

## **The training needs of older workers**

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The nature of work has been the subject of significant change in recent years. More people are experiencing multiple changes in career as the security of employment once offered by large enterprises and the public sector has disappeared in the wake of downsizing. At the same time as the expectations of people regarding their working lives are changing, people are living longer and healthier lives. The old assumptions about people retiring from work completely at the age of sixty or younger, and living lives unconnected to the world of work are giving way to a situation in which an increasing number of older people prolong their working lives well past the conventional age of retirement. Changes in career and the desire of many to remain active in the workforce longer are two of the most important forces reshaping the training and learning experiences of older Australians.

These workforce demographics have great significance for the training and learning of older people. As older workers remain in the workforce longer and are increasingly subject to career change, access to training and learning opportunities will become more important to them. As older workers remain at work and as the population ages, the necessity for reorienting the Australian training system towards reskilling of older, adult workers will become increasingly important.

The study examines the labour market situation and training opportunities facing older Australians to assess if older Australians have equitable opportunities and access to training compared with younger members of the labour market. The study explains the role training and learning has played in the participation of older workers in the workforce and identifies specific training issues facing older Australians.

**Key words:** changing nature of work, adult reskilling, training issues