



ISSUE: MATURE AGE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Council on the Ageing (COTA) NSW Policy Position

COTA NSW supports the right of people of all ages to participate in the workplace and to be treated fairly and without discrimination. The skills, knowledge and experience of older people should be recognised and valued so they are able to continue to contribute economically, intellectually and socially. Workplace policies need to encourage mature age participation through flexible work practices and relevant training for HR managers and recruiters.

Rationale for COTA NSW's policy position

- The planned increase in the age pension eligibility age to 67 years by July 2023 and 70 years by 2035 will place greater pressure on many older Australians to keep working for longer.
- Older Australians say that age discrimination is the main reason they can't get or keep their job as they get older.
- Many employers and recruiters have a perception that older workers are costlier to their business, but research does not support this.
- Older workers have valuable skills and experience, which they can pass on to younger workers if they are given the role of mentor.
- Enabling older people to work longer would have a positive impact on the economy, increasing Australia's GDP and taxation base.
- People are living longer so they should have the choice to keep working if they need to or want to.
- Work provides a way for people to continue to participate in society and feel valued.

Actions COTA NSW Calls For

- Encourage employment practices that promote flexible workplaces that support the varying needs of a diverse workforce.
- Improve the training of human resource professionals to better understand the value of older workers and the role of unconscious bias in the recruitment process.
- Implement better recruitment practices that ensure candidates are judged on their skills, experience and ability to do the job, not their age.
- Dedicate funds for the implementation of *Jobs for the Future* Priority 4.1 to change the workforce environment for older workers by developing programs that help people plan for later workforce participation and transition to retirement.
- Monitor and track trends in the workforce participation of older people. Interpret and interrogate these trends.
- Create an annual award and event that showcases best practice employers who implement innovative and progressive recruitment, retention and training policies for mature workers in their organisations.
- Superannuation, Insurance and WorkCover legislation must reflect the increasing workforce participation of people over the age of 65, including allowing workers 75 and over to top up their superannuation until the mandated cap of \$1.6m is reached.
- The NSW Government to introduce payroll tax concessions for companies employing new staff members aged 50 years or older.
- Explore available opportunities for older people to upgrade their practical and employment interview skills.