Ageing Workforce

Prevention and Management of Injuries

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Ageing Oz

Like that of most developed countries, our population is ageing

Sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy.

Over the next several decades, population ageing is projected to have significant implications for Australia, including for:

- Health
- Labour force participation
- Housing
- Demand for skilled labour

*Australia to 2050: Future Challenges, January 2010 (Intergenerational Report 2010), Attorney-General’s Department*
Ageing Oz

- 2007
  - Population ≈ 21 million
  - Proportion ≥ 65 yrs ≈ 13%
  - Proportion 15 - 64 yrs ≈ 67%

- 2056 (projected)
  - Population ≈ 35.5 million
  - Proportion ≥ 65 yrs ≈ 23%
  - Proportion 15 - 64 yrs ≈ 60%
Dependency Ratio

- 2007 Dependency Ratio = 48
- 2056 Dependency Ratio = 65
- Increase in ratio is expected to commence from 2015.
Life Expectancy

• In 1970
  – ♂ - 74.5 years
  – ♂ - 67.8 years

• In 2010
  – ♂ - 84.9 years
  – ♂ - 80.4 years

• In 2050
  – ♂ - 88.0 years
  – ♂ - 84 years
Quick Summary

• Enter the Workforce at 18
• Leave at 75
• Die aged 95
• Contributed to Dependency for 57 years
• Been Depender 37 years
Effect of Ageing - Body

- ↓ muscle strength and balance
- ↓ aerobic capacity and endurance
- ↓ Joint mobility – flexibility and posture
- ↑ reaction time
- ↓ Hearing/vision
- Altered Sleep Pattern
- Increased potential for chronic disease
Effects of Ageing - Soul

- Slower mental processes (NB Quality may be the same)
- Ingrained perceptions
- Rigidity
Is this a risk that needs to be managed?

Workplace Health and Safety Legislation obliges management and executive to control the risk of work-related injury and illness with severe penalties to individuals and organisations who fail.

*The Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, Section 28*

(1) An employer has an obligation to ensure the workplace health and safety of each of the employer's workers at work.

This is particularly important where the employee is involved in hazardous or safety critical work.
Is this a risk that needs to be managed?

Despite continual improvements in safety systems, the rates of claims for injuries and illness have not diminished and the cost to organisations is increasing.

This is partly due to the increasing contribution of human factors to workplace accidents and illness.

Some employees have or will develop significant underlying conditions or behaviours that put them at foreseeable risk of injury or illness.

This is the employer’s problem!
Risk Management

Organisations must ensure their employees are fit for duty or face the significant consequences of ignoring this growing risk.

**but**

A careful balance is required between the various legal obligations, including duty of care, disability discrimination and privacy.
How to Manage?

Prevention

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Quaternary
# How to Manage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary</strong></td>
<td>Avoid disease / injury either through eliminating disease agents or increasing resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
<td>Methods to detect and address existing disease prior to the appearance of symptoms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary</strong></td>
<td>Methods to reduce negative impact of disease / injury such through case management (treatment and rehabilitation)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quaternary</strong></td>
<td>Complex case management / loss mitigation</td>
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What is Fit for Work?

• Able to carry out the *essential and inherent* requirements of all the tasks in their job.

• Without creating a significant risk to themselves, others or the employer.

• “Foreseeable”.

• “Significant”.

What is Fit for Work?

- Able to carry out the *essential and inherent* requirements of all the tasks in their job.
- Without creating a significant risk to themselves, others or the employer.
- “Foreseeable” and “Significant” risk.
- Prognosis / treatment / rehabilitation.
- What can they do - “Reasonable accommodation”.

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Risk Management Options

- Accept the risk
- Outsource the risk
- Alter the risk
- Eliminate the risk

- Aging population
- Decrease fitness
- Less people / candidates / workers
- Anti-discrimination legislation
Anti-discrimination legislation

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT 1991

Discrimination on the basis of certain attributes prohibited

7.(1) The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of the following attributes—
Anti-discrimination legislation

- sex;
- marital status;
- pregnancy;
- parental status;
- breastfeeding;
- age;
- race;
- impairment;
- religion;
- political belief or activity;
- trade union activity;
- lawful sexual activity;
- association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of the above attributes.
Anti-discrimination legislation

Discrimination in work area

Must not discriminate –

1. in any variation of the terms of work; or
2. in denying or limiting access to opportunities for promotion, transfer, training or other benefit to a worker; or
3. in dismissing a worker; or
4. by denying access to a guidance program, an apprenticeship training program or other occupational training; or
5. in developing the scope or range of such a program; or
6. by treating a worker unfavourably in any way in connection with work.
Anti-discrimination legislation

It is not unlawful to discriminate in the work or work-related area if an exemption in sections 25 to 36 or Part 5 applies.

- **Genuine occupational requirements** - A person may impose genuine occupational requirements for a position.

- **106 Acts done in compliance with legislation etc.**

- **107 Public health** A person may do an act that is reasonably necessary to protect public health.

- **108 Workplace health and safety** A person may do an act that is reasonably necessary to protect the health and safety of people at a place of work.
Anti-discrimination legislation

And cannot be remedied by reasonable adjustment without 'unjustifiable hardship'
Manage the Risk

• Pre-employment risk assessment
• Ongoing risk management / FFW
• Symptom / injury / illness management
• Complex case management
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