range of positions	5.57%	5.91%
Use mature age specific job boards to advertise vacancies	2.26%	0.86%
Other	1.31%	4.80%
No practices undertaken	29.62%	25.37%

DETAILED FINDINGS

RECRUITMENT

Table 10 shows an increasing trend in 2018 towards respondents indicating their organisation definitely does not (28 per cent), or probably does not (28 per cent) have an age at which they are reluctant to recruit workers. In 2014 half the respondents (52 per cent) indicated their organisation probably or definitely has an age above which they are reluctant to recruit workers compared to 30 per cent in 2018.

TABLE 10: IS THERE AN AGE ABOVE WHICH YOUR ORGANISATION IS RELUCTANT TO RECRUIT WORKERS? (808 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Definitely not	7.79%	27.72%
Probably not	21.27%	27.97%
Maybe	19.34%	13.99%
Probably	28.76%	23.02%
Definitely	22.84%	7.30%

When asked to indicate the age range that respondent's organisations are reluctant to recruit workers, 17 per cent of respondents indicated over 60, compared to 2014 where 23 percent indicated over 60, as seen in table 11. In 2014 the overwhelming majority (91 per cent) of respondents indicated a reluctance of their organisation to hire workers 50 years old or above, compared to 68 per cent in 2018, though nearly a quarter (23 per cent) don't know, an option not available in 2014.

TABLE 11: IF THERE IS AN AGE ABOVE WHICH YOUR ORGANISATION IS RELUCTANT TO RECRUIT OLDER WORKERS, WHAT AGE ARE YOU REFERRING TO? (808 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Over 35	1.35%	1.03%
Over 40	2.08%	2.88%
Over 45	6.05%	4.94%
Over 50	16.16%	10.29%
Over 55	16.25%	12.14%
Over 60	22.38%	17.49%
Over 65	16.61%	14.20%
Over 70	19.13%	13.99%
Don't know	N/A	23.05%

DETAILED FINDINGS

RECRUITMENT

As indicated in table 12, there was a 5 per cent increase from 2014 (27 per cent) to 2018 (32 per cent) in respondents indicating there are no challenges or obstacles for their organisation in recruiting older workers. There was a reported reduction from the 2014 figure of 7 percent in respondents indicating older workers lack required technological skills (27 per cent) to 2018 (20 per cent), and a 5 percent decrease in salary expectations of older workers as an obstacle in recruitment.

There was a reported increase in respondents indicating a lack of applicants from older workers from 26 per cent in 2014, to 28 per cent in 2018, and a slight increased perception (1 per cent) that a recruitment obstacle is older workers not fitting into the organisation's culture.

TABLE 12: WHAT ARE THE GREATEST OBSTACLES FOR YOUR ORGANISATION IN RECRUITING OLDER WORKERS? (812 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
No challenges/obstacles	27.06%	32.14%
Lack of applicants from older workers	26.13%	27.59%
Older workers lack the technological skills required	27.06%	20.32%
Roles available are too physically demanding	29.55%	16.87%
Salary expectation are too high	20.65%	15.52%
Older workers do not fit into the organisation's culture	12.57%	14.04%
Older workers have too much experience for the roles available	16.11%	13.42%
Older workers' qualifications are out-dated	10.82%	7.14%
Older workers lack the qualifications required	5.66%	4.19%
Other	5.78%	13.30%

DETAILED FINDINGS

RETENTION

When respondents were asked which options were available to employees in their late careers, three quarters (76 per cent) indicated flexible working hours as an option, roughly the same as 2014 (75 per cent), as shown in table 13. There is a reported 12 per cent decrease in long-service awards and recognition from 2014 (59 per cent) to 2018 (46 per cent), a 9 percent decrease in continued access to training and development, and an 8 per cent decrease in career planning and advice options.

TABLE 13: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS ARE AVALIABLE IN YOUR ORGANISATION TO EMPLOYEES IN THEIR LATE CAREERS? (791 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Flexible working hours	74.63%	75.98%
Part-time options	72.03%	65.61%
Continued access to training and development	63.13%	54.49%
Long-service awards and recognition	58.65%	46.40%
Phased retirement	34.44%	33.12%
Job-sharing options	33.05%	28.19%
Flexible work locations	27.96%	27.56%
Career planning and advice	24.69%	16.81%
Flexible job design policies	13.37%	13.65%
Elderly care leave	14.46%	11.38%
Grandparental leave	9.32%	7.84%
Return-to-work options for retirees	7.99%	7.46%
Loyalty payments	5.69%	2.40%
None of the above	7.62%	9.61%

DETAILED FINDINGS

RETENTION

Respondents were asked their opinion of what the best ways to retain older workers in their organisation are. Sample comments follow from the 675 participants who provided insights are set out below:

"Enabling older workers to mentor as part of their job"

"Financial advice for phased retirement options"

"A flexible and individual approach. We all age differently"

"Maintain their motivation to learning"

"Access to training and development"

"Provide a transition to retirement, flexible work arrangements, provide opportunities for older workers who undertake quite physical roles to learn new skills and move into a less physical role"

"Recognise and value the contributions of all members of our workforce. Diversity is just good for business. Create an inclusive culture for all"

"Identify diverse range of role and career opportunities to leverage their expertise; invest in training that ensures their ongoing employability, provide range of flexible work options and benefits to align with what motivates them/their needs"

"Secondments which allow for professional development, training and development is also available and clear lines for career progression or transferring into part time work as a method of transitioning into retirement"

"As with all employees, understand their motivation for being at work, and work to those motivators (e.g. development, financial, career, social). Not everyone is the same, so treat everyone as an individual, and have a conversation with them!"

"Don't stereotype. Continue to provide interesting and challenging work. Continue to provide learning opportunities.Provide opportunities for them to share their experience"

DETAILED FINDINGS

RETENTION

Table 14 shows that retirement remains the top reason for older workers exiting organisations in 2018 (77 per cent) as it was in 2014 (83 per cent). Responses indicate a decline of 4 per cent for illness or injury as a reason since 2014, and a 10 per cent decrease in redundancies since 2014. Job restructuring (17 per cent), and work that is too physically demanding (14 per cent) decreased when compared to 2014 responses.

The need for more flexibility increased as a cited reason by 3 per cent since 2014, with poor relationships with managers and caring for a partner or older family member increasing by 1 per cent.

TABLE 14: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON REASONS WHY OLDER WORKERS LEAVE YOUR ORGANISATION? (778 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Retirement	83.48%	77.25%
Illness or injury	27.27%	22.88%
Redundancy	32.04%	22.24%
Access to superannuation	17.73%	16.84%
Job restructuring	20.12%	16.58%
Poor relationship with manager	14.98%	16.20%
Caring for partner or older family member	14.92%	15.42%
Work too physically demanding	18.28%	14.27%
Need for more flexibility	9.96%	12.85%
Lack of promotion opportunities	12.17%	12.08%
Caring for children or grandchildren	9.35%	10.03%
Other	6.29%	10.28%

A greater proportion of respondents in 2018 (63 per cent) report older worker departures cause loss of key skills and knowledge compared with 2012 (46 per cent), a difference of by 17 per cent as seen in table 15. More than one fifth (23 per cent) of respondents indicated that older worker departures have not caused a loss of key skills and knowledge, a decrease of 15 per cent since 2012.

TABLE 15: HAVE OLDER WORKER DEPARTURES CAUSED LOSS OF KEY SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE? (787 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Yes	45.73%	62.52%
No	38.03%	22.62%
Don't know	16.24%	14.87%

DETAILED FINDINGS

RETENTION

When respondents were asked if their organisation captures corporate knowledge from older workers who are transitioning out of the workforce, more than a quarter (26 per cent) indicated often or always, a 3 per cent increase since 2014 (23 per cent) as shown in table 16.

TABLE 16: DOES YOUR ORGANISATION CAPTURE CORPORATE KNOWDELGE FROM OLDER WORKERS AS THEY TRANSITION OUT OF THE WORKFORCE? (783 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Always	6.34%	9.96%
Often	16.82%	15.84%
Sometimes	36.99%	38.19%
Seldom	27.54%	24.39%
Never	12.31%	11.62%
Other	6.29%	10.28%

As shown in table 17, since 2014, 8 per cent fewer respondents indicate their organisation offer a mentoring program to facilitate knowledge transfer between older and younger workers. Responses indicate more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of organisations do not offer a mentoring program to facilitate knowledge transfer, an increase of 4 per cent since 2014.

TABLE 17: DOES YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE A MENTORING PROGRAM THAT FACILITATES KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FROM OLDER TO YOUNGER WORKERS? (788 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Yes	30.88%	22.72%
No	62.86%	67.39%
Don't know	6.26%	9.90%

More than half (56 per cent) of respondents indicate their organisation does not have a transition to retirement strategy in place to support older workers exiting the workforce, as seen in table 18. Around a third (32 per cent) currently have a strategy or plan to introduce a strategy in the future.

TABLE 18: DOES YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE A TRANSITION TO RETIREMENT STRATEGY IN PLACE? (790 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2018
Yes	20.76%
No	55.57%
Don't know	12.78%
Plans to in future	10.89%

DETAILED FINDINGS

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The most practiced methods to ensure employees of all ages can access training and development opportunities remains consistent with 2014 trends with regularly reviewing training needs for all employees (60 per cent), line managers being required to encourage employees of all ages to participate in training (44 per cent), and offering a diverse range of training options relevant to employees of all ages (43 per cent) the top three opportunities as seen in table 19.

Responses indicate a 3 per cent decrease in promoting opportunities to specific groups through demographically-based communications since 2014, and a 3 per cent increase in other strategies being employed since 2014.

TABLE 19: WHAT PRACTICES DOES YOUR ORGANISATION UNDERTAKE TO ENSURE EMPLOYEES OF ALL AGES CAN ACCESS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES? (772 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Regular review of training needs for all employees	61.43%	60.49%
Line managers required to encourage employee of all ages to participate in training	47.40%	43.65%
Offer a diverse range of training options relevant to employees of all ages	35.14%	42.62%
Promoting opportunities to specific groups through demographically-based communications	7.68%	4.27%
Monitor participation rates in training schemes by age	3.96%	3.11%
No practices undertaken	16.22%	16.84%
Other	3.11%	5.96%

DETAILED FINDINGS

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Table 20 shows 8 per cent of respondents indicated line managers in their organisation are given training on how to manage different generations often or always, not greatly different to 2014 results (6 per cent). More than three quarters (76 per cent) of respondents in 2018 indicate that line managers in their organisation seldom or never are given training on how to manage different generations, also not greatly different to 2014 responses (77 per cent).

TABLE 20: ARE LINE MANAGERS IN YOUR ORGANISATION GIVEN TRAINING ON HOW TO MANAGE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS? (772 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Always	1.53%	3.50%
Often	4.10%	4.02%
Sometimes	17.68%	17.75%
Seldom	27.28%	23.06%
Never	49.42%	52.68%

As shown in table 21, there is a decrease in respondents reporting employees in their organisation being given unconscious bias training often or always, from 26 per cent in 2014, to 22 per cent in 2018. There is also a reported increase of 8 per cent in reporting employees seldom or never being given unconscious bias training, from 2014 (46 per cent) to 2018 (54 per cent).

TABLE 21: IF YOUR ORGANISATION PROVIDES UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING, DOES IT ADDRESS AGE-RELATED BIAS? (727 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Always	12.00%	12.65%
Often	13.68%	9.49%
Sometimes	28.32%	23.80%
Seldom	27.37%	18.29%
Never	18.63%	35.76%

DETAILED FINDINGS

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Respondents indicate that of the organisation's providing unconscious bias training, there is a reported decrease of 4 per cent in addressing age-related bias often or always, from 2014 (26 per cent) to 2018 (22 per cent), as shown in table 22. There is a reported increase of 8 per cent in organisations seldom or never addressing age-related bias, from 46 per cent in 2014 to 54 per cent in 2018.

TABLE 22: IF YOUR ORGANISATION PROVIDES UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING, DOES IT ADDRESS AGE-RELATED BIAS? (727 RESPONSES)

ANSWER	2014	2018
Always	12.00%	12.65%
Often	13.68%	9.49%
Sometimes	28.32%	23.80%
Seldom	27.37%	18.29%
Never	18.63%	35.76%

AUSTRALIAN HR INSTITUTE
+61 (0) 3 9918 9200
research@ahri.com.au

ahri.com.au/research

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