

3. AGEING WORKFORCE - Recommendations: Change Today

- 3.1. National conversation and attitude change towards older workers.
- 3.2. Retraining and career transition support for people over 50.
- 3.3. Improve tools and capability to manage an ageing workforce.

These recommendations extend beyond retirement policy. The review found that the topic of our ageing workforce is a vital one for New Zealand's future economic and retirement prospects. Recommendations focus on leadership and actions, rather than legislation or policy change.

3.1. National conversation and attitude change towards older workers.

New Zealand's structural demographic changes are not well understood but have significant implications for our future workforce and economy. We need to recognise the importance of older workers' skills and experience and how this can be maximised and transferred.

Age discrimination in the labour market is real and requires a culture change. The depth of response and importance of this topic underlines the call for a national conversation on these issues.

3.2. Retraining and career transition support for people over 50.

The rapidly changing nature of work and the employment market highlight the need to provide retraining and support for older workers. Many people struggle to find work if they have been out of the workforce, despite their best efforts. People in manual occupations also frequently find it difficult to physically continue working beyond their 50s.

These factors point to the necessity for more support to transition between different careers and jobs later in life. The Ministry of Social Development background paper for the review identifies features that can help facilitate older people's workforce participation including: removing labour market age discrimination; flexible work hours; work with less responsibility or fewer physical demands; job sharing; and age-specific employment assistance.

The Australian Re-start employer subsidy for older workers who have been out of the workforce could be investigated.

3.3. Improve tools and capability to manage an ageing workforce.

A clear message from the Commission's ageing workforce forum is a demand for more tools and resources to assist with effectively managing an ageing workforce. Government, the business sector and organisations should work together on developing guides and best practice frameworks. Businesses recognise the impacts of an ageing workforce but are not generally prepared. Flexibility is the key for older workers.