

Public Submission to Australia's Demographic Challenges, Social Policy Division

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Leadership is Required

With this submission I would like to challenge Government in Australia to demonstrate effective leadership through taking initiatives in terms of restructure of the Public Sector. The Government can improve its broader impact by taking responsive action followed by communication of the strategies taken and their consequential impacts.

The Demographic Challenges that now face the nation include serious consequences for the governments' employees in the Public Service. It is now the time to initiate restructure in the public service workplace. It is time to tackle the workforce challenges in this key government responsibility.

If government leaders want to influence the country they need to improve public service employment structure and flexibility, as well as its retention of mature staff and knowledge management. In doing this well and doing this early, the government will provide the commercial business world and the community at large, evidence and commitment to their own tackling of the problem.

Government has collected sufficient information through its analysis and reviews ("Australia's Democratic Challenges" and recommendations to the Public Service such as "[New challenges for the Australian Public Service](#)")

However it is difficult to find evidence of the Public Service responding to the demographic challenge. In the "New Challenges" report there are a number of suggestions directly impacted by a maturing demographic. There may be improvements occurring, however there is little communication.

Much of the concern linked to an upcoming smaller employment pool could be reduced by offering more flexible employment arrangements to mature workers. There is clearly a desire by APS workers to continue working but in a more flexible basis.

The Government Superannuation Revised Super Scheme '54/11' problem, though not universally an issue for PS departments, still looms as a nightmare for the effective continuity and achievement of selected PS departments. The potential exodus of mature, experienced and knowledgeable staff from both Federal and State PS has the potential to lead to a huge resource and skill gap, particularly as there are many in this age bracket are in senior and management positions.

Not only is the lack of experienced staff and management an ongoing dilemma for organizations reliant upon them, there is the critical knowledge gap left as they leave. These resources will disappear from the workplace. Without the experience to handle

the recurrent issues that face our nation, what will we do? Do we have to learn as if from scratch and repeat the errors of our past ad infinitum?

One of the drivers behind mature workers decisions about exiting the workplace early rather than seeking ongoing employment is the financial issue. There are community concerns that the workers superannuation payments could be harmed by reducing their exit workload to casual or part time. Clarity and broadcasting is required to dispel these community based myths.

Not all commercial and community organizations match the age breakdown of the Public Service but there are many sectors where the demographic challenges are similar. Manufacturing, Education, the Power Industry, Health professions are faced with similar consequences of a mature demographic profile. Leaders in the commercial sectors and the broader community need to be reading about the problem and witnessing what needs to be done. The Governments' actions and leadership are sorely needed.

The Government needs to encourage wise employment planning strategies in regard to the maturing workforce. They need to initiate change bravely and measure the impact. And the Government needs to tell the story and lead by example.