

Mature age people

Literature Review

August 2009

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TRAINING AND EDUCATION SUPPORT
SOCIAL INCLUSION & VOCATIONAL ACCESS

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1. Introduction

This paper reviews literature concerning the labour market and training experiences of mature age people and recent Australian and international policy responses. As far as possible, it also aims to consider how older workers and job seekers are faring in the current economic downturn. The paper provides an annotated bibliography of key research (mostly published in 2008 and 2009), an overview of Federal Government policy and funding initiatives and a list of related websites.

The review identifies a number of key themes in the literature. The issue of sustaining and developing the skills of older workers, particularly the male dominated manufacturing industry, continues to be a strong focus in the current research. The Australian Industry Group's major research project published in December 2008 highlighted the need to retrain an ageing, predominately male workforce for the rapid change of skills required in the 21st century. A combination of formal, informal and non-formal learning, accompanied by various government incentives and organisational initiatives are required to meet this challenge, according to a review conducted by NCVET (Misko, J., 2008) as part of the AIG project.

Similarly, the Manufacturing Skills Australia report (Selby Smith, C, Smith, A & Smith, E 2007) highlighted a range of pedagogical issues for training mature aged workers in the manufacturing sector. The key driver for sustaining and developing the skills of existing workers is the presence of a learning orientation in the organisation. (Smith, A., Oczkowski, E., Selby Smith, C., 2008) Smith et al highlight the opportunities for VET providers to work with employers to improve skills development for workers. Current research on sustaining the competence of older workers by Griffith Institute for Educational Research aims to inform learning strategies and curriculum practices in both workplaces and educational institutions (Billet, S., forthcoming).

The importance of building skills in the context of a diverse older workforce has also been a focus in the emerging research. In an NCVET paper, Ferrier et al examine the implications of mature age workers' diversity for effective skills development. The authors investigate characteristics such as gender, cultural and language backgrounds, skills, qualifications, work experience and employment status (Ferrier, F., Burke, G and Selby Smith, C., 2008).

The need to consider gender differences is a consistent thread in recent literature. Despite strong growth in female labour force participation over the past few decades, a considerable disparity still exists between the participation rates of men and women, particularly for prime aged women and women aged 55 to 64 years. The Australian Institute examines the experience of Australian women in the specific context of recent

economic recessions. It explores ways in which the policy response of the current recession can be improved to take into account women's unique circumstances (Richardson, D., 2009).

The review highlighted the gaps in our knowledge of the later life experiences of work (and retirement) among older women. Forthcoming research by the Australian Productivity Commission and Swinburne University's Faculty of Business and Enterprise will enhance our understanding of the working choices of women nearing retirement.

Retirement, retirement intentions and retirement transitions are current areas of investigation for a number of research institutions and government departments. The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009 report highlights a marked contrast between current retirees compared with the intentions of future retirees and notes that the GFC is likely to cause many workers to revise and delay their retirement. According to research conducted by the University of Tasmania, professionals have the youngest expected retirement age, while labourers and production/transport workers have the oldest.

Retirement transition is also explored by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. The researchers ask how many Australian baby boomers are already in a transition job; how many intend to retire gradually; and how long they intend to spend in this transition phase. The Diversity Council Australia identified key factors influencing older people's decision to remain in the workplace, including job flexibility, hours of work and support for learning and development (Russell, G., 2007).

2. Literature review

Abhayaratna, J., Andrews, L., Nuch, H., Podbury, June 2008, 'Factors affecting the part time employment of older workers' in Part time employment: the Australian experience, Productivity Commission.

This chapter is part of a comprehensive study of part time work trends in Australia, focusing specifically on the changing role of part time work for Australians aged 55 to 64. Using recent ABS and Hilda data, the paper highlights significant gender differences in participation rates and motivation for working part time. It found an increasing number of older workers are using part time employment to transition to retirement.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast 11 June 2009, Ranks of part time jobless swell, (Transcript of a report by Stephen Long, Economic correspondent, PM)
<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2595796.htm>

Stephen Long reports on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data which show a surge in the number of people underemployed. John Buchanan, Director of the Workplace Research Centre and Bill Mitchell, professor of Economics at Newcastle University, provide comments. They note that when the jobless and the underemployed rates are added together, the figure rises to 13.5 per cent of the workforce. Men are particularly affected with the male-dominated manufacturing sector suffering mass job shedding.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast 9 July 2009, Job figures: devil in the detail (Transcript of interview with John Buchanan, Director of the Workplace Research Centre, 7.30 Report) <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2009/s2621766.htm>

Dr John Buchanan, director of the Workplace Research Centre at Sydney University comments on the June 2009 unemployment rate (5.8 per cent). Over a 12 month period, 120,000 full-time male jobs were lost, mostly in NSW including 77,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector. Over the same period, part time work for males and females increased; and there was an increase in fulltime female employment.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, December 2008, Population Ageing in New South Wales, Catalogue Number 4106.0.

The report provides a snapshot of the ageing (45 years and over) and older (65 years and over) populations. The chapters titled The Workforce and Participation in Society offer useful insights into labour market participation, vocational training and related issues. The overview draws extensively from non-ABS surveys and collections provided by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009, Retirement and retirement intentions, Catalogue Number: 4102.0.

This report highlights a marked contrast between current retirees compared with the intentions of future retirees. In 2007, the average age at which employed people intended to retire was 64 years - five years later than the average retirement age for current retirees. However, the report noted that the global financial crisis is likely to cause many workers to revise and delay their retirement further. The report also identifies industries with large numbers of their workforce intending to retire within 10 years.

Australian Industry Group, December 2008, Skilling the existing workforce: final project report, AIG, North Sydney.

This DEEWR funded project included the development of a major background research report on skilling the existing workforce; a national consultation process and trials of, and case studies into, enterprise experiences with skilling the existing workforce. The findings include: strategies for an ageing population; the need to retain existing workers; lack of post-secondary skills and qualifications; and rapid change in the nature of skills required in the 21st century workforce. Workers learn by informal and formal experiences as they age and these learning experiences should be incorporated into a workforce skills development approach. Many consultations were with representatives of the manufacturing industries (glass, cars and trucks, submarines, white goods, hydraulics, textiles, recycling, railways, and pipes) as well as education and training stakeholders.

Barnett, K., Spoehr, J., April 2008, Complex not simple: the vocational education and training pathway from welfare to work, NCVER, Adelaide.

This report explores the role that the VET system can play in assisting people move from welfare to work. The researchers examined the experiences of VET students from the relevant welfare groups and sought the views of other key stakeholders such as TAFE staff and Centrelink personnel. Conclusions include that VET can play a positive role but that there needs to be collaboration between VET and income support sectors to ensure that barriers are overcome. The study points to the importance of prevocational courses that address basic and remedial education needs, as well as offer personal support services.

Billet, S., (forthcoming) Sustaining older workers' competence: informing policy and practice, Griffith Institute for Educational Research, NSW.

This project will identify and recommend practices and policies to sustain and develop the skills of older workers. The researchers will conduct 30 interviews with older workers, develop six case studies and verify findings through a survey targeting a wider cohort. The project aims to inform policy and practice for workplaces and educational

institutions and identify appropriate learning strategy and curriculum practices in both workplaces and educational institutions. Additionally, the report will identify, evaluate and share examples of good practices.

Booth, H., Ackland, R., Windsor, T., (forthcoming), The role of online social networks in successful ageing, National Seniors Australia.

This research project will explore the role of online social networks in successful ageing. The project will increase understanding of how online social networking contributes to successful ageing through partnering, economic and voluntary activity, family and social connectedness. The findings will inform policy recommendations, social interventions and education programs designed to enhance 'ageing well, ageing productively'.

Bowan, K., Kearns, P., December 2007, E-learning for the mature age worker: final report, Flexible Learning Frameworks, DEST.

This final report provides an overview of the current situation in Australia in the role and use of e-learning in training for mature age workers and aims to identify good practice. The study involves three parts: a literature review, consultations in all states and territories and the conduct of four case studies. The report's outcomes include guidelines for good practice.

Dawe, S., 2008, Older workers and VET: at a glance, NCVET, Adelaide.

This report summarises key research and data to provide a national snapshot of projected labour force participation by mature age people. It highlights significant issues and trends reflected in relevant recent research, ABS and OECD data.

Ferrier, F., Burke, G and Selby Smith, C., 2008, Skills development for a diverse older workforce, NCVET, Adelaide.

Ferrier et al examine the implications of people's diversity for effective skills development for workers aged 45 to 64 years. The authors investigate characteristics such as gender, cultural and language backgrounds, skills, qualifications, work experience and employment status. The research included seven case studies of training delivery aimed at identifying the factors contributing to effective skills development. Positive outcomes were attributable to organisational factors and teaching and learning approaches. These included cooperative arrangements for program development and delivery, the integration of learning and work, encouraging sympathetic learning environments and attention to appropriate staffing.

Foster, S., 2008, *Mature age learners and workers: a review of the literature*, Work-based Education Research Centre, Victoria University.

This review investigates the literature on mature age learners and examines issues related to the nature of mature aged learners as a student segment and their participation in the labour market and education and training. Additionally, the report considers the challenges for training providers in addressing the learning needs of older learners.

Guenther, J., Falk, I., and Arnott, A., 2008, *The role of vocational education and training in welfare to work*, NCVET, Adelaide.

Based on interviews with welfare clients, training providers, government agencies and business, this study examines the challenges posed by the Commonwealth Government's Welfare to Work policy for VET providers. The report focuses on what makes training programs effective for the target groups in the transition to employment. It found that effective transitional programs must address the particular needs of client groups. Above all, they must develop employability skills and involve considerable pastoral care from training providers. Training should also provide on-the-job experience, a career pathway and flexibility to allow for personal constraints, for example, transport, childcare and illness.

Haukka, S., Robb, W., Alam, K., May 2009, *Chart of accounts: a framework for measuring the economic and social contributions by older Australians*, NSPAC.

This study develops a framework or 'chart of accounts' that allows users to track the participation of older Australians in paid and unpaid work; and estimate the value of economic and social contributions by older Australians as well as the value of losses for not utilising their knowledge and skills. Users can also make predictions of future contributions and participation in paid and unpaid work by using existing data as the baseline. Using this framework, the study estimated that there was a loss of \$10.8 billion a year to the Australian economy for not using the skills of older Australians. The study encourages a strategic ageing policy approach that is multidimensional, multi-sectoral and holistic and identifies four key areas for further research.

Jackson, N., Walter, M., *Which of Australia's baby boomers expect to delay their retirement: an occupational overview*, School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania.

While many of Australia's baby boomers are open to the idea of later retirement, intentions to delay retirement are by no means evenly distributed through the population by occupation. Nor are discussions pertaining to retirement occurring at the required level or evenly across occupations. This paper provides a comparative overview of findings for all 35 occupations at the ANZCO 2-digit level. Among these findings are

that professionals and associate professionals - many of whom hold so-called 'critical skills' which are central to the functioning of many businesses, organisations and departments - have the youngest expected retirement ages, while labourers and production/transport workers have the oldest.

Lattimore, R., 2007, *Men not at work: an analysis of men outside the labour force*, Productivity Commission.

This paper found that the rates at which men are disengaged from the labour force have increased four fold over the last century, rising particularly rapidly over the last 50 years. At any one time nearly 30 per cent of adult males are outside the labour force - neither working nor looking for work. An important explanation for the lower labour force participation rates of these men is the shift away from unskilled manual work in an increasingly service-sector and skill-based economy. Inactive men are more likely to be living alone, to be poorly educated, and of Indigenous or non-English speaking migrant background. For example, a man aged 45-54 living alone is about four times more likely to be outside the labour force than one who has a partner.

Mercer Australia, December 2008, 2012: *Beyond the global financial crisis*.

This updated profile of the Workplace 2012 report takes into account economic data and events from February to October 2008 and revised labour market projections, highlighting that (i) the number of workers aged 55+ in the labour force will increase by 14% (from 1.7 million to 2 million) (ii) women aged 55+ in the labour force will increase by 19% and (iii) men aged 55+ will increase by 10%. It predicts that employment growth is expected to be 50 per cent higher for women (10%) than for men (6%) between now and 2012. Further, it estimates that there will be a 20 per cent increase in the demand for females aged 60-64 in the Australian workplace by 2012 and a 17 per cent increase in demand for women aged 55-59.

Misko, J., 2008, *Combining formal, non-formal and informal learning for workforce skills development*, AIG and NCVER, Adelaide.

This review shows how multiple variations and combinations of formal, informal and non-formal learning, accompanied by various government incentives and organisational initiatives (including job redesign, cross-skilling, multi-skilling, diversified career pathways, action learning projects, quality assurance arrangements, job rotations, and mentoring programs) can be used to prepare workers to gain, maintain or progress through jobs. The report found formal learning continues to be the main route to recognised qualifications, especially for entry into regulated occupations. However, informal learning acquired through experience in work and life is the most frequently used of all the learning forms. Employers are mostly interested in the results of learning rather than the form of learning. They want essential job related technical skills and

knowledge and are also keen to have problem-solving, team work and communication skills. Workers with higher levels of education and training continue to access greater amounts of learning (formal and non-formal) than others. Accelerated apprenticeship training is problematic for those lacking the required literacy and numeracy skills.

Perkins, D., Tyrrell, L., Scutella, R., 2009, *Is career advancement important to disadvantaged jobseekers?* Melbourne Institute and Brotherhood of St Laurence.

This large survey of disadvantaged jobseekers analyses the career aspirations amongst Australian unemployed groups that have experienced long periods out of the workforce. While much has been learned about what factors are likely to encourage or act as a barrier to advancement, there has been less inquiry into the attitudes of low-wage workers towards the notion of career advancement. Using survey and qualitative interview data the study seeks to determine the importance placed on career development and to identify determinants of attitudes towards advancement.

Productivity Commission (forthcoming) *Working choices of women nearing retirement.*

Despite strong growth in female labour force participation over the past few decades, a significant gap still exists between the participation rates of men and women, particularly for prime aged women (ranked 20th in the OECD), and women aged fifty five to 64 years (ranked 14th). The Commission has pointed to the need to explore the reasons behind such participation gaps. The aim of this research is to inform policy changes to raise participation rates and thereby offset, in part, the slower growth of labour supply associated with the ageing of the population over the next few decades.

Richard W. Johnson, Janette Kawachi, and Eric K. Lewis, 2009, *Older workers on the move: re-careering in later life*, AARP's Public Policy Institute.

This US research report examines the characteristics of workers who change careers in late life finding, among other things, that later-life career change seems to be an important part of the retirement process. According the authors, 27% of older workers who change their jobs in the US, switch occupations. The study reports that workers who change careers typically move into jobs that pay less and offer fewer benefits. However, the new careers tend to offer more flexible work arrangements, less stressful working conditions, and fewer managerial responsibilities.

Richardson, D., August 2009, *The impact of the recession on women*, Australian Institute.

This paper examines the experience of Australian women during recent recessions and explores ways in which the policy response of the current recession can be improved. It considers the extent to which the current stimulus policy emphasises construction

projects, areas which tend to be biased toward the employment of males. The paper found that while the recession has not affected women's unemployment as seriously as men's, women already faced chronic labour market difficulties, comprising 80% of hidden unemployment in key age groups. The paper argues policy responses need to take into account women's unique circumstances, including the likelihood that they are more occupied with caring responsibilities.

Russell, G., May 2007, *Grey matters: engaging mature age workers*, Diversity Council Australia.

The research, funded by ANZ, IMB and the Australian Federal Police, documents the responses of 1,000 Australians, aged 45 years and over. The respondents were surveyed in telephone interviews to ascertain their views on a range of issues relating to labour force participation and training. The report found that having a job with flexibility, including hours of work, was important or very important for 97% of those not currently employed. Many mature-age people not currently working are care-givers (40%). Over 80% of mature-age people not currently employed said working for an organisation that was supportive of older workers, including supportive of their learning, was important in influencing their decision to remain in the workplace. The report provides a best practice tool kit for employers.

Selby Smith, C, Smith, A & Smith, E 2007, *Pedagogical issues for training mature-aged workers in manufacturing industry*, report prepared for Manufacturing Skills Australia.

This project was commissioned to draw together existing knowledge about the training of mature-aged workers. The study is set in the context of a tight labour market and change in age distribution in the manufacturing sector resulting in the increasing value of mature aged workers. Key findings are: working performance does not deteriorate with age; mature age workers are often quick to learn on the job; focussed at work; amenable to change; reliable; and have good work ethics. However, entry into formal training is often characterised by a lack of confidence caused by low literacy and numeracy levels; lack of recent classroom experience; and fear of failure. A range of options are canvassed in the report to resolve any problems arising from these perceptions.

Smith, A., Oczkowski, E., Selby Smith, C., 2008, *To have and to hold: retaining and utilising skilled people*, NCVET, Adelaide.

This report examines the ways in which Australian employers retain skilled staff at a time of low unemployment and skills shortages. It also considers the ways in which employers enhance their ability to use the skills of their workforce. The study found that the key driver for both skills retention and utilisation is the presence of a learning orientation in the organisation. Training as part of an overall learning culture, particularly nationally recognised training, is also important in retaining skilled people and making better use of

their skills. The report highlights the opportunities for training providers to work with employers.

Spoedhr, J., Barnett, K., Parnis, E., July 2009, Experience works: the mature age employment challenge, NSPAC.

This discussion paper provides an overview of mature age employment; outlines the distinctive barriers faced by older workers and identifies benefits for employers. The paper summarises key demographic data, presents specific case studies and investigates overseas approaches to draw out lessons and policy options relevant for the Australian context.

Taylor, P., Brooke, L., Cherry, N., Gregory, J., Steinberg, M., (forthcoming) Work life transition facing older women, Faculty of Business and Enterprise (FBE), Swinburne University.

There are significant gaps in our knowledge of the later life experiences of work and retirement among older women whose career opportunities, experiences of balancing work and personal life differ markedly from those of men. This study will develop policy and practice recommendations for structuring and enhancing women's later job and retirement opportunities.

Waterhouse, P., Virgona, C., 2008, Working from Strengths: Venturing towards strength-based adult education.

Developed for practitioners, this resource introduces adult literacy educators to the principles of strength-based practice, a technique that concentrates on the strengths, capacities and aspirations of individuals and uses these as a catalyst for change and growth. The resource provides examples of key processes and techniques, as well as information about where to access additional resources relating to strength-based practice.

Warren, D 2008, Retirement expectations and labour force transitions: the experience of the baby boomer generation (Working Paper No. 24/08), Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Victoria.

This paper examines the retirement intentions and labour force participation patterns of Australian baby boomers. It describes their retirement intentions: how many are already in a transition job; how many intend to retire gradually; and how long they intend to spend in this transition phase.

Windsor, K., Alcorso, C., 2008 Skills in context: a guide to the skill ecosystem approach, NSW DET.

The new skill ecosystem guide outlines the key features of the approach, based on the experiences of industry groups and their partners over the last five years. The Guide is designed for use by government bodies, industry and regional organisations which are embracing workforce development. VET practitioners and training organisations interested in partnering with industry around skills development will also find the guide relevant to their work.

Wren, T., 2008, Keeping skills in hard times: a discussion paper, Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

In this discussion paper Wren argues that Australia needs to do three things to cope with the worsening economic climate: look to alternatives to firing and invest in skills; repair the safety net to avoid poverty and dislocation; and ensure retrenched workers get the most effective assistance to get back to work quickly. The author recommends establishing a Skills Development Fund that would enable employers to retain their employees during the economic slowdown while they undertake training.

3. Federal Government policy and finding initiatives (2009/2010)

Vocational education and training policy has remained central to the Federal Government's response to the dramatic change in economic circumstances that has seen a shift from a labour market characterised by skilled labour shortages to one of rising levels of unemployment. In the light of these changing conditions the Government is realigning some of its VET programs to focus on skills maintenance through support for the unemployed, re-skilling of mature workers and the achievement of higher level qualifications that will be required for economic recovery. (Kempner, Budget Review Index)

The following summarises some of the key Federal programs and initiatives which are of particular relevance to mature age job seekers and workers.

Commonwealth Training Initiatives

Productivity Places Program (Mainstream)

The program will boost by 175,000 the number of funded qualifications for jobseekers and workers in NSW in the period to the end of 2012. The total comprises:

- 58,000 job seeker qualifications
- 117,000 existing worker qualifications.

Jobseekers are defined as individuals who are not existing workers and may include mature age workers re-entering the workforce. Existing workers are defined as individuals who have been paid for at least one hour's work in the preceding week. Jobseeker places are funded at: Certificate IV (\$5,000) and Diploma (\$10,000). Existing worker places are funded at Diploma and Advanced Diploma (\$9,000) and Certificate IV (\$4,500).

The program offers prioritised full qualifications for industry, including:

- those experiencing skills shortages, e.g. Community Services and Health
- industries of strategic importance, e.g. Advanced Manufacturing, Finance.

The first tender ended on Wednesday July 22, 2009. A tender for phase 2 contracts is planned for September 2010 with contracts to be let for January 2011 to December 2012.

Productivity Places Program (administered by the Commonwealth)

From 1 July 2009, the Australian Government will provide direct funding for two sub-elements of the PPP:

- 10,000 Structural Adjustment Places (SAP) to support groups of recently retrenched workers (these places have also been referred to as TPPP); and

- 18,900 New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) training places over 3 years (6300 NEIS places per year).

An additional \$86.5 m has been made available for language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) and pre-vocational training. The funded measures will build on existing Australian Government foundation skills programs, including the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL), the Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) and the Australian Apprenticeships ACCESS program.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Funding

The Government will provide \$28.2 million over three years (\$86.5 million) to provide 5,888 additional language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) training places for adults aged 25 years and over. The extra training places will comprise:

- 4,138 places for job seekers,
- 1,500 Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) places,
- 250 places in short courses designed to assist adult workers who are vulnerable to redundancy or have recently been retrenched.

Global Financial Crisis Initiatives

Compact with Retrenched Workers

The Australian Government with State and Territory governments established a Compact with Retrenched Workers. From 1 July 2009, retrenched workers aged over 25 years will be entitled to a training place for a government-subsidised Vocational Education and Training qualification (the PPP is the main source of funding for implementing the Compact).

Jobs Fund

The Jobs Fund is a \$650 million Australian Government initiative to support and create jobs and skills development through projects that build community and social infrastructure. The Jobs Fund will also invest in one-off capital projects to improve community infrastructure and will provide seed funding for social enterprises.

The Jobs Fund comprises three streams of funding:

- \$300 million Local Jobs stream to support community infrastructure projects with a focus on environment-friendly technology and heritage,
- \$200 million Get Communities Working stream for self-sustaining projects which create jobs and provide activities and services to improve community amenities,
- \$150 million Infrastructure Employment Projects stream for investment in infrastructure which generate jobs in regions affected by the economic downturn.

Local Employment Coordinators

The Government is placing Local Employment Coordinators in regions that are in most need of support. In NSW, the priority areas are: Canterbury-Bankstown and South

Western Sydney, Illawarra, Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley, Mid-North Coast, Sydney West and Blue Mountains, Central Coast-and Hunter.

The Local Employment Coordinators will identify employment opportunities and provide support to workers who have lost their job; work closely with local councils, businesses, chambers of commerce, unions and community organisations to maximise employment and training opportunities resulting from the Government's stimulus package. The Coordinators will also help develop apprenticeship opportunities and promote the skills these communities.

Employment Services – Job Services Australia

From 1 July 2009, Job Services Australia replaces previous employment services such as Job Network and will provide one-on-one assistance and tailored employment services. Seven separate employment services programs have been rolled a 'one-stop-shop' to meet needs of job seekers and employers.

Early access program for workers who have lost their jobs

All workers who have lost their job because of the economic downturn can get access to personalised employment services through Job Services Australia. The program runs for two years until 31 March 2011.

Retrenched workers will gain immediate access to Stream 2 services and benefit from a \$550 Employment Pathway Fund credit and immediate eligibility for outcome payments.

Job Services Australia providers will help workers develop a tailored Employment Pathway Plan. This could include:

- job search training and job search assistance such as resume preparation and advice about the best ways to look for work including expanding a client's employment related networks;
- supervised access to resources such as telephones, computers, stationery, vacancy listings;
- a comprehensive skills assessment to determine what work or educational skills and experience they currently possess;
- skills development training relevant to the local labour market needs;
- referral to education or training to possibly improve literacy under programmes such as the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program or Adult Migrant English Program;
- purchase of vocational and non-vocational assistance using the Employment Pathway Fund (EPF) which could include various items from safety boots; heavy vehicle licences; computer courses; wage assistance; and relocation assistance etc.

When workers present a redundancy letter from their employer to Centrelink, they will be assessed by the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI). If they are assessed as eligible, they will immediately receive higher levels of servicing (e.g. additional services tailored to their individual circumstances through Stream 3 or 4 services.) Although workers who lose their jobs will have an income and assets test applied, it will only apply to their eligibility for income support and not employment services.

Innovation Fund – funding for projects to assist disadvantaged job seekers

The Innovation Fund is a component of the new Employment Services, commencing on 1 July 2009 and ending on 30 June 2012.

The fund is designed to address the needs of the most disadvantaged job seekers including Indigenous Australians, people with mental health conditions, the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, and people from jobless families or who are living in areas of entrenched disadvantage. In order to receive funding, organisations must be a member of the Innovation Fund panel. Proposals for the second round of projects were to have been submitted by 7 August 2009.

The Participation Review Taskforce

The Participation Review Taskforce examined the barriers to participation of mature age job seekers. The taskforce investigated to what extent mature age job seekers with recent labour market experience should have the same participation requirements as other job seekers with full-time job search requirements. Recommendations to help mature age job seekers to find employment were developed, including initiatives to improve attitudes to mature age job seekers.

Golden Gurus: 2020 Summit

The Government will commit \$400 000 to the Golden Gurus program to will encourage skilled mature age people who are retired, semi-retired or not working full time to share their skills and experience as mentors for community organisations and small businesses.

Apprenticeship Funds

There are a range of apprenticeships funding programs available that can include mature age workers as long as businesses comply with the specified requirements for the apprenticeship fund.

Australian Apprenticeships Access Program

This program provides vulnerable job seekers who experience barriers to entering skilled employment with nationally recognised pre-vocational training, support and assistance. The program is delivered locally by brokers and providers who work closely with employers to deliver training that meets industry needs.

The program includes a minimum of 150 hours pre-vocational training linked to an Australian Apprenticeship pathway. Following the training period participants receive individualised intensive job search assistance for up to 13 weeks. Participants who gain an apprenticeship or other employment or commence in further education or training, along with their employers, receive 13 weeks of post-placement support.

Support for Mid-Career Apprentices

As part of the 2009/10 Budget, the Government announced the extension of Support for Mid-Career Apprentices payment from those aged 30 and over to those aged 25 and over. Support for Mid-Career Apprentices is a direct payment to either an employer or Australian Apprentice aged 25 or over when the apprentice starts an eligible trade apprenticeship. The fortnightly payments can subsidise apprenticeship wages by up to \$13,000 over the first two years of an apprenticeship.

The extension of this payment will benefit around 2,000 Australian Apprentices or their employers annually. They will be entitled to an extra \$7,800 in the first year of training and \$5,200 in the second year.

Skills for Sustainability for Australian Apprentices (SSAA)

The SSAA payment is a pilot program within the Skills for the Carbon Challenge initiative and is an outcome of the Australia 2020 Summit, managed by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. \$26.5 million has been committed over four years

The program aims to accelerate the response of industry and the tertiary education sector to climate change. To encourage apprentices to undertake sustainability related training, a payment of \$1,000 will be provided to eligible apprentices who have successfully completed the required level of training, which teaches skills in sustainability and environmentally sustainable work practices.

FarmReady Industry Grants

FarmReady is a national program available to all primary industries to manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Two types of support are available, FarmReady Reimbursement Grants and FarmReady Industry Grants.

Eligible participants are able to claim up to \$1,500 reimbursement per financial year to attend FarmReady approved courses, with additional funding available for associated reasonable travel, accommodation and childcare expenses.

Industry Grants of up to \$80,000 are available to eligible industries, primary producers or natural resource management groups to develop skills and strategies in response to the impacts of climate change.

4. Related websites

Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

<http://www.jobwise.gov.au>

The Jobwise site supports mature age employment and contains information for employers, mature age job seekers and mature age workers.

<http://www.jobaccess.gov.au>

This site provides supports employment of people with disability.

<http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au/skills/IndustryProfiles/WorkforceAgeing/>

Industry Employment Profiles provide a comprehensive dataset of Australian industries. The profiles include data on workforce ageing and other workforce characteristics.

<http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/>

Skills Australia is an independent statutory body, providing advice to DEEWR on current, emerging and future workforce skills needs and workforce development needs.

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/>

Australian Workplace provides job seekers, employees and employers with information about finding a job, starting work and workplace issues.

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/lmip/>

The Labour Market Information Portal (LMIP) provides up to date labour market information to help people to better understand their local area.

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Publications/>

This section of the site contains up to date data and information on labour market trends including leading indicator of employment and regional updates, Australian regional labour markets; job outlook; skill shortages and vacancy reports.

Other Commonwealth Government Departments and agencies

<http://www.abs.gov.au/>

This site provides statistics on a wide range of economic and social matters, including participation in labour market, education and training.

<http://www.budget.gov.au/>

The 2009-10 Budget outlines a range of initiatives designed to support employment and skills development.

<http://www.aro.gov.au/>

Ageing Research Online (ARO) provides access to information on ageing research, including relevant policy responses and research initiatives.

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/dhs/publications/electorate-data/cl.html>

The Dept of Human Services has a useful list of government data at the electorate level, including the number of Newstart recipients in each seat.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/>

The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues.

<http://www.seniors.gov.au/>

This site is Australian Government's premier source of information for Australians over 50; containing information on health, lifestyle, care, finance, work and legal rights.

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/matureworkers/index.html>

This site showcases [stories from the workplace](#) featuring older workers, a [guide to the federal Age Discrimination Act](#), [research and reports on older workers](#).

NSW Government Departments and agencies

<http://www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au>

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care provides support and services to older people, people with disabilities and their carers in NSW.

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/trainingmarket>

This site provides information and advice to Registered Training Organisations, approved, or planning to tender, to deliver specific services under various programs administered through NSW DET's Approved Providers List.

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/star/index.htm>

This one stop shop for workforce development information brings together information from many NSW government sources.

Industry and other non-government organisations and networks

<http://www.cotansw.com.au/>

COTA (NSW) is a peak body providing leadership in social policy and community information and education for all older persons in NSW.

<http://www.productiveageing.com.au/site/>

The Productive Ageing Centre was established by National Seniors Australia and provides information, research and education on productive ageing.

<http://www.isc.org.au/>

The 11 national Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) provide industry intelligence to the VET sector about current and future skill needs and training requirements.

<http://www.aigroup.com.au/aboutus>

The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) is a leading industry association representing businesses a range of sectors.

<http://www.gtaltld.com.au/>

Group Training Australia is an employer network of apprentices and trainees offering advice and assistance.

Research centres and news sites

www.accesseconomics.com.au

Access Economics provides expert economic advice, analysis, modelling and forecasting for business, government and not-for profit organisations.

<http://www.agingworkforcenews.com/index.html>

Aging Workforce News is a US based news site and blog tracking international developments, tools, and resources for managing older workers in the workplace.

<http://apo.org.au>

Edited by the Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, this site provides an extensive database of Australian policy information.

<http://www.assa.edu.au/>

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia is an autonomous, non-governmental organisation promoting research and teaching in the social sciences.

<http://www.avetra.org.au/index.shtml>

Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVE'TRA) is a national, independent association of researchers in vocational education and training.

<http://www.education.monash.edu.au/centres/ceet/>

The Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) is a research centre involving two Monash University's Education and Business & Economics faculties.

<http://www.business.curtin.edu.au/business/research>

The Centre for Labour Market Research is based at Curtin University of Technology and investigates labour markets and related issues.

<http://www.werc.vu.edu.au/>

The Work-based Education Research Centre (WERC) conducts research and development in vocational and work-based education at Victoria University.

<http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/>

The Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CofFEE) is the University of Newcastle research centre for employment economic equity issues.

<http://www.rilc.uts.edu.au/index.html>

The University of Technology's Centre for Research in Learning & Change examines ways in which learning influences changes in educational institutions, workplaces, organisations and communities.

<http://www.wrc.org.au/index.php>

The Workplace Research Centre, at University of Sydney, provides research, training and conferences on all aspects of work and working life.

<http://www.ncver.edu.au>

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research is Australia's principal provider VET research and statistics.

VET resources online

<http://lorn.flexiblelearning.net.au/>

LORN is a gateway to online training resources for VET teachers and trainers.

<http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/about/services>

Edna is an online resource and collaborative network for the education and training community.