



# Federal Budget 2004-05

---

## ***Fact sheet — Mature Age Employment and Workplace Strategy***

Current projections show that growth in the labour force may fall to zero by around 2040 under the influence of an aging population and a declining fertility rate.

Increasing labour force participation and productivity is the Government's response to this challenge. As the workforce ages, improving mature age participation will become increasingly important.

Job Network is currently assisting about 183,000 mature age job seekers. Mature age job seekers are about 23 per cent of the participants in Job Network. Since 1 July 2003, Job Network has recorded over 16,700 long-term (13 week) outcomes for job seekers over 45. However, we need to do more to maintain a strong labour supply to meet the future needs of employers.

The measures contained in this strategy represent the first step in this process. The package will address this problem holistically by:

- engaging mature age people about their work and job search needs:
- addressing entrenched employer views and encouraging mature age friendly workplaces:  
and
- creating opportunities to demonstrate successes.

The *Mature Age Employment and Workplace Strategy* will provide \$12.1 million over four years. Assistance is in addition to services already available to mature age job seekers through Transition to Work and Job Network.

There are a number of elements to the package.

### *Employees*

For employees, around 40 *Jobwise Workshops* will be held across the nation over a four-year period. These workshops will operate at a regional level and target both job seekers and those already in work but considering retirement. Participants will be able to find out about current labour force opportunities, the nature of the contemporary labour market and the latest in job search techniques. They will be given information about services and those eligible will be linked up with their chosen provider.

Participants in the *Jobwise Workshops* will also be given the opportunity to join local *Self Help Groups* to assist them build on the information provided in the workshops. *Self Help Groups* will be particularly valuable to participants who are not eligible for Job Network services. Around 30 *Self Help Groups* are expected to be established each year.

*Jobwise Labour Market Update Seminars* for employment service providers and intermediaries will also be run to complement the *Jobwise Workshops*. This initiative will assist these agencies develop their staff by helping them update their knowledge of the impact of demographic change. This will improve their service and help them engage more effectively with local employers on the issue.

### *Employers*

For employers, the package will provide information and assistance as well as opportunities to demonstrate best practice.

- Each year \$1 million will be provided to facilitate the development of local projects in industries that have both the need and potential to employ mature age workers.
- Employers who have a strong record of successfully implementing age-positive policies will receive public recognition as a *Champion for Mature Age Employment*.
- Employers will be given access to information, resources and best practice information through and improved *Jobwise* website ([www.jobwise.gov.au](http://www.jobwise.gov.au))
- Complementing the *Jobwise Workshops*, around 40 *Business Learning Networks* will be established over the four years to provide an employer network to share ideas and best practice.

These networks will be particularly valuable for small to medium sized businesses who often lack the resources to develop and implement measures on their own.

- *Voluntary Mature Age Guidelines* will be developed cooperatively with business to provide a practical basis for employers to recognise, and reap, the benefits of a diverse workforce.