AGEING WORKFORCE AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

‘Current Assessment, Future Implications & Strategies’

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March 2003
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ageing Workforce and Youth Employment in Local Government (South Australia) Project was conducted by a Working Party consisting of representatives from the Local Government Human Resource Network Group, Local Government Association, Local Super and Local Government Workers Compensation Scheme. The project was funded by the Local Government Research and Development Scheme. The Ageing Workforce and Youth Employment Project Working Party consisted of the following individuals:

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A project officer, Louise Constable, was contracted for the duration of the project to: develop a proposal plan; research the relevant issues; identify strategies implemented at other organisations; consult with other organisations and peak bodies; conduct surveys; conduct a youth focus group; analyse results; develop recommendations and write this report.

The project required the involvement of several councils to assist in the completion of surveys and participation in the youth focus group. The following councils’ efforts are greatly appreciated:

- City of Holdfast Bay
- City of Charles Sturt
- City of Clare and Gilbert Valley
- City of Salisbury

Two high schools also participated in survey completion for this project. The high level of cooperation exhibited by both Pulteney Grammar High School and Fremont Elizabeth High School is appreciated.

In addition, the assistance provided by Local Super, the Local Government HR Network members, and all individuals who completed surveys or participated in the focus group is acknowledged and appreciated.

Finally, in researching the issues surrounding the ageing workforce and youth employment, the following individuals and bodies provided valuable information:

- Louise Rolland, CEO, Business Work & Ageing, Swinburne University
- Chris Glasson, SA Water
- John Grundy, Options Group
- Rob Ranzijn, University of South Australia
- David Harding, Dreamjob Pty Ltd
- Janine Berry, Brisbane City Council
- Office of the Ageing
- Council on the Ageing (COTA)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART ONE - AGEING WORKFORCE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why address the ageing workforce issues?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Early Retirement Practices</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Stereotyping of Older Workers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Age Discrimination</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Recruiting</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Needs of Older Workers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Extended Working Life</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Flexible Hours / Part-Time Roles</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Remaining Employed</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Training and Development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Organisational Needs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Workforce and Succession Planning</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Corporate Knowledge and Skills Transference</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Employee Considerations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Barriers to increasing workforce participation by older workers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Physical Roles</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Work Injuries</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Organisational Policies Regarding the Management of Older Workers</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 South Australia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Interstate Research</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Other Agencies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Survey Methodology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Council Employee Survey</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Retired Council Employee Survey</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 HR Network Group Survey</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Results</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Council Employee Survey</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Retired Council Employee Survey</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 HR Network Group Survey</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Strategies/Recommendations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART TWO - YOUTH EMPLOYMENT</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. University Graduates</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Traineeships/Apprenticeships</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Other Work Areas</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane City Council</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Casual Employment/Work Experience</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of Australia’s ageing population is attracting an increasing amount of attention. There are a number of factors that contribute to the ageing population, namely the declining birth rate, the declining death rates, decreasing immigration levels and most significantly, the ageing of the ‘baby boomers’. The projected statistics of Australia’s population highlight the magnitude of this trend.

![Percentage of total population proportions](chart)


The ageing population will have considerable implications for the labour market for many reasons. Firstly, people are more likely to remain in the workforce for longer periods compared to traditional employment patterns. This will occur partly for financial reasons and because people are living longer they are, generally, remaining more active and healthier. Therefore, they are more able to continue making valuable contributions to the workforce for extended periods of time. Secondly, despite the extended life expectancy of the Australian population, the average retirement age has declined in recent decades. Currently the average age at retirement is only 55 years, which is younger than most other countries. Moreover, the Australian workforce participation rates of individuals aged 55 and over are amongst the lowest of all OECD countries (Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield, 2002). This will have to be reversed to address the expected shortage of available workers, which has been predicted to occur by 2010. Thirdly, organisations must take action now to encourage older workers to remain in the workforce for longer to counteract the future shortage of younger replacement workers available (due to the steadily declining birth rate).

It is, therefore, evident that very shortly there will be a considerable smaller ‘pool’ of younger candidates to replace the high numbers of older people exiting the workforce. This is of great concern to Local Government because, as the report “Workforce Planning for Local Government in South Australia – Councils in Profile, 2001” indicated, current council employees consist of proportionally few youth but substantial numbers of older employees. Consequently, the increasing numbers of older workers and decreasing numbers of younger workers will have significant implications on workforce demographics, particularly for Local Government. Therefore, it is essential for Local
Government to identify the pertinent issues to develop and implement effective strategies that will:
- Support older employees in the workplace
- Assist in managing employees as they age
- Assist older workers transition toward retirement
- Promote age diversity in the workplace
- Address the reasons youth are underrepresented in Local Government
- Attract, develop and retain younger workers in Local Government.

This report aims to investigate these issues with a focus on providing a number of recommendations that will assist in developing policies to effectively manage these issues.
PART ONE - AGEING WORKFORCE

It has been well documented that the Australian population is ageing, for various reasons. Contributing factors include the dramatically declining birth rate, declining death rates, decreasing immigration levels and the ageing of the cohort of ‘baby boomers’. The Council on the Ageing (COTA) predict that in the next 30 years there will be only two people of working age for every person aged 65 or more. This compares to the current statistics of four people of working age for every person aged 65 or more (1999). Furthermore, as fertility and immigration levels decrease, the rate of population growth has declined steadily from 1.6 % in 1971 to 1.2 % in 1999 and is predicted to fall to 0.1 % by 2051 (Office for Older Australians, 1999). Statistics such as these highlight the magnitude of Australia’s ageing population phenomenon.

These figures indicate that there will be a shortage of younger replacement workers and that future workforces will consist of predominately older workers. However, in contrast, presently Australian workers retire at a relatively young age, the current average age of retirement being only 55 years (Ranzijn, 2000). As ‘baby boomers’ are beginning to reach the traditionally expected retirement age (around 55-60 years), large numbers of older workers will soon be exiting the workforce without sufficient numbers of younger workers to replace them. This is evident from the number of new entrants to the workforce each year, currently at 170,000 per year. It is expected that during the entire decade 2020-2030 there will be only 125,000 new entrant’s (Sheen, 2001). This alarming statistic has lead researchers to predict that by the year 2010 there will be a shortage of workers. Therefore, it is apparent that the ageing workforce will have substantial ramifications on the Australian labour market. Planning ahead and addressing the relevant issues now can reduce the impact of these impending changes for organisations. As the ageing workforce issues are complex and multi-dimensional there are many other reasons why employers should investigate the topic.
Why address the ageing workforce issues?

- To develop formal policies and strategies to assist older workers to either remain in the workforce or move into retirement.

- To address the potentially large numbers of workers leaving the workforce within a short time frame, due to the large cohort of ‘baby boomers’ reaching retirement age at around the same time.

- Due to the shortage of younger workers, older workers will be required to fulfil operational requirements. Organisations that implement ‘age friendly’ policies and “[make] their workplaces attractive to older workers [will] have a competitive edge when the shortage of workers kicks in” (p. 12, Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield, 2002).

- Compulsory retirement age legislation has been prohibited in all Australian states and territories, except the Northern Territory and Tasmania (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, HREOC, 1999). This means that older workers can continue working, and need not retire at a certain age as they once did (previously 65 years). This change of legislation may effect employees in certain positions within Local Government, such as those undertaking physical roles.

- With a workforce consisting mainly of older workers, positions involving physical manual tasks need to be redesigned for older workers who may not be able to fulfil that role any more. Other possibilities such as multi-skilling, alternative duties and retraining need to be explored to an increase in workers compensation and rehabilitation cases.

- Labour market statistics report that some skilled positions are already difficult to fill. Acting now will reduce the total amount of vacant positions and inability to fill skilled positions in future.

- In Local Government, many ‘baby boomers’ have been employed for extensive periods. Action needs to be taken to minimize the potential loss of corporate knowledge (due to their approaching retirement) and maximize the transference of skills.

- Planning for an older workforce allows succession and workforce planning to occur, thereby, maximizing the stability and continuity in the workplace.

- Employers who address the issues pertinent to an ageing workforce will be seen as market leaders by industry, other employers, employees and customers alike. Currently, no South Australian organisation has developed and implemented policies to address the ageing workforce issues. In doing so, Local Government, could become a best practice employer in this domain.

- At present there is limited awareness of the issues surrounding the ageing workforce by individuals inside organisations. There is a need to increase the awareness and commitment levels to effectively cope with the changes in workforce dynamics.

- Presently, there are prevailing negative stereotypes of older people in the workplace. These ideas have fuelled many misconceptions and perceptions of the capabilities of older workers, and have resulted in older workers feeling discriminated against and past their ‘use-by date’. These stereotypes will have to be challenged to promote an ‘age friendly’ workplace.
1. Current Management Practices of Older Workers

1.1 Early Retirement Practices

The Australian average age of retirement has declined in recent years to just 55 years of age (Ranzijn, 2000), despite the continuing increases in life expectancy. The current workforce participation rate of Australians aged between 55 and 64 is 49%. This is lower than the US and New Zealand, which is between 58 and 60% (About Seniors, 2003). The workforce participation rate for people age 65 or more is much lower, with the current rate being lower than that of most other OECD countries (Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield, 2002). These low workforce participation rates of older Australians are largely due to the current cultural climate which has enabled early retirement practices through large-scale retrenchments or downsizing and also discourages older people from remaining in the workforce after a certain age. This trend to encourage older workers to retire early has not, to date, been of great concern, because there has been a healthy supply of younger replacement workers available. As this supply of younger workers diminishes, employers need to address the trend of encouraging early retirement. This wide-scale practice of early retirement has lead the Prime Minister John Howard to comment that “we have to recognize that the cult of early retirement . . . should be changed because we have a valuable asset – people with enormous experience, increasingly better health and enthusiasm to make a commitment and a capacity to do so” (John Howard, quoted in About Seniors, 2003). It is evident then that older workers must be encouraged to remain in employment for longer periods than previous employment patterns.

1.2 Stereotyping of Older Workers

Needless to say, there are many perceptions regarding the capabilities and characteristics of older workers such as being resistant to change, forgetful, less flexible and adaptable, general deteriorating physical and mental abilities, less energetic and creative, less ambitious, being mentally slower and difficult to re-train (Business, Work & Ageing, 2003). While, subject to great individual variation, most of these perceptions are largely unfounded. The ageing process does, however, inevitably result in many physical changes which can pose a significant problem for older workers who undertake manual roles (these are further discussed in 4.1 Physical Roles). Although, importantly, older workers are not necessarily frail or ‘losing their faculties’ rather, many may be at the peak of their career (Flint, 2002a). Generally with age, there is a gradual decline in information processing speed, but intellectual capacity may increase as well as other skills such as problem solving ability and effective communication skills are likely to increase with age (HREOC, 1999). Other attributes such as wisdom and creativity also increase with age (NSW Committee on Ageing, 2001). Moreover, older workers are, advantageously, able to draw on a lifetime of experience.

Stereotypes concerning the capabilities of older workers are very common and can be by individuals of all levels within organisations. These stereotypes are damaging because they involve value judgements which attribute what is ‘too difficult’ for an older worker without assessing the particular individual’s capabilities (HREOC, 1999). Stereotypes concerning older workers are “largely a matter of perception” and psychological in nature rather than based on evidence (p. 17, Options Group, 2000). These ideas are incredibly restricting and detrimental in realizing the full capabilities of
older workers. These cultural stereotypes which devalue age, are so widespread that older people themselves often perpetuate them. Many individuals assume they are too old to learn new skills or complain about their failing memories. Such self-handicapping behaviour (Ranzijn, 1999) prevents many older workers from participating in training and development programs, applying for promotions, and continuing employment past a certain age. These stereotypes will have to be challenged to create a workplace that values the capabilities and contributions of older workers and encourages older workers to remain in employment for longer periods.

1.3 Age Discrimination

Age discrimination legislation exists to prevent discriminating practices on the basis of age (in South Australia the *Equal Opportunity Act 1994*). Although, a covert form of ‘indirect’ discrimination often occurs. This is described by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission as involving “practice or policy [which] appears to be neutral and is applied equally to everyone but its effect is to disadvantage one group disproportionately” (p. 8, 1999). This practice can have a detrimental effect on both older and younger workers equally. Furthermore, compulsory retirement legislation, which prohibits older workers being forced to retire at a particular age, has been abolished in South Australia\(^1\). However, older workers have been targeted for attractive financial ‘packages’, which have enticed many into retirement.

To prevent direct and indirect discrimination within the organisation there is a need for:

- Formal policies which clearly state that age discrimination is not acceptable in regard to recruitment practices, access to training and promotional opportunities.
- Communicating the organisation’s intolerance of age discrimination would also assist in challenging many stereotypes about older workers.

1.4 Recruiting

Age discrimination in recruiting practices is a major problem for older workers. The current recruiting practices favour youth over age, which ‘represents a huge loss of experience . . . [which] older workers are perceived as a liability rather than an asset (p. 6, Ranzijn, 1999). A survey conducted by Drake of 500 Australian executives found that not only was workplace age discrimination ‘rampant’ but more than 60% of the respondents said they preferred to employ people in their 30s with only one out of five pursuing workers aged 40 and over (Flint, 2002a). Similarly, a national survey of 3500 employers conducted by Morgan and Banks in 1998 found approximately one third of the participating companies had replaced employees aged 45 or more with younger workers (HREOC, 1999). Thus, many older people seeking employment encounter age discrimination during the recruitment process and find this the largest barrier to finding employment (COTA, 1999). Organisations, therefore, need to examine their recruiting practices and ensure age discrimination is eliminated. This would ensure that valuable and talented older candidates are not overlooked.

\(^1\) However, there are some exceptions, organisations such as the Australian Defence Force are able to enforce a mandatory retirement age.
2. Needs of Older Workers

To encourage older workers to remain in employment longer, clearly the needs of older workers must be considered and balanced with those of the organisation. The following section discusses factors, which should be considered in assessing the employment requirements of older workers.

2.1 Extended Working Life

Life expectancy has extended in past decades, currently being 76 years for Australian males and 81 years for females and this is predicted to increase to 81 and 86 years respectively, by 2050 (Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield, 2002). This means that older people are likely to want to remain in employment for longer periods than ever before, because:

1. Older people are experiencing increasingly better health than previous generations. They are, therefore, are able to continue working for longer periods.
2. Longer life expectancies result in longer periods of retirement. This has significant financial implications, with changes to the current pension system imminent. For example, a man who retired at 65 years in 1968 “needed enough resources, along with an age pension, to support himself for around 13 years. In 2001, a man who leaves work at 55 needs resources for an expected 26 years” (p.19, NSW Committee on Ageing, 2001).
3. Older people may also have other significant financial commitments to meet (e.g. mortgage repayments, dependents, supporting a second family, etc.)
4. Child rearing has been delayed in the last couple of decades and greater numbers of young people spend longer studying. Older workers may still have dependent children to support at the current expected retirement age of between 55 and 65 years of age.

2.2 Flexible Hours / Part-Time Roles

With an ageing workforce there will be a requirement for more flexible work arrangements. Many older workers will have caring responsibilities (elderly parents, partner, grandchildren), family commitments and their own health concerns to balance with the need to continue earning an income (Office for Older Australians, 1999).

While, flexible work practices need to be balanced with the organisations operational requirements, it has been recommended that options such as part-time hours, job-sharing, sabbaticals and secondments be considered (Department for Work and Pensions, 2001b). Flexible hours can be introduced into retirement planning by way of transitory or phased retirement. This can be beneficial to both employee and employer as it enables workers to gradually reduce their hours, yet continue to earn an income, while passing their skills and knowledge onto others through mentoring. Considerable research on flexible work practices, including flexible retirement, has been conducted by the British Government Department of Work and Pensions (2001a; 2001b; 2002). This research provides information on implementing flexible work practices, but there are considerable differences in the pension systems between Australia and United Kingdom. The financial aspect is one of the most important factors in an employee’s decision to reduce hours or retire. For this reason, a significant barrier in implementing flexible work practices may be the financial difficulties in balancing superannuation access whilst
continuing to earn an income, despite it being somewhat reduced. For detailed superannuation information refer to Appendix A, Local Super Report.

This aside, a survey of public sector employees conducted by the Western Australian government found that 68% responded that they would support the option of reduced hours (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2000). Also, the participant's level of interest in flexible work practices was reported as 'overwhelmingly positive'. A similar survey was conducted for this project, which assessed retired council employees' and current council employees' support for flexible hours, part-time/job-sharing and transitory/phased retirement. It was found that 84% of current council employees supported transitory/phased retired, with only 15% not supporting it. A significant contrast was found for retired employees with only 36% supporting transitory/phased retirement, with 51% opposing the idea (13% did not respond). This finding was unexpected, as the retiree sample indicated considerable support for more flexible hours and part-time or job share positions, in other items. The results of these surveys are discussed in detail in 7. Results.

2.3 Remaining Employed

Becoming unemployed and involuntary retired is a reality for many older workers. Due to the preference of the labour market for younger workers and age discrimination common in recruiting practices, many older workers are unable to find subsequent employment. This has devastating effects for older unemployed people such as shock, humiliation, grief, loss of confidence and long term negative effects on their well-being (HREOC, 1999; Sheen, 2001). This “demoralisation … they suffer means that their employability depreciates at a rapid rate once unemployed” (p. 8, NSW Committee on Ageing, 2001). Many older people become so demoralised with the job seeking process they cease searching and become involuntarily retired.

COTA conducted an assessment of early retirement figures between 1992 and 1995 and found for 81% of men and 64% of women, early retirement had been initiated by variables beyond their control (1999). Many older people also lack recent job searching experience and therefore lack familiarity with interviewing/recruitment processes. Furthermore, older job seekers may lack up-to-date skills, recent qualifications and experience in several industries.

2.4 Training and Development

The changing nature of workforces means that more employees will have to update their skills and acquire new skills during their working life more frequently than workers from previous generations. This continual updating of skills is essential for both employees to remain in the workforce and the organisation, with the requirement for relevant, up-to-date and appropriately skilled employees (Rolland, personal communication). A large proportion of older workers will have received their qualifications decades earlier and therefore need to refresh their skills and adapt to continual technological advancements. While stereotypically, older workers are thought to be less receptive to new technology, older workers have the same capacity to learn new skills as younger workers.

The negative attitudes held by individuals within organisations can produce an ‘artificial barrier’ to older workers participating in training and re-skilling programs (Office for Older Australians, 1999). Older workers may, however, benefit from training in different learning formats such as face-to-face, computer-based, self-paced or one-on-one.
Options Group (2000) suggest that older workers might take longer to learn new technology and that they may learn differently from younger workers. Flint (2002a) suggests that older workers might do better in small training groups that enable interaction and focus on problem solving. Therefore, workplaces should incorporate lifelong learning principles as a fundamental aspect of the organisational culture to promote continual skill development and refinement.

3. Organisational Needs

3.1 Workforce and Succession Planning

Workforce planning has already identified that the ageing workforce is of considerable concern for Local Government. A key component of ageing workforces is that “the ‘supply’ of mature workers will grow much more rapidly than the ‘supply’ of younger workers” (p. 1, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2001). Therefore, organisations will need to develop policies and create an organisational culture that supports older employees and encourages them to remain in employment for longer periods. This will reduce the impact of the expected shortage of workers, which in turn will affect many facets of the organisation.

As large numbers of ‘baby boomers’ start exiting the workforce, succession planning will become an important strategy. To avoid future difficulties in filling positions, especially highly skilled and managerial positions, organisations need to implement succession planning strategies (Department of Premier & Cabinet, 2003). This involves identifying when employees intend to retire and implementing appropriate training and mentoring programs for potential ‘successors’. Undertaking this type of workforce planning facilitates the transfer of knowledge, skills, experience and contributes to job continuity (Sheen, 2001).

The Department of Industrial Relations (2001; 2002) has produced a workforce planning worksheet for employers as part of the document “Workforce Demographics Toolkit: Framework and Strategies for an Ageing Workforce”. The department also produced “Flexible Work Practices – Framework and Options Kit”. Both of these documents are highly relevant and provide practical advice for organisations on workforce planning, succession planning and managing other ageing workforce issues (available at www.psier.qld.gov.au/publications.htm).

3.2 Corporate Knowledge and Skills Transference

Corporate knowledge is acknowledged as a valuable source of information, which is attained through years of experience in an industry, an organisation and a particular position. It is therefore, extremely important to retain this knowledge and prevent it from being lost when the employee ultimately exits the organisation. Transferring and retaining corporate knowledge was a key objective for one South Australian company who introducing a transitory retirement period (of up to three years) for employees. This ‘transitioning’ concept could be utilised in Local Government for individuals in key positions or managerial roles. Likewise, transferring skills will also become increasingly important as a shortage in many trades is predicted. Maximising the transfer of skills and retention of corporate knowledge can be facilitated through the introduction of flexible work practices and providing mentoring/coaching opportunities. In one interstate company with half of its workforce aged over 40, it was found that informal mentoring
was an important method of transferring information and skills and also provided ‘on the job’ training (Options Group, 2000).

3.3 Employee Considerations

With an ageing workforce, it is essential to consider the availability and capabilities of older workers. Older workers are thought to have many valuable attributes such as greater experience, loyalty, reliability and maturity (HREOC, 1999; Sheen, 2001). Also, older workers are thought have lower rates of turnover and less absenteeism (Department for Work and Pensions, 2001b). However, the physical capabilities of older workers decrease with age due to a general deterioration in physical abilities and ‘wearing out’, caused by considerable length of service in a physical role, discussed in detail in 4.1 Physical Roles.

As physical roles constitute a large part of the Local Government workforce, efforts should focus on offering alternative employment positions, job redesigning, training opportunities and advance planning to reduce the impact of this issue. Failing to do so will result in increases of absenteeism through workers rehabilitation and reduced operating capabilities. Furthermore, if organisations introduce flexible work practices (such as part-time, job share roles, flexible retirement) this will result in overall more employees but less full-time employees. This is likely to be more demanding for human resource personnel that will have to manage more staff as well as for departmental managers who have to fulfil operational requirements while coordinating additional staff to do so. Initially, the introduction and facilitation of these initiatives may be seen as problematic to employees within the organisation. However, the organisation would ultimately benefit by increased employee morale, increased stability, a reduction in lost corporate knowledge (through current immediate retirement practices) and the attraction of high quality employees.

4. Barriers to increasing workforce participation by older workers

As future workforces will consist primarily of older workers, it is important that potential barriers for their continuing employment be addressed. Is has been discussed that in the current labour market climate, chronological age in itself is a significant barrier. Other psychological barriers such as prevailing negative attitudes and stereotypes towards older workers have also been discussed. One of the most important barriers to older workers continuing employment in a large section of Local Government positions is the inescapable conclusion that older workers at some stage, will not be able to perform many of the manual laborious jobs within councils.

4.1 Physical Roles

The ageing process, obviously, results in a gradual decline in many physical abilities. While inevitable, the onset of many physical ailments is modifiable by lifestyle factors, such as diet and exercise. According to Gardner (in Flint 2002b), general age-related physical changes include:

- Reduced hearing and visual acuity
- Reduced muscle strength (including hand grip)
- Musculoskeletal degeneration (including loss of bone mass and arthritis)
Reduced aerobic and endurance capacity
Reduced tolerance to work environments with extreme hot or cold temperatures
Increased prevalence of cardiovascular problems and diabetes

The ageing process however, is very individualistic and chronological age is often not an accurate indicator of an individual’s capabilities. That said, the above list indicates that many older workers will have difficulty coping with the intensely physical work required in many ‘outside’ workforce positions with Local Government. Some organisations may be able to modify the job design to allow older workers to continue in that particular role. For example, this might include eliminating twisting, bending, and heavy lifting elements of the role (Gardner in Flint, 2002b). However, in smaller organisations it might be impractical for older workers to continue in a position where they are likely to receive limited assistance with physical tasks.

This issue is highly problematic to the ageing workforce in Local Government because physical work is a large component of council positions and yet there are not clear cut solutions. However, several strategies can be introduced to reduce the impact of this problem, for example:

– Implementing job rotation, to prevent workers being injured through repetitive tasks
– Allocating small work teams, which include a mixture of younger and older workers to carry out physical tasks.
– Multiskilling
– Alternative duties
– Learning new skills in other non-physical domains
– Assisting workers plan ahead for when they are not able to undertake physical work.

In addition, healthy lifestyles programs, such as those implemented in many councils are considered a positive step in improving the health and well-being of all workers, particularly for older workers (Flint, 2000a; 2002b).

4.2 Work Injuries

The number of workers rehabilitation cases is likely to increase in future. This is because physical roles, by the very nature of the work, result in higher numbers of workforce injuries. Future workforces will consist of predominately older workers who, whilst in a stage of physical decline, will be undertaking most of the manual physical roles. Therefore, the frequency of injuries is likely to escalate unless several workforce planning strategies are implemented to improve the management of older workers in physical positions. Data from the Local Government Workers Compensation Scheme indicates that currently most injuries occur in the older age groups. In 2001 and 2002 most injuries occurred in the 41-45 year age bracket, followed by the 46-50 and 51-56 year age brackets. A sharp decline in injuries was reported in the 57-60 year age group, however, workforce participation by employees in this age group probably accounted for the decrease in injuries. In contrast, an age profile analysis conducted on a glass manufacturing company found that the highest amount of work accidents occurred in the age groups below 40 years (Options Group, 2000). Moreover, the least accidents occurred in the 50 years and older group. This reason for this was thought to be because older and more experienced workers were more aware of the dangers involved in working with glass. Older workers were also more likely to have injured themselves previously, or witnessed work colleagues being injured.
5. **Organisational Policies Regarding the Management of Older Workers**

For this project 14 South Australian organisations were contacted to ascertain whether they had developed policies regarding managing older workers and youth employment issues. The organisations surveyed included the industries of government, manufacturing (car, home equipment and electrical components), privatised services, retail and other private industries. The personnel officers of the participating companies were asked several questions regarding the policies and practices at their organisation. As very few South Australian organisations have developed formal policies regarding the ageing workforce, interstate organisations were also contacted. Furthermore, four large interstate councils were contacted to assess whether they had or have future plans to address the management of older employees.

5.1 **South Australia**

At the time of the survey (March 2003), no South Australian organisation had developed policies or strategies to manage issues relevant to the ageing workforce. These findings were very similar to those of Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield (2002) who likewise conducted a survey of 20 South Australian organisations to identify any formal policies regarding older workers and their plans to address the ageing workforce. Importantly, Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield stated that the “lack of awareness of the [ageing] population demographics, and the lack of a long-term employment policy to address the issues, even among the very large companies, was one of the most surprising and important findings” (p. 16, 2002).

Likewise, lack of awareness regarding the ageing workforce issues and knowledge of the potential impact for businesses was the clear pattern found by the research officer who conducted the survey for this project. Discussions with individuals from the participating organisations resulted in a variation of comments, ranging from ‘it [the ageing workforce] won’t affect us’ to a couple of organisations starting to investigate the issue. One company mentioned that they are experiencing increasing difficulties in recruiting qualified skilled tradespersons and had starting thinking about strategies to combat this. This company said that they expected the shortage of skilled workers to worsen because of the ageing population (many skilled workers will retire shortly) and a lack of young people taking up apprenticeships.

An exception was one South Australian company who had introduced a “**Workforce Refreshment Program**” into their operations division late last year. This program was developed to reduce the large and immediate loss of corporate knowledge experienced when long-serving rural employees retired. Older employees in key positions, with important corporate knowledge, can ‘transition’ their knowledge/skills onto others and help train succeeding employees over a period of up to three years. Employees are invited to participate in the program (and receive a partial separation package for doing so) but the organisation ultimately decides whether their position is one requiring ‘transitioning’. The organisation can also negotiate with individuals to transition them in less than three years, depending of course on the extent of knowledge and skills to be transferred (for more information on this program refer to Appendix C). It should be noted that employees move from full-time employment into full-time retirement, however,

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2 Ageing research defines ‘older workers’ as being aged 45 and over.
program participants are aware of their retirement date up to three years in advance. While this program addresses the important issues of retaining corporate knowledge, maximising skills transference, and enabling succession planning to occur, it does not actually address older workers in the workplace. However, Local Government could benefit from utilising a similar transitioning program for positions that require an extensive local knowledge base, which is usually gained over long periods of time. An example would be senior planners, engineers or parks and gardens managers.

5.2 Interstate Research

Four medium to large interstate councils (VIC, NSW and QLD) were contacted to assess whether they had or were intending to investigate the ageing workforce issue. Two councils (both from NSW) said they had not developed any such policies and were not intending to address the issue at this stage. One large metropolitan (VIC) council had developed a corporate plan for the next three years that included a section on the needs of ‘baby boomers’. While the majority of the plan discussed older people in the community, one part identified a future need to “make more of the untapped potential of older workers as the supply of new and younger workers diminishes” (p. 19, City of Melbourne, 2001). However, when contact was made with the relevant individual at this council, it was established that the objectives of the corporate plan had not yet been operationalized. There are plans to address these objectives in the future.

One other large council had established a ‘Workforce Reshaping Project’ which identified several sub-projects such as ‘Ageing Workforce’ as well as many others which are considered highly relevant to Local Government, such as ‘Young Employees Strategy’, ‘Workforce Planning’ and ‘Knowledge Management’. The ‘Young Employees Strategy’ is discussed in the subsequent Part Two - Youth Employment section of this report (Brisbane City Council, 2003). Further details of the Ageing Workforce sub-project were not available at the time this report was written because the project was conducted as a pilot program that is currently being evaluated. However, the contact officer at the council was most cooperative and interested in the investigations of this project because both organisations are unique in trying to manage the same issues (the under-representation of young employees and concerns regarding the ageing workforce within Local Government). It is suggested that the relevant individuals interested in further developing policies for Local Government (SA) remain in contact with this council, as doing so could potentially be mutually rewarding for all involved.

An interstate company, ‘Business, Work & Ageing’ (based in Victoria) develops strategies for organisations to manage ageing workforce (Business, Work & Ageing, 2003; Rolland, personal communication). On a fee for service basis, they conduct an age profile analysis of the organisation to identify whether there are any age-related issues and exactly where in the organisation they exist. The CEO of Business, Work and Ageing, Louise Rolland, says that they then develop specific strategies tailored to that organisations needs and then commence the implementation process. Currently, the organisation is working on case studies for four interstate large organisations. The ethos of Business, Work & Ageing is that organisations should encourage lifelong learning and continual change throughout all stages of the working life. This would see organisations develop work pathways and provide training and development

3 It should be noted that Louise Rolland was repeatedly recommended by numerous agencies and is highly regarded as an expert on ageing workforce issues.
opportunities at all stages of an employee’s career. In doing so, employees would remain skilled, productive and up-to-date rather than becoming detached, outdated and devalued through lack of training and staying in one position for years at a time (Rolland, personal communication). Additionally, Rolland stated that an important step this process is to conduct a workplace education campaign to overcome the various stereotypes surrounding older workers, increase awareness of the issues, and promote an organisational culture which is committed to providing older workers with training opportunities to remain skilled and relevant in the workplace.

Another interstate organisation, Options Group (based in Victoria), conducted the ‘Age Balance Project’ in which two organisations participated (Options Group, 2000). A report detailed the outcomes of an age profile analysis conducted on two interstate organisations, one being a glass manufacturing company the other a logistics company. The workforces of these companies consisted of 45% and 60% of employees over 40, respectively. The major findings of the study included:

- The highest amount of work accidents occurred in the age groups below 40, for both companies. Absenteeism was also found the highest in age groups below 40.
- Informal mentoring was an important method of training.
- The manual nature of tasks meant employees ‘wore out’ over time and needed to be retrained to use higher levels of technology and less physical tasks to enable them to continue working.
- With the introduction of new technology, there is a need for employees to demonstrate adaptability and flexibility for new technology rather than particular trade skills. The authors recommended that the recruiting process should attempt to identify these capabilities in applicants.

Furthermore, one of the participating organisations was considered a ‘caring culture’ because it gave an older worker extended leave due to illness and gave older workers the option of going part-time or returning on consultancy basis after retirement. Importantly, this was attributed to the vision of the Chief Executive Officer, which was, to look at the individual’s qualities and abilities regardless of age.

Options Group (2000) made several recommendations to assist the organisations manage older workers more effectively. These included:

- developing targeted training programs for older workers
- developing a retirement planning policy
- developing a skill matrix to better utilise the skills of all employees
- structuring work teams to utilise skills of older people; including job rotation to increase integration between older and younger workers.

The report also emphasized the need to communicate and educate employees to increase their awareness of ageing workforce issue, and therefore increase their cooperation in addressing these issues.

5.3 Other Agencies

While investigations were being conducted for this project, contact was made with peak bodies such as Office of the Ageing, Council On The Ageing (COTA), the Equal Opportunity Commission and university research groups. As a result of these
discussions it was found that while no South Australian organisation has formally
developed policies to manage an ageing workforce, many bodies are currently
investigating the issue.

Some of the South Australian state government bodies researching this topic, include
the Office of Employment and Training, the Office of Vocational Education and Training,
the Department of Human Services, Economic Development Board, the Department of
Premier and Cabinet (SA Business Vision 2010), Department of Health and Ageing and
the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. At present, the state
government, in collaboration with the Office of the Ageing, is in the process of
establishing a reference group to review ageing workforce best practice policies and to
reach a unified approach to addressing the issues. The project officer was invited to be
a member of this reference group and this invitation has been forwarded to the working
party for consideration. In addition, the project officer was also invited to attend a
seminar regarding the ageing workforce by the Department of Employment and
Workplace Relations, which has also been forwarded to the working party.

6. Survey Methodology

For this project three surveys were conducted to assess current and retired council
employees’ attitudes regarding the management of older workers and retirement and
ascertain information from the HR Network Group. The details of which are as follows:

6.1 Council Employee Survey

This project required an analysis of current council employees’ attitudes regarding the
management of older workers and transitioning toward retirement. To do this, a survey
was constructed to measure the variables of interest (see Appendix D). The survey was
completed by 74 employees of varying ages in two councils, one located in the Adelaide
metropolitan area and the other being a rural South Australian council. The survey was
distributed to a designated person at each of the two councils who organised the
photocopying, distribution, collation and forwarding of surveys to the project officer for
analysis. The survey was intended to be distributed to employees of a third large
metropolitan council, which would have yielded a much large sample (N>200).
However, for unforeseeable and uncontrollable reasons this third council was unable to
participate at short notice. The remaining sample of 74 participants is considered
disappointing and not representative of Local Government in South Australia.

6.2 Retired Council Employee Survey

Another survey was constructed to assess recently retired council employees’ retirement
experience and their attitudes towards factors that may assist older workers remain in
the workforce for longer periods (see Appendix E). The survey was mailed to a sample
of 100 South Australians who had retired from Local Government within the last 18
months. Forty-seven participants completed the survey and returned it in the reply paid
envelope to the project officer for analysis. To generate a representative sample,
participants were recruited to match the male/female workforce ratio reported in the
‘Workforce Planning for Local Government in South Australia, 2001’ report. In addition,
participants were included from both rural and metropolitan areas of South Australia.
This sample is considered to be representative of recently retired council employees.
6.3 HR Network Group Survey

A survey of Local Government Human Resource Network Group members was conducted to assess what strategies individual councils had in place or were developing to manage issues relevant to both older and younger workers (see Appendix F). While participants were given a limited time (a one-week period) in which to complete and return the survey, there was minimal participation with only five responses received.

7. Results

7.1 Council Employee Survey

The following statistics were generated from a sample of 74 council employees (49 female, 24 males, 1 unknown) from 2 South Australian councils. Sixty-nine of these participants worked for a medium metropolitan council with 5 participants employed by a small rural council. The mean age of the sample was 44.1 years. The participants selected from 5 possible corporate groups, with 44.6% working in Human Services, 17.6% in Corporate, 16.2% Environmental, 14.9% Engineering/Infrastructure, 1.4% Other, and 5.4% unknown. Participants ranged in their length of service in Local Government, with the most frequent employment duration being 4 to 7 years service (24.3%), followed by 12 months to 3 years (20.3%) and 8 to 11 years (16.2%). Additionally, the majority (58%) were employed on a full-time permanent basis, with 23% reportedly employed on a part-time permanent basis.

In response to the statement ‘I feel that at a certain point I would not be able to continue my current job’, 46% of the sample either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similarly, in response to the question ‘I can imagine being in my current job past 60’, exactly 50% either agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that half of the respondents would consider continuing in their current position past the age of 60.

However, the average expected age of retirement for the sample was 61.8 years. This figure is significantly higher than the current average age of retirement (55), but is lower than the previous compulsory retirement age of 65. Furthermore, 50% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they ‘expect to spend the rest of their career at council’. This may be influenced by the very high job satisfaction reported by the participants, with 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing that ‘I like my current job’.

Participants were asked ‘what factors do you believe, would be the most important to enable you to continue working as you age?’. They were asked to select and rate three of the possible 11 factors from 1 being the first most important factor to 3 being the third most important factor to them. The section included a variety of factors, for a full list refer to Appendix D, part B, question 9.

- The first most important factor was reported as being ‘more flexible hours’ (30%), followed by ‘retraining in a different position’ (20%) and ‘part-time or job-share positions’ (15%).
- The second most important factor was reported as being ‘part-time or job share positions’ (28.5%) followed by ‘more flexible hours’ (20.5%).
- The third most important factor was reported as being ‘help with family health problems/caring responsibilities’ (13.5%) followed equally by ‘extended leave without pay’ (12%) and ‘assessing job design and making changes if possible’ (12%).
This pattern clearly indicates that the sample were highly supportive of flexible work practices which include the option for part-time, job share and more flexible hours. This pattern was further reinforced by the significant finding that **84% of participants supported transitory or phased retirement**, with only 15% responding that they would not support it.

A subsequent question, using the same rank scoring system as the above item, asked participants **what factors are most likely to influence your decision to retire?** Once again participants were asked to rank the 3 most important factors to them from a selection of 14 factors (see Appendix D, part C, question 13 for a full list).

- The first most important factor was reported as being ‘financially ready’ (42%) followed by ‘more time with family/friends’ (21.5%) and ‘health problems’ (15%).
- The second most important factor was reported as being ‘more time with family/friends’ (19%) followed equally by ‘financially ready’ (17.5%) and ‘health problems’ (17.5%).
- The third most important factor was ‘health problems’ (17.5%) followed by ‘free to travel/relocate’ (13.5%).

These results indicate that the sample considered finances, health issues and more time with family and friends were important factors for the sample in seeking retirement.

The participants were asked three questions regarding financial planning, contact with Centrelink and the provision of retirement information.

- The majority of the participants had not sought **advice from a financial planner** (75%) with only a minority doing so (22%).
- A correlation was conducted between this question and the respondent’s age because respondents’ age was considered a confounding variable in whether they had sought the advice of a financial planner. As expected a moderate negative correlation was found between these 2 variables (-.243, p<.05). This indicated that older participants were more likely to seek the advice of a financial planner.
- The item **I have found my dealings with Centrelink favourable** produced mixed data with 11% responding yes and 36.5% responding no. With most of the participants (53%) not answering the question.
- A similar response pattern was found for the item **I have found the retirement information supplied to me to be satisfactory**, with 26% responding yes, 28.5% responding no, and 46% omitting the question.

The survey included a ‘comments’ section, which only a few participants completed. Interestingly, while an introductory letter explained the key aspects of population ageing including the future shortage of younger workers, a few wrote “that if older workers did not retire, there would be a lack of jobs for young people”. This comment was even more prominent in the responses from retired council employees.

### 7.2 Retired Council Employee Survey

The following statistics were generated from a sample of 47 recently retired (<18 months) council employees (31 male, 15 females, 1 unknown) from metropolitan and rural South Australian areas. The mean age of the sample was 61.2 years. The participants were asked to indicate their length of service with Local Government prior to retirement:
Length of service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of service</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 5 years</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25 years</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30 years</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 35 years</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+ years</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the statement ‘I retired when I expected to’, 53% of the sample either agreed or strongly agreed. However, 23.5% also strongly disagreed to the same question. Likewise, 51% agreed or strongly agreed that ‘I knew well in advance the date I was to retire’ with 28% strongly disagreeing. As in the council employee survey results, this survey found high job satisfaction figures, with 72.5% stating that they enjoyed the job they were employed in.

A question asking participants if they would have preferred to gradually retire produced mixed results with 42.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 32% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This was compared to the results found for the item asking participant’s support for transitory/phased retirement. Surprisingly, only 36% supported transitory/phased retirement with the majority (51%) in opposition, yet 42.5% would have preferred gradual retirement. However, a number of participants (13%) did not respond to the transitory/phased retirement item, which may have effected the results.

The participants were asked many similar questions to the current council employees, including the item ‘what factors do you believe, would be the most important to enable you to continue working as you age?’ The scoring system was the same as that for the council employees with participants rating the three most important factors to them from a selection of 11 (see Appendix E).

- The first most important factor was reported as being ‘part-time or job share positions’ (21%), followed by ‘more flexible hours’ (17%).
- The second most important factor was reported as ‘more flexible hours’ (15%) followed equally by ‘part-time or job share positions’ (13%) and ‘retraining in a different position if current job no longer suitable’.
- The third most important factor was reported as being ‘assessing job design and making changes if possible’ (15%) followed equally by ‘part-time or job share positions’ (10.5%) and ‘mentoring/coaching roles’ (10.5%).

These results are very similar to the results of the of the council employees for the same question, being significantly supportive of flexible work practices such as part-time hours, job sharing and more flexible hours.

In response to the question ‘what factors influenced your decision to retire?’ participants selected and ranked the three most important factors from a selection of 14 possible factors (see Appendix E).

- The first most important factor was reported as being ‘health problems’ (25.5%) followed by ‘financially ready’ (19%) and ‘expected at my age’ (13%).
- The second most important factor was reported as being ‘free to travel/relocate’ (19%) followed by ‘dissatisfied at work’ (15%).
The third most important factor was ‘more time to pursue hobbies/volunteer’ (17%) followed equally by ‘more time with family/friends’ (10.5) and ‘financially ready’ (10.5%).

While health issues were identified as being an important factor for retirement, the response patterns for the remaining factors did not produce a consistent result.

Participants were asked the same three questions regarding financial planning, contact with Centrelink and the provision of retirement information as the council employees.

In contrast to the minority of council employees who had sought financial planning advice, most of retirees’ sample had sought such advice (85%). A minority (4.3%) said they hadn’t sought financial planning advice, and 10.5% did not answer this item.

In response to the item ‘I have found my dealings with Centrelink favourable’, 62% responded yes and 10.5% responded no. Again, many of the participants (28%) did not complete this question.

In response to the item ‘I have found the retirement information supplied to me to be satisfactory’, 74.5% responded yes and only 17% responded no.

This indicates that retirees were, overall, satisfied with the retirement information provided. However, the question did not stipulate the source of retirement information as being from their workplace, Local Super or Centrelink.

Both surveys asked participants to list three barriers to continue working past the age of 65 years. This was difficult to score as a wide assortment of answers were received. However, the general pattern was that health problems were viewed as a major barrier followed by age discrimination (by employer and colleagues), and the expected inability to perform job requirements satisfactorily.

More retired council employees (N=47) completed the ‘comments’ section compared to the current council employees (N=74) even though the sample was considerably smaller. As the results for the council employees survey found, many of the comments included statements such as “all employees should retire at 65 or less to allow school leavers to find employment”. Another responded stated that compulsory retirement legislation be reintroduced and the age lowered, to provide more employment opportunities for young people. Again, this was found despite an introductory letter outlining the important ageing population issues, including the future shortage of younger workers. This suggests that there is an attitude of making way for younger workers amongst current council employees and this view was especially prominent in the sample of retired council employees. A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that despite providing all participants with ageing population information, there remains a limited understanding of the importance of age-related issues. An awareness/education campaign could better inform employees of the reasons the ageing workforce issue is being addressed.

7.3 HR Network Group Survey

As mentioned, only five survey responses were received from HR Network Group members. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions about the type of policies in place at various councils, given that councils differ markedly in size, number of employees and location (rural/metropolitan). While the responses are not considered representative of Local Government in South Australia, the following patterns were identified:
1. Mentoring/coaching occurred informally, with no council responding that they had formal policies in place.

2. No council had formal succession planning policies in place. Although a couple indicated that informal succession planning occurred and formal policies were being developed.

3. A variation in responses was found for an item asking if the council provided opportunities for workers to undertake part-time or job share positions. Some cited that these positions were available in certain areas, one said that this can be discussed with management and another said that part-time or job share positions had “never been requested or offered”.

8. Strategies/Recommendations

Based on existing ageing workforce literature, first-hand and existing research, organisational policies, consultations with peak bodies and surveys results collected for this project, the following recommendations are made:

1. Education/awareness campaign
   This project emphasised the lack of awareness concerning ageing workforce issues. To encourage greater cooperation and maximise understanding of key issues, employees need to be informed of the reasons the organisation is addressing the issue and what implications this will have for them as individuals.

2. Ensure the entire organisation is committed to addressing the ageing workforce issue
   All levels of the organisation need to be made aware of the importance of this issue and the potential impacts on the organisation if the ageing workforce is not addressed. Also, management should lead by example and demonstrate their support of older workers and anti-discriminatory policies/practices.

3. Anti-discriminatory policies
   HR policies such as recruiting, training and promotion policies should clearly state that the organisation does not discriminate on the basis of age (see Appendix H). Organisations must also create a culture that discourages indirect discrimination and negative stereotyping of older workers.

4. Encourage lifelong learning principles
   Organisations should encourage employees to continually update their skills and expect to undertake training to keep themselves relevant and skilled. The organisation should also promote change to allow individuals to gain skills in other areas or take on new opportunities to allow them to continue employment.

5. Increase part-time and job-share positions
   These types of positions are more often required by older workers who have other commitments such as caring responsibilities. Part-time and job-share positions will be increasingly attractive to ageing workers.

6. Consider introducing other flexible work practices
   Such as flexible/phased retirement. This will also assist the transfer of skills and retaining corporate knowledge.

7. Gauge employee support for flexible work practices
   Contradictory support for flexible work practices was found between retired council
employees and current council employees. To further investigate this, it is recommended that a more representative sample be surveyed regarding their support of flexible work practices.

8. **Conduct workforce and succession planning**
   Includes advance planning for the exit of key personnel and planning for future workforces (see Appendix H).

9. **Develop formal mentoring policies and encourage informal mentoring**
   Informal mentoring is an important form of ‘on the job’ training. Formalising this process will provide clear guidelines and clarify the expectations of both parties. Mentoring is likely to become an even more important source of skills transference as the skills shortage intensifies. Mentoring also fosters relationships between older and younger workers, thus reducing the ‘us and them’ culture.

10. **Consider ‘transitioning’**
    Identify roles that require transitioning, (where loss of corporate knowledge is a problem) and design a transitory schedule of appropriate duration.

11. **Policy for physical roles**
    There is a need for a policy that addresses what is to occur when older workers are unable to perform their current (physical job). This needs to include the availability of alternative duties, retraining/skilling in other areas, job redesigning, etc.

12. **Conduct further analysis of satisfaction with retirement information**
    While 75% of retirees sampled reported that they were satisfied with the retirement information supplied, the question did not stipulate the source of this information (eg. Local Super, workplace, Centrelink, other). Additionally, 46% of current council employees omitted this question resulting in invalid results.

13. **Develop intranet sites with detailed information for older workers**
    Older workers need to consider many aspects when contemplating retirement, and providing clear relevant information will be of great value. Including links to other websites through ‘in-house’ intranets would be easily accessible (and quick to organise). An excellent example is the comprehensive ‘Guide to Retiring’ website developed by the Queensland Government. This can be found at [http://www.families.qld.gov.au/retirement](http://www.families.qld.gov.au/retirement)

    For a suggested model of organisational policies, please refer to Appendix H, ‘Age Diversity in the Workplace’.

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*March 2003* 25
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The topic of youth employment is another workforce area of concern for Local Government. Youth have, and continue to be, under-represented in the Local Government workforce compared to the proportion of youth in the wider South Australian community. This was found in the report “Workforce Planning for Local Government in South Australia – Councils in Profile, 2001”, which reported the following statistics:

- The average age of Local Government employees was 42.4 years.
- The 15-19 age group represented the smallest number of Local Government employees at just 1.23%. This compares to the Australian labour force statistics provided by the ABS, March 2001, which reported that this age group represented 8.32% of the total labour force.
- Likewise, the 20-24 age group represented 5.75% of the total Local Government workforce compared to 11.52%, reported by ABS.
- Lastly, the 25-34 age group represented 19.2% of the Local Government workforce compared to 24.08%, reported by ABS.

As indicated by these figures, there is a significant difference in the number of employees aged between 15 and 34 years in the Australian labour workforce compared to Local Government workforces. The percentage of employees in these age groups represent 43.92% and 26.18%, respectively, of the total workforces. Therefore, it is evident that Local Government has proportionally less youth in employment.

These figures are concerning, because as mentioned, due to declining fertility rates there will be a considerable smaller ‘pool’ of younger workers available to replace the number of older people exiting the workforce. It has been reported that during the entire 2020-2030 decade, the expected number of new entrants will be only 125 000 compared to the current 170 000 new entrants each year (COTA, 1999). Moreover, it is anticipated that this scenario will be especially evident in South Australia, for two reasons:

1. The proportion people aged 65 or more are highest in South Australia, compared to all other Australian states and territories.

2. Significant numbers of young workers are leaving South Australia for employment interstate or overseas due to lack of opportunities/employment or career progression (Ranzijn, Carson & Winefield, 2002).

As the numbers of young South Australian workers is set to decrease further, it is important for Local Government to act now and boost its low numbers of young employees. The area of youth employment involves university graduates, traineeships/apprenticeships, casual employment, work experience and vacation work placement programs. It has been suggested that youth are under-represented in Local Government for many reasons. Some of the major contributing factors are believed to include: lack of awareness by the wider community of the variety of careers available in Local Government; Local Government not being considered an employer of choice by youth; the problematic image/stigma of Local Government, including the perception of very conservative working environment.

To help analyse why youth continue to be under-represented in Local Government a number of approaches were taken. Firstly, current Local Government youth employment programs were identified. Secondly, a comparison of other organisations youth initiatives was conducted. However, Local Government is one of the few organisations...
who have identified under-representation of young employees as an issue. Thirdly, the Human Resource Network Group were surveyed for information about youth employment policies at their respective councils to ascertain what strategies individual councils have in place. Fourthly, a survey of high school students was conducted to assess their knowledge of Local Government careers and what factors they would find attractive in a potential employer. Lastly, a youth focus group consisting of young council employees was conducted to provide a forum for exchanging ideas regarding the positive and negative aspects of working for Local Government.

1. University Graduates

Graduate programs are the most common approach to recruiting university graduates. A graduate program for Local Government was recently developed by Dreamjob Pty Ltd. The Local Government Graduate Program document supported the idea that Local Government is not a preferred employer for university graduates and that there is a lack of awareness of the available career opportunities within Local Government. While, some fields such as planning and environmental occupations may be aware of career possibilities within Local Government, other fields such as information technology, engineering, management/business, public relations/communications, finance/accounting, may not be. A study of 61 undergraduate students, conducted by Higher Education Workplace Skills Olympiad (2002) for the Municipal Association of Victoria, found that 80% of the participants had not considered working for Local Government because they either had never considered it or didn’t know about the type of employment opportunities available.

An important common element of organisations researched for this project, was that they targeted youth by marketing their organisation and graduate program by several methods. Firstly, university career expos were popular as companies were able to market themselves aggressively to their target audience and interact with the students to answer any questions. In a discussion with an individual from a large corporation (with a successful graduate program), he stressed the importance of ‘getting in early’ with university students, because by third year many of them had decided with what organisations they wanted to apply for. Furthermore, ‘word of mouth’ is considered an important factor in attracting and facilitating information amongst university students. Secondly, many organisations with graduate programs, had developed websites which contained: relevant, concise information regarding what the graduate could expect from employment; reasons the graduate should apply for a position at their organisation; career progression/development opportunities; the application procedure; and, brief information about the company. These websites were highly ‘user-friendly’ and did not contain lengthy corporate information or ‘vision’ statements. Thirdly, establishing links from other popular student websites was another form of contacting students (for example, http://www.gradlink.edu.au). In addition, advertising positions on large employment websites such as ‘monster’ and ‘seek’ were found to be amongst the most widely used methods of discovering employment opportunities (HEWSO, 2002).

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4 Two of the South Australian universities, Adelaide University and the University of South Australia, held career expos/fairs during the time of this report (these organisations were recruiting for 2004).
While most large companies have some sort of graduate program, it may be either a very formal or an informal process. One large manufacturing organisation contacted for this project said that while they didn’t have a formal graduate program, the process was semi-structured with support, mentoring and continual development available for graduates. Other organisations have highly developed and very structured programs, such as the South Australian government. The Office for the Commissioner of Public Employment (OCPE) begins recruiting early in the year for the following year’s graduate intake, and utilises different forms of advertising to attract candidates (newspaper, websites, university websites, career expos). The OCPE organise graduate employment for all of the government agencies, hence the requirement for a structured, unified program. Some other organisations graduate program are highly sought after, thought to be (anecdotally) because they have a large, well established corporate name, they have a structured graduate program, and the organisation has marketed itself extensively to youth. In comparison, there may be a stigma attached to working in Local Government (David Harding, personal communication).

In discussing graduate programs it is essential to consider what factors graduates seek in employers. For this purpose, a survey of third/fourth year university students was intended for this project. However, at the time of this project all South Australian universities were on holidays, making conducting surveys impossible. Nevertheless, HEWSKO’s (2002) recent research with undergraduate students for Local Government (Victoria) found that the most important factors the participants sought in employers were (in order) remuneration, organisational culture, location, assistance with further studies, flexibility of work hours and job variety. Interestingly, the factors, graduate program and opportunity for career advancement, ranked as the third and second least important factors (out of 12), respectively.

2. **Traineeships/Apprenticeships**

Traineeships and apprenticeships are considered a cost effective method of employing and training new staff. Usually, trainees/apprentices attend a training institution for approximately two days per week and undertake work at the organisation for the remaining days. The traineeship/apprenticeship duration can differ but the normal period is 12 months. Depending on the availability of positions, the trainee may continue ongoing employment with the organisation or leave in search of employment elsewhere. The trainee/apprenticeships offered in Local Government include the areas of gardening/horticulture and administration. The working party for this project believe that the numbers of trainees and apprentices had decreased in the last couple of years. Efforts were made to ascertain figures to support this belief, but were not available in time for this report.

For this project a youth focus group consisting of young council employees was conducted. During the focus group discussion, two trainees in attendance said that while they had enjoyed their traineeship they were about to complete it with no ongoing position at the council available. They stressed that they would like to continue in employment with their respective council, but they had a very limited time left and had not, as yet, been able to secure an ongoing position. However, similar traineeship periods occur at many other organisations (one motor insurance company are currently marketing their administration/customer service traineeship program), and young participants receive training qualifications on completion of their traineeship program. Therefore, they have a greater chance of obtaining subsequent employment. Although,
it is important to note, that while Local Government workforce demographics demonstrate a minority of young employees, a proportion of young employees may desire to remain in Local Government but are not able to for lack of positions available.

3. Other Work Areas

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a tendency for younger people to seek employment in certain areas of Local Government, such as construction, maintenance, parks and gardens, and customer service. Apart from these areas which tend to attract younger people, there is a need to assess what other areas of the organisation (which have not traditionally attracted many youth), young employees can be more exposed to. Individual councils will need to investigate this issue as each council differs in its structure, size, local and capacity to do this. Also, there could be real difficulties in exposing youth to different areas of the organisations, such as limited resources to provide adequate support/development or mentoring opportunities. A barrier to including more young employees in organisation is the competition they face with other, more experienced, candidates. To compensate for this, job descriptions could be analysed to determine whether many years of experience are really necessary to fulfill the job requirements. However, in trying to attract more youth to Local Government, there will be a ‘trade-off’ between employing more experienced (and older) applicants and employing a young person. Moreover, management positions, obviously, require a certain number of years experience and aren’t readily accessible to youth. However, encouraging job pathways to these careers might be possible in individual councils. For example, Brisbane City Council (2003) are involving young employees in areas such as project support/officer roles to enable them access to other areas of the organisation and develop more interest in these areas.

Brisbane City Council

Like Local Government in South Australia, Brisbane City Council (BCC), are experiencing an under-representation of youth in their workforce. To address this issue, BCC has developed a Young Employees strategy as part of their ‘Workforce Reshaping Project’. This strategy includes: attracting more employees; ensuring satisfaction amongst current young employees; maximising the contribution efforts of young employees; and, creating more opportunities in the organisation for young employees. BCC plans to address these objectives by:

- Conducting traineeship recruitment sessions with schools.
- Providing young employees with lifeskills workshops, a social club and a recreation fund.
- Ensuring effective communication with young employees through websites and newsflashes.
- Conducting regular Youth Forums with young employees.
- Promoting young employees in other areas of the organisations. Also, involving youth in corporate projects.
- Establishing a Young Employees network.
- Introduction of a Graduate Program.
- Introduction of ‘Kick Start’ Program for young employees.

The ‘Kick Start’ Program is aimed at young employees with “lower skill level and experience but with the recognised potential to succeed” (p. 5, BCC, 2003). The
Program involves reconsidering the level of a position and reclassifying it as one level lower for young employees to enter, and including a cadetship which would enable skills such as project management to be developed. On securing such a position, the young employee would spend 2-3 weeks in intensive training, and the remaining skills would be attained over a one year period. This would enable young employees access to areas of the organisation not traditionally accessed by many youth.

4. Casual Employment/Work Experience

As half of all 15 to 24 years olds are studying, with the majority (81%) studying full time (ABS, 1997, in HREOC, 1999) the area of casual employment, work placements and work experience while studying, is an important area Local Government could further utilise. Many young people are not aware of the employment opportunities available within councils, but providing opportunities for casual/part-time employment and work experience could help raise awareness. Providing support while studying by way of part-time/casual employment would expose young people to the diversity of council careers while giving them work while studying. This may require more flexibility by employers, as young employees have to organise study commitments and employment. Employers could also encourage their young employees to do work experience/casual work in other areas of council, especially if other departments are relevant to their area of study. Lastly, employers might provide more mentoring opportunities, offer career advice and help them establish links/contacts at other councils.

5. Survey Methodology

For this project two surveys were conducted to assess high school students knowledge of Local Government careers and ascertain information from the HR Network Group. A youth focus group consisting of young council employees was also conducted. The details of which are as follows:

5.1 High School Student Survey

To assist in developing strategies to address the reasons youth are under represented in Local Government, it was essential to assess a number of factors relating to youth employment. To do this, a survey of year 12 students from two high schools (one public school, one private school) was conducted. The survey was designed to assess a several elements of youth employment, more specifically to:

- Identify attributes youth seek in prospective employers and different job roles.
- Identify factors that assist them to choose one organisation over another.
- Ascertain the number of students seeking traineeships/apprenticeships/other employment or a university position at the end of year 12.
- Assess the impact of parental advice, peer group advice, school career information and career information nights/expos, on students career decisions.
- Assess students opinion regarding Local Government as a possible career path.

The survey was simplistic in design (see Appendix G), therefore facilitating greater cooperation and participation from the students involved. The survey did not ask for students names, thus the participating students confidentiality and anonymity was assured. Students were asked to participate, as their responses were assisting to investigate the project objectives. However, the introductory letter informed the students
that participation was voluntary, as well as informing them of the reasons the survey was being conducted. The survey was conducted over a one-week period in February 2003.

5.2 Youth Focus Group – Council Employees

A focus group consisting of young employees from different councils was conducted to discuss and hear from those directly involved, what the issues were for young people in Local Government. Four councils had been approached to participate and HR officers at those councils were asked to nominate approximately five volunteers from their council. This would have resulted in a sample of approximately 20 young employees from four councils. However, the youth focus group sample, disappointingly consisted of only seven employees from two councils. Despite this lack of participation, some important issues were discussed. Although, the results must be viewed with caution as the representativeness of the sample is questionable.

A focus group program was distributed to the participants which provided an explanation of why the research project and focus group was being conducted and an agenda of items to be discussed. The program emphasised that participants should feel able to speak freely about their experience in Local Government as the individual (the project officer) conducting the focus group did not record their names, and the report would not identify any individual participant. Thus, the participants confidentiality was assured which reduced potential hesitation by the young employees for fear of feedback to their employer.

During the focus group, participants were asked to take part in a discussion of:

– Attitudes toward Local Government as an employer
– Factors they find favourable/unfavourable about working for Local Government
– What attracted them to Local Government
– Barriers to youth employment in Local Government, and possible solutions.

In addition, participants were asked to complete a six item questionnaire assessing what they consider the best and worst aspects of working for Local Government, how long they expect to work or Local Government and factors that would enable them to work longer in Local Government. This was considered an important exercise as some members of the group may have felt inhibited in discussing such issues in front of their fellow work colleagues.

5.3 HR Network Group Survey

A survey of Local Government Human Resource Network Group members was conducted to assess what strategies individual councils had in place or were developing to manage issues relevant to both older and younger workers (see Appendix F). As previously mentioned, participants were given a limited time (a one-week period) in which to complete and return the survey but there was minimal participation with only five responses received.
6. Results

6.1 High School Students

The following statistics were generated from a survey of 144 (75 male, 67 female, 4 unknown) year 12 and year 13 students at Pulteney Grammar School and Fremont Elizabeth High School. The sample consisted of the following participants from each school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Fremont Elizabeth</th>
<th>Pulteney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total 144

The mean age of the sample was 16.9 years.

Many of the students had decided on a career, with 65% yes to the questions ‘I have chosen my career’ and 33% responded no (2% unknown). This statistic indicates that the majority of 16 year old students (beginning of school year) have already decided on a career.

In response to the question ‘on completion of year 12, I will be’, students selected from a number of categories, with results as follow:

- Seeking a trainee/apprenticeship 5%
- Seeking a Uni/TAFE position 53.5%
- Looking for a full-time job 11%
- None of the above 5%
- Travelling/Deferring study 6%
- Working for or with a family business 1%
- Applying for a different training program 1%
- Studying part-time/working part-time 8%
- Missing 10%

The following statistics were reported in response to the question ‘would you apply for a job in Local Government?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These statistics highlight a significant difference between the numbers of students from each school who reported they would not apply for a job in Local Government. The private school figure of 91.3% is extremely high in comparison to the 69% found for Fremont Elizabeth. This pattern may be explained by the differences in numbers of students who knew a Local Government employee. Approximately, 23% and 13% of Fremont Elizabeth and Pulteney students, respectively, knew a Local Government employee. In addition, two councils reportedly recruit trainee and apprentices from Fremont Elizabeth High School, resulting in this school having more contact with Local Government compared to Pulteney Grammar School.

In response to the question ‘which factors do you think are most important to be happy in a job?’ Participants were asked to select and rate 3 of the possible 11 factors from 1 being the first most important factor to 3 being the third most important factor to them. For a full description of these factors, refer to Appendix G, part C, question 21.

- The first most important factor was reported as being ‘rewarding/satisfying work’ (44%), followed by ‘good pay’ (18%) and ‘friendly team of people’ (16%).
- The second most important factor was reported as being ‘good pay’ (22.5%) followed by ‘friendly team of people’ (18.5%).
- The third most important factor was reported as being ‘good pay’ (27.5%) followed by ‘friendly team of people’ (12%) and ‘positive working environment’ (11.5%).
- This pattern suggests that rewarding/satisfying work, good pay and working with a friendly team of people are very important attributes that youth associate with being happy in a job.

A subsequent question, using the same scoring system, asked participants if they would be more interested in a company that can offer various factors, listed at Appendix G, part C, question 22: In response to the question ‘would you be more interested in a company that can offer:?’ the following results were found:

- The first most important factor was reported as being ‘excellent working conditions’ (43%) followed by ‘company training and development programs (14.5%) and above average salary (11.5%).
- The second most important factor was reported as being ‘above average salary (29%) followed by ‘excellent working conditions’ (25%) and ‘opportunity for promotion’ (13%).
- The third most important factor was ‘opportunity for promotion’ (21%) followed by ‘above average salary (15%) and ‘a large business with a well-established name’ (14.5%).
- These results indicated that the sample considered remuneration, working conditions and promotion opportunities as being highly desirable attributes in potential employers.

A question asked students what careers or job types they knew about in council. While most students (54%) did not complete this section, the most reported positions at council were garbage collectors, road/ construction workers, parks and garden staff, dog catchers and mayor. A number of respondents reported positions such as politicians, ministers, police/ambulance officers (one stated medical practitioner), indicating that there appears to be some confusion regarding what roles Local Government performs. An intensive education or awareness campaign would help to clarify this, and make Local Government more accessible to high school students.
### 6.2 Youth Focus Group – Council Employees

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion involved a discussion of the positive and negative aspects of working for Local Government, these were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Factor</th>
<th>Discussion Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS TO TRAINING</td>
<td>Training was readily available to most of the group. One member expressed that his employer had encouraged him to do an expensive training course. For him, this reaffirmed that his manager was interested in his ongoing development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIENDLY TEAM</td>
<td>Mixed opinions concerning this point. A few expressed that working with friendly people was one of the best parts of their job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEXIBLE HOURS</td>
<td>The majority of the group responded very positively to being able to take flexi-time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT/ MENTORING</td>
<td>This included being able to seek help when required, and feeling able to ask questions without ridicule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL CLUBS/ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>One group member raised this as being positive. Other group members said they didn’t have many organised social activities but would like if there were.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTHY LIFESTYLES PROGRAM</td>
<td>Included access to a gym, flu vaccinations, ergonomic equipment, health screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNCIL FAMILIARISATION COURSE/BUS TOURS</td>
<td>Members from one council said that a Council Familiarisation Course had helped them greatly, because they had very limited knowledge of what Local Government was about. Members of the other council said that a Bus Tour had helped them with the physical layout of the municipality but would like to have had a more thorough council familiarisation course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT SUPPORT</td>
<td>Generally, it was felt that IT training was available when required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN DOOR MANAGERS</td>
<td>The majority said that even if they couldn’t approach their immediate supervisor, the next level manager or even CEO had informed them of their ‘open door’ policy, which was respected by the group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative factor</th>
<th>Discussion Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTRACTS (also see underneath)</td>
<td>The entire group expressed extreme dissatisfaction with contracts, citing lack of job security and inability to plan ahead. While they understood that many companies now preferred contractual employment, Local Government seem to over-use it. Many group members said they were frustrated and found the uncertainty regarding the tenure of their contract stressful. Also, they expressed that while on contracts they weren’t able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>Local Government is often portrayed very negatively by the media (e.g. television programs such as Today Tonight, A Current Affair). Group said there is the constant negative stereotype that council workers ‘do nothing’. Group felt that Local Government was likened to working in government, not seen as an innovative, corporate, rewarding employment option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICS</td>
<td>Some members said they were initially not aware of the politics around them, but gradually their communication with other departments or ability to conduct their job was effected by in-house politics. Also, there were some comments regarding ‘passing the buck’, not accepting responsibility for one’s actions was thought common practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESTRUCTURING</td>
<td>All said that repeated restructuring was frustrating because they had experienced a lack of stability or focus and that organisation had decreased morale as a result. Also they had to undergo these changes whilst adhering to work deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF MENTORING</td>
<td>This was raised by some members working in outside jobs. They said that they knew a lot of older people were very knowledgeable and could give them valuable advice but that it didn’t happen very often because they felt these key older workers were not approachable or busy doing other tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF PROMOTION</td>
<td>Mixed response – a couple said that in their area it might take up to 15 years for them to gain a promotion. Others said they would apply to other councils if promotion opportunities arose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCONSISTENT WAGES ACROSS COUNCILS</td>
<td>One participant said that ensuring all councils paid the same amount for positions and levels would stop ‘job-jumping’ from one council to another. This person said they had lost a number of excellent people because they found higher wages at another council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHETORIC</td>
<td>Many members of the group said that when they commenced working for the council they were informed that they would receive training and career development. However, they felt in reality this wasn’t always the case. The seemed to be some disparity in development opportunities they had been told would occur and what actions were actually taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ATTITUDES BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER WORKERS (also see underneath) | This was raised by members of the outside workforce. They felt that there was a large gap between ‘them and us’. Older workers were clearly not valued, one stating that “they’re trying to get rid of dead wood”. Younger workers felt they were needed for the manual laborious positions but were not valued.
 Older workers are reported to work on many different areas in a day, doing the most labour intensive and ‘boring’ tasks. This person said they would have much higher job satisfaction if they had some input into the creative process, or were allowed to look after certain areas so that they could feel a sense of pride of how the area looked.

CONTRACTS

There was a considerably lengthy discussion of contractual employment, with the entire group expressing extreme dissatisfaction with contracts. They understood that employers wanted to assess them before making them permanent but it was common practice to keep extending contracts for three or six months at a time. One group member said she was initially employed as a temporary contractor, then given a three month contract, followed by a six month contract and then two subsequent three month contracts. This participant said that while she has been at the council for some time she has never felt any job security and experienced some concern leading up to the end of each contract regarding whether the contract would be renewed or not. It was mentioned that there might be a prevailing underlying attitude between permanent and contract employees. Permanent employees being able to cement themselves readily into the organisation, plan ahead and becoming ingrained in the culture of the organisation. Contract employees on the other hand were faced with not knowing ‘what lies ahead’ and expressed some apprehension in becoming committed to the organisation when they may not be working there in future.

ATTITUDES BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER WORKERS

This was viewed as a significant negative factor because a good working relationship between older and younger workers is required to transfer skills and knowledge and allow younger workers to be receptive to such advice. The ‘them and us’ attitude is seen as damaging, because it fosters negativity toward each group. For example, younger people may become more resentful of older workers not being able to carry out particular physical tasks, this will produce and reinforce negative stereotypes and prevent younger people working positively with older workers. Therefore, younger workers will be less likely to see the positive attributes of older workers. Conversely, older workers may view younger workers as being incapable of higher tasks, being valuable only for manual labour, or lacking in desirable personal attributes (e.g. ‘common sense’, work ethic, experience, etc.). This notion of ‘old school’ attitudes was mentioned during the focus group as a barrier between older and younger workers.

Focus Group Questionnaire

While there were only seven participants in the focus group, the responses to the focus group questionnaire reinforced the issues mentioned above.

6.3 HR Network Group Survey

As mentioned, only five survey responses were received from HR Network Group members. The youth employment questions in the survey were intended to provide information to the project officer on what youth programs/initiatives different councils have in place. With very limited feedback received, it is difficult to speculate about what sort of activity different councils are taking regarding young employees. The survey

March 2003
responses received are not considered representative of Local Government in South Australia. However, the following was reported:

1. All five councils employed trainees/apprentices.
2. Most participated in work experience/work placement programs.
3. One council was about to commence a Graduate Program, the same council participated in a Young Business Leaders program.
4. The issues with youth programs/initiatives ranged from: traineeships not leading to permanent positions; managers being unhappy with trainees to be missing for a couple of days each week; and, lack of supervisory staff to oversee youth programs.

7. **Strategies/Recommendations**

Based on the results of the surveys, literature findings and similar research conducted at another large council, the following recommendations are suggested:

**Attracting Youth to Local Government**

1. **Education/marketing campaign to increase Local Governments profile**  
   This would include an informative aspect, where young people would be educated about what Local Government is about, by various methods (school visits, pamphlets, open days, site visits, newspaper/magazine features, etc.) The campaign would also need to promote the many career possibilities in council. It is clear from the high school results found that young people have a limited awareness of the careers available at Local Government.

2. **Use mediums to promote Local Government that are most frequently used by youth**  
   This includes establishing user-friendly websites, advertising positions on employment websites (such as ‘seek’ and ‘monster’) and establishing links from university websites. The website links need to communicate clearly, what Local Government can offer them and why they should consider a career in council.

3. **Participate in career nights/university expos/fairs to encourage interaction between youth and Local Government**  
   This would raise the profile of Local Government and promote the various employment opportunities.

4. **Develop partnerships with local schools and post secondary institutions**  
   As the results from the two high schools indicated, having contact with Local Government increased the likelihood that students would apply for a position at council.

5. **Introduction of a Local Government Youth Development Officer**  
   This person could further promote Local Government and establish partnerships with high school, TAFEs, universities and other institutions.

**Retaining youth in Local Government**

1. **Conduct more youth focus group to re-examine dissatisfaction with contracts**
The sample of young employees included in the youth focus group was not representative. Therefore, it is recommended that further investigation explore whether there is, in fact, widespread dissatisfaction with contractual employment.

2. **Involves young employees in other areas of the organisation**
   The ability to do this will vary between councils. However, a program similar to Brisbane City Council could be introduced to allow young employees more access to other areas.

3. **Consider establishing a Youth Network and other support measures**
   This could include relevant youth information links (development opportunities) from the council intranet site; establishing youth focus groups that investigate areas of concern, establishing social clubs. The Youth Development Officer (as above) could facilitate much of this.

4. **Assess factors that will increase the retention rates**
   If the council does not conduct individual development planning with employees, the employees need to be consulted to ascertain what they want/need from their organisation and what career development opportunities they are looking for. Altrich (in Armstrong, 2001) recommends treating employees as customers and emphasises the need to understand what will make employees stay in the organisation and not seek employment elsewhere.

5. **Need to do more than include a policy about youth employment**
   The youth focus group emphasised the need to ‘walk the talk’. Mere rhetoric is not sufficient and disillusioned young people as they believe their employer will develop them, and then nothing eventuates, they quickly become dissatisfied and leave (also communicate their dissatisfaction to their friends).
References


Brisbane City Council (2003). Young employees in BCC, Brisbane.


Appendices

Local Super Report A
Local Super Appendix B
SA Water ‘Workforce Refreshment’ program C
Current Council Employee Survey D
Retired Council Employee Survey E
HR Network Group F
High School Survey G
‘Age Diversity in the Workplace’ Model H
Local Super Report

Background
To obtain taxation concessions under federal legislation, superannuation funds must be maintained solely for the provision of death and/or retirement benefits plus other ancillary benefits that are generally related to an employee’s cessation of service (resignation, disability).

Under the benefit options provided by Local Super (Scheme), the employment status, the style of benefit chosen and whether the member has elected to make personal contributions will affect the ultimate benefit received by a member. Insurance cover applies 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and illness or injury claims do not need to be work related.

A simple description of the options is shown below. Salarylink is available to full time and part time, permanent and contract employees only.

Salarylink
Members can elect to make personal contributions ranging from 1%-10% of salary.

Benefit defined in advance based on period of contributory membership, salary at retirement and a benefit accrual percentage determined by the member’s personal contribution rate.

In the event of death or total and permanent disablement (TPD) prior to age 65, it provides a benefit similar to what would have been received by the member upon retirement at age 65.

After a 3 month qualifying period, provides a total and temporary disability (TTD) benefit of 75% of salary for a maximum benefit payment period of 24 months.

Ill health retirement benefit available for members aged 50 and over.

Example: Member aged 55, has contributed to Salarylink for 25 years at rate of 5%, final average salary $40,000.

Early retirement benefit at age 55 $150,000
Ill health retirement benefit at age 55 $180,000
Retirement benefit at age 65 $210,000

NB The illustration at age 65 assumes no increase in final average salary. It also does not take into account the 3% award contribution made to the Marketlink account.

Marketlink
Non contributory members plus those who elect to make personal contributions to Marketlink.

Works like a bank account - end benefit will depend on how much money has been paid in, plus the investment returns earned, less expenses.
Aged based levels of death and TPD cover (refer Appendix B for scales)
No other insurance benefits.
Where members want additional death and TPD cover, they are able to purchase additional units of age based cover (as per scales in Appendix B).

**Actuarial Data**

Every 3 years, the Scheme must undergo an actuarial review and the actuarial analysis of Salarylink members has shown the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period ending</th>
<th>Average membership age</th>
<th>Average age of commencing contributory membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.6.96</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6.99</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6.02</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age composition in various age groups was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period Ending</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6.96</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6.99</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6.02</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In respect of retirement ages, the experience of the 1996 review period showed a significantly higher proportion of members than expected retiring at age 55 and evidence of increased retirements between ages 60 and 64.

For the 1999 review period, the previous peak of retirements at age 55 was less evident and there was continuing evidence of increased retirements at ages 56 – 63.

Retirements at age 64 were higher than expected.

The retirement pattern for the 2002 was in line with the actuarial assumptions, which support the trends described above.

**Superannuation Benefits**

Over the years Local Super has introduced a number of strategies to assist older members. These are summarised below.

**Ill Health Retirement Benefit**

Available to Salarylink members only and provides an increased benefit to eligible members aged 50 and over who are unable to work at previous levels due to medical conditions. The additional benefit payable is 50% of the difference between the accrued benefit at date of cessation of service and the amount that would have been received at age 65, had the member kept working and contributed at the same rate.

When this benefit was introduced in 1994, it was particularly aimed at outdoor workers who have performed manual work over many years.
For members under age 50 who are approved to receive an ill health benefit, the amount payable is the full value of the retirement benefit that would have been payable at age 55, based on salary to date of cessation.

**Part-Time Workers**

Where Salarylink members move from full time to part time working hours, the benefit accrual rates applying to their periods of full and part time membership are calculated separately and then applied to the equivalent full time salary on cessation of service.

The benefit accrued during the previous period of full time employment does not suffer because we use full time equivalent salaries in benefit calculations.

For Marketlink members, the contributions paid would be based on the part time salary being received.

**Financial Planning Services**

Services, which are paid for by the Scheme, are provided as follows, subject to some timing criteria:

*Pre retirement plan* – available to all employed members aged 53 and over. Provides consultation and report, with the report providing a pre retirement financial strategy setting out goals for retirement.

*Cessation of service* – available to members ceasing service on or after age 55, or prior, if they have been approved to receive an ill health or TPD benefit, or have been retrenched. Provides interview and report which assists in setting a financial strategy appropriate to their needs.

*Follow up consultation* – available within 2 years of the above, subject to the member still having an account balance in the scheme.

**Seminars**

Apart from the work site information sessions that occur during working hours, pre-retirement seminars are held in various locations at regular intervals.

A financial planner also presents at the pre-retirement seminars, which cover the Scheme’s retirement benefit options, financial planning and investment issues, Centrelink benefits and retirement income streams. It also covers retirement lifestyle issues and changes.

**Investment Choice**

Investment choice on non-Salarylink accounts was introduced in October 2001. Where members do not make a choice, their accounts are invested in the default strategy, which is the Growth option (80% shares and property, 20% fixed interest and cash).

With the ongoing volatility of investment markets and the concern that many members have not taken any notice of the fact that investment choice exists, an age based default will apply from 1 June 2003.

Where members do not select an option, the following will apply:
Aged 55 – 59 years: Default to Conservative Growth (40% shares and property, 60% fixed interest and cash).
Aged 60 years and over: Default to Cash (100% cash).

Issues for Local Super

Employees need to be encouraged to save for their retirement. While the compulsory system of employer superannuation guarantee contributions will provide some benefit at retirement, it is well recognised within the industry that these contributions, together with any social security benefits, will not provide an adequate benefit for most people. In addition, many employees do not have adequate insurance protection in the event of prior death or disablement and once again, social security benefits alone generally do not provide an adequate level of income for most people.

The Scheme’s challenge is to educate employees re the above and the difference that making personal contributions, even at a minor level, can make. We obviously also want members to understand and appreciate the benefits that are offered by the Scheme.

Local Super is ahead of its peers in that it still offers an open defined benefit scheme to its members. The Salarylink benefit structure provides the security of a retirement benefit defined in advance, attractive insurance protection (including the ill health retirement benefit for older members) and is not subject to interest rate movements in times of market volatility. Members also have the option of making personal contributions to Marketlink, plus all members are exposed to Marketlink via the 3% productivity contribution.

When members leave their local government employer, they do not need to leave the Scheme and for retiring members, there are a number of flexible options for them to draw down a retirement income stream.

For Local Super, a key issue from the project is to understand whether there are any issues for older workers that we are not aware of and that may need to be considered by Local Super, whether it be education, communication, benefits or services. In addition, we would like to be assured that all human resource personnel, as well as members, fully understand the benefit structure of the Scheme and how it may be utilised to assist the management and retirement of older workers.
### Local Super Appendix

**Marketlink Basic Insurance Benefit for Death and Total and Permanent Disablement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member’s age next birthday at date of cessation of Service</th>
<th>Benefit Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 40 years</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 years</td>
<td>$51,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 years</td>
<td>$47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 years</td>
<td>$43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 years</td>
<td>$39,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 years</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 years</td>
<td>$33,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 years</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 years</td>
<td>$27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 years</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 years</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 years</td>
<td>$19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 years</td>
<td>$17,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 years</td>
<td>$15,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 years</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 years</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 years</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58 years</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 years</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 years</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 years</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 years</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 years</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

SA Water ‘Workforce Refreshment’ Program

Title: WORKFORCE REFRESHMENT PROGRAM

Distribution: All Management

Summary: This policy details aims, scope, eligibility, criteria and requirements of the Operations & WET Workforce Refreshment Program 2002/3 - 2005/6.

Effective Date: 01 July 2002

Review by Date: 30 June 2006

Approved by: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Version History:

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<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>01 July 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>01 July 2003</td>
</tr>
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INDEX
1 INTRODUCTION
2 WORKFORCE REFRESHMENT PROGRAM
3 PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS
4 SCOPE OF PROGRAM
5 TARGETED VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT (TVER)
6 ELIGIBILITY
7 PROCESS AND CRITERIA
8 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS
9 TRANSITIONING
1 INTRODUCTION

The Operations and WET Business Units within Water Services face a number of workforce issues that challenge the Corporation's business viability. The challenges include:

- Lack of succession options
- Potential loss of essential skills and knowledge
- Future skill and capacity issues
- Technology requirements challenging some employees
- Aging workforce

2 WORKFORCE REFRESHEMENT PROGRAM

SA Water is introducing a Workforce Refreshment Program to address the above issues. This Program will facilitate the separation of existing employees (as prescribed within this Policy) from the Corporation and refresh positions with new recruits.

3 PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The Program will be characterised by:

- Consultation with employees and their representatives
- Dignified and financially attractive exiting opportunities for employees
- Replacement of each separating employee
- Early recruitment to provide transition periods for skills and knowledge transfer
- Post employment planning supports
- Training for new and existing employees

4 SCOPE OF PROGRAM

The Program only applies to Operations and WET Business Units within Water Services.

The Program will span separate 3-year timeframes for each of the Operations (02/03 – 04/05) and WET (03/04 – 05/06) Business Units within Water Services and will allow for up to approximately 25% of positions to be refreshed.

5 TARGETED VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT (TVER)

A Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (TVER) Scheme will be used to separate employees within the Refreshment Program. Where employees separate with a TVER payment, positions will be replaced with new recruits, many of whom will be sourced through traineeships.

The TVER payment is $2,000 for every year of completed service, with a minimum of 104 weeks base salary and a minimum of $10,000. (More detailed information is available in the SA Water TVER Policies).

Tax concessions will apply for those employees who are aged between 55 and 64. (More detailed information is available in the SA Water TVER Policies).
6  ELIGIBILITY

Within the above-mentioned scope, employees eligible to participate in the Program will be those in field and office operational positions.

7  PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Eligible employees will be invited to register their interest in a TER. SA Water will then make offers to employees it agrees to separate after assessment against the following criteria:

- Where an incumbent is in the normal retirement age range and the lack of succession planning options risks a loss to the corporation of critical skills and corporate memory
- Where an incumbent’s performance is significantly impacted by lack of occupational skills and/or reduced work capacity that neither training nor other reasonable supports are likely to improve into the future

8  PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Employees participating in the Program will demonstrate commitment to:

- Effecting transfer of knowledge and skills to new employees
- Scheduling their separation to facilitate planned succession
- Continued satisfactory performance and OHS requirements

9  TRANSITIONING

In a number of instances an overlap of new recruits and separating employees, called a transition period, will be required to facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge and to ensure a smooth workforce change and continuity of service to customers.
Current Council Employee Survey

PART A: This section requires you respond to the following statements by ticking one of the possible 5 responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My organisation currently provides people with the necessary information and resources to manage their own careers effectively</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that at certain point I would not be able to continue my current job</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I like my current job</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can imagine being in my current job past 60</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I would consider retraining instead of retirement</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe that you can learn new skills well into old age</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I plan to leave Local Government within the next couple of years</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I would expect to spend the rest of my career at the council</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART B: Please respond to the following questions regarding the MANAGEMENT OF OLDER WORKERS

9. What factors do you believe, would be most important to enable you to continue working as you age? (please record the 3 most important factors to you, 1 being the most important and 3 being the 3rd most important to you).
   □ More flexible hours  □ Mentoring/coaching roles
   □ Part-time or job share positions  □ Financial advice
   □ Extended leave without pay  □ Retirement planning
10. What do you think are the 3 most significant barriers to continue working past the age of 65 (the previous mandatory retirement age)?

1. ........................................................................................................................................................................
2. ........................................................................................................................................................................
3. ........................................................................................................................................................................

PART C: Please respond to the following questions relating to RETIREMENT.

11. At what age do you expect to retire? .............. years

12. Would you consider a transitory or phased retirement period?       Yes / No

For example, you would retire over, say a 3 year period, reducing working hours gradually.

13. What factors are most likely to influence your decision to retire? (please record the 3 most important factors to you, 1 being the most important and 3 being the 3rd most important to you).

☐ Expected at my age       ☐ More time with family/friends       ☐ Financially ready
☐ Health problems       ☐ Feel pressured from others       ☐ Dissatisfied at work
☐ Lack of job security       ☐ More time to pursue hobbies/volunteer       ☐ Free to travel / relocate
☐ Other       ☐ Family health problems / Caring responsibilities       ☐ Unable to meet job performance standards
☐ Satisfied with career/work accomplishments       ☐ Little opportunity for flexible hours (part-time, reduced hours)

PART D: To help in analysing trend patterns please complete the following INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

Function Group
Ageing Workforce and Youth Employment in Local Government

☐  Engineering/Infrastructure - Admin, Technical, Asset/Facilities, Works/Horticulture, Support, Other
☐  Corporate - Admin, Customer Service, Records/Rates, Contract Administration, Finance, Human Resources, IT, Strategic/Policy, Other
☐  Environmental - Admin, Building, General Inspectorial, Planning, Health, Other
☐  Human Services - Admin, Community Services, Library/Local History, Tourism, Community Development, HACC, Economic Development, Other
☐  Other

Age: ........... years  Sex  Male / Female

Employment:
☐  Full-time - Permanent  ☐  Full-time - Contract
☐  Part-time - Permanent  ☐  Part-time - Contract
☐  Casual  ☐  Other

Length of Service:
☐  Less than 12 months  ☐  12mths to 3yrs
☐  4yrs to 7yrs  ☐  8yrs to 11yrs
☐  12yrs to 15yrs  ☐  16yrs to 19 yrs
☐  20yrs to 23 yrs  ☐  24 yrs +

To help us analyse the effectiveness of Local Government retirement financial planning practices, please complete the following questions regarding the PROVISION OF FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE

1. I have sought the advice of a financial planner to assist me with my retirement plans  Yes / No
2. I have found my dealings with Centrelink to be favourable  Yes / No
3. I have found the retirement information supplied to me to be satisfactory  Yes / No

Comments: (Optional)

........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

Please return this form to your Human Resources Department. Once again, thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX E

Retired Council Employee Survey

PART A: Please respond to the following statements regarding YOUR RETIREMENT by ticking one of the possible 5 responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. I retired when I expected to</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I knew well in advance of the date that I was going to retire</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I would have preferred to gradually retire (eg. progressively reducing hours) than retire at a certain date</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I enjoyed the job I was employed in prior to retirement</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART B: Please respond to the following questions relating to RETIREMENT.

5. What factors influenced your decision to retire? (please record the 3 most important to you, 1 being the most important and 3 being the 3rd most important to you).
   ☐ Expected at my age
   ☐ Health problems
   ☐ More time with family/friends
   ☐ Feel pressured from others
   ☐ Financially ready
   ☐ Lack of job security
   ☐ Dissatisfied at work
   ☐ More time to pursue hobbies/volunteer
   ☐ Free to travel / relocate
   ☐ Other
   ☐ Family health problems / Caring responsibilities
   ☐ Unable to meet job performance standards
   ☐ Satisfied with career/work accomplishments
   ☐ Little opportunity for flexible hours (part-time, reduced hours)

6. Would you have considered a transitory or phased retirement period? Yes / No
   For example, retire over, say a 3 year period, reducing working hours gradually.
PART C: Please respond to the following questions regarding the
MANAGEMENT OF OLDER WORKERS

7. If you had wanted to continue working, what factors would have been of most
assistance in enabling you to do so? (please record the 3 most important to you, 1
being the most important and 3 being the 3rd most important to you).

☐ More flexible hours  ☐ Mentoring/coaching roles
☐ Part-time or job share positions  ☐ Financial advice
☐ Extended leave without pay  ☐ Retirement planning
☐ Help with family health problems / Caring responsibilities
☐ Retraining in a different position, if current job no longer suitable
☐ Access to health information / support
☐ Assessing job design & making changes if possible
☐ Other

8. What do you think are the 3 most significant barriers to continue working past the
age of 65 (the previous mandatory retirement age)?

1. ..............................................................................................................................
2. ..............................................................................................................................
3. ..............................................................................................................................

PART D: To help in analysing trend patterns please complete the following
INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

Age: .......... years  Sex: Male / Female

At what age did you retire? .......... years

How long have you been retired for? .......... years

How long did you work for council prior to retiring?

☐ 0 to 5yrs  ☐ 21 to 25yrs
☐ 6 to 10yrs  ☐ 26 to 30yrs
☐ 11 to 15yrs  ☐ 31 to 35yrs
☐ 16 to 20yrs  ☐ More than 35yrs
To help us analyse the effectiveness of Local Government retirement planning practices, please complete the following questions regarding the PROVISION OF FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE

1. I went to a financial planner to assist me with my retirement

   Yes / No

2. I have found my dealings with Centrelink to be favourable

   Yes / No

3. I have found the retirement information supplied to me to be satisfactory

   Yes / No

Comments: (Optional)

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please return this form in the reply paid envelope attached. Once again, thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX F

Survey for HR Network Group

Please complete the following questions in the space provided and return via email to Louise Constable by Friday 7 March 2003. Please note, in some questions it may be necessary to indicate whether your response is applicable to the ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ workforce.

Ageing Workforce

1. Please describe any formal processes in your council regarding mentoring/coaching roles for older workers to mentor/coach younger workers? (If none, please indicate if this occurs at an informal level).

2. In your council are opportunities available for older workers to undertake part-time and job-share positions? Also, are flexible hours and alternative duties available for older workers? Please describe both the availability of these positions and any barriers to providing them.

3. Does your council have any formal succession planning policies in place? If so, please describe. If not, please describe any informal succession planning strategies.

4. What strategies has your council put in place to address issues associated with the impacts of an ageing workforce? Please list.

5. If there are not any strategies in place to address these issues, please list why.
## Youth Employment

1. What youth programs/initiatives are currently offered by your council? (These may involve graduates, trainees, apprentices, cadetships, work-placements, etc.). If none, please list possible reasons why.

2. Please describe the level of interest in these programs

3. State whether you feel these programs/initiatives are successful. Also, please list any improvements you believe would increase the success of these programs/initiatives.
## High School Survey

**PART A:** This section requires you to respond to the following statements by ticking one of the possible 5 responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I am not sure yet what I want to do</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My parents have helped me decide what career path I should take</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My friends have been probably the most influential in my career decision</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I have found the career information provided to me by my school to be helpful</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I have attended career nights or career expos</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I have received a lot of advice concerning my career choice</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I would prefer a career where I don’t have to study</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I am choosing a career that I believe I will always be able to find work in</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I would like to learn a trade or gain an apprenticeship</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I am choosing a career because it pays well</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I believe that it is difficult for university graduates to find employment straight away</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I believe in general, it is difficult for young people to find employment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I already know which organisations I would be most interested in working for</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ageing Workforce and Youth Employment in Local Government

PART B: Please respond where appropriate to the following questions.

17. I have chosen my career/job ____________ Yes / No

18. My ideal career/job would be …………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

19. Age: ............. years  Sex: Male / Female

20. On completion of year 12, I will be: . (please tick one)
   □ Looking for a full-time job
   □ Seeking a traineeship/apprenticeship
   □ Seeking a university/TAFE position
   □ Applying for a different training program
   □ Working for or with a family business
   □ Travelling / Deferring study
   □ Studying part-time / working part-time
   □ None of the above

PART C: The following questions ask for your opinion about job satisfaction and ideal employer characteristics.

21. Which factors do you think are most important to be happy in a job (please record the 3 most important factors to you, 1 being the most important and 3 being the 3rd most important to you).
   □ Rewarding/satisfying work  □ Variety of work
   □ Opportunity for promotion  □ Good pay
   □ Training & development programs  □ Positive working environment
   □ Reasonable hours  □ Approachable, ‘open door’ managers
Aging Workforce and Youth Employment in Local Government

- Work in close proximity of home
- Recognition of good performance
- A challenging yet manageable workload
- Friendly team of people
- None of the above

22. Would you more interested in a company that can offer: (please record the 3 most important factors to you, 1 being the most important and 3 being the 3rd most important to you).
   - Company training and development programs
   - A large business with a well-established name
   - Excellent working conditions
   - Above average salary
   - Opportunity for promotion
   - Provision of a mentor who can help supervise / train you
   - Youth designed programs, such as graduate programs & traineeships
   - Other perks (e.g. company car, salary sacrificing, etc)

PART D: The following questions ask about your knowledge of Local Government (or Councils)

23. Do you know anyone who works for a Council? Yes / No

24. What careers or job types do you know about in Council?
   1. .................................................................
   2. .................................................................
   3. .................................................................

25. Would you consider applying for a position at a Council? Yes / No

Comments: (Optional)
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Please return this form to your teacher and once again, thank you for your participation.
AGE DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Promotional material ('positive ageing' & youth)
Lifelong learning
'Best practise' employer
OHS & healthy workplace
Job design - alternative job roles
Mentoring/Coaching roles

Skills transference/ Knowledge Mgt
Flexible/ phased retirement
Job readiness skills
Part-time/ job-share roles
Retraining/ Reskilling/ Refresher training

**TRANSITION** period to retirement. Does the area/role require it?

**YES**
Formulate Transition to Retirement policy

**NO**
Refer to General Age Diversity policy

**PHYSICAL ROLES** - need to reduce WC injury & absenteeism

Formulate specific policy
- Alternative roles
- Reduced / part-time hrs
- Retraining
- Asst with career planning

**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**
- Promotion, image of LG
- Personal career development
- Retention strategies

- Graduate Program
- Apprenticeships/Traineeships
- Vacation Program/Work Experience

**PARTNERSHIPS** with Universities, TAFEs, High Schools

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

First stage - education program to increase understanding/awareness of the issues (why the ageing workforce/youth employment is an issue)