

Living longer, learning longer:

Experiences, perceptions and intentions
regarding learning, education and
training among older Australians

May 2016

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About National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre

National Seniors Australia (National Seniors) is a not-for-profit organisation that gives voice to issues that affect Australians aged 50 years and over. It is the largest membership organisation of its type in Australia with more than 200,000 members and is the fourth largest in the world.

National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC) is an initiative of National Seniors and the Australian Government. NSPAC's aim is to improve quality of life for people aged 50 and over by advancing knowledge and understanding of all aspects of productive ageing.

NSPAC's key objectives are to:

- support quality consumer-oriented research informed by the experience of people aged 50 and over
- inform government, business and the community on productive ageing across the life course
- raise awareness of research findings that are useful for older people
- be a leading centre for research, education and information on productive ageing in Australia.

For more information visit productiveageing.com.au or call 03 9296 6800.

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Executive summary

Background and purpose

Increased life expectancy combined with recent changes to government policy (e.g. eligibility for the Age Pension increasing to age 67 by 2023) will require many people to work past the traditional retirement age of 65 to financially support themselves. Additionally, it is anticipated that Australia's ageing population will have a significant impact on the workforce participation rate; as the ageing population retire, labour shortages will emerge. Predicted labour shortages can be reduced by encouraging and supporting older workers to work for longer than they do now.^{1,2,3}

However, a number of barriers exist that result in lower rates of labour force participation, underemployment and longer durations of unemployment among older people. Some of these include, ill health, injury, disability, care-giving responsibilities, discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and inflexible employment arrangements.^{4,5,6,7}

There is a strong link between a person's employability and training, with those who receive training having a higher probability of being employed.^{8,9,10} Workplace training and re-skilling are recognised as important factors in helping older workers do their job better, get a promotion, find a job and find more hours.¹¹ Yet, older workers are among the lowest qualified compared to other age groups and for a variety of reasons, they experience less access to learning, education and training (LET) opportunities compared to younger people.^{12,13,14}

In Australia, there is a need to understand more about the experiences, perceptions and future intentions of LET among older people. This study aimed to provide new insights into the issue by exploring the following areas:

- Experiences of LET
- Perceptions of LET
- Future intentions to engage in LET

Data and methods

Data were collected as part of the 2014 National Seniors Social Survey which covered a range of topics, including health, employment, financial and social issues. The survey was conducted among members of National Seniors Australia aged 50 years and over. The study included respondents categorised as 'having engaged in the workforce during the past five years', that is, those who were currently employed or looking for work, and those who had not permanently withdrawn from the paid workforce or had not retired in the past five years. A total of 1,140 cases were eligible for inclusion in the analysis.

¹ Australian Treasury. (2010). *Intergenerational report 2010, Australia to 2050: future challenges*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

² Giffillan, G., & Andrews, L. (2010). *Labour force participation of women over 45*. Melbourne: Productivity Commission.

³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Ageing and Employment Policies: Live Longer, Work Longer*. Paris: OECD.

⁴ Hanley, G., McKeown, T., & O'Connell, M. (2007). *A novel way to improve the labour market attachment of older Australian workers*. Melbourne: Department of Management, Monash University.

⁵ Australian Treasury. (2010). *Intergenerational report 2010, Australia to 2050: future challenges*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

⁶ Giffillan, G., & Andrews, L. (2010). *Labour force participation of women over 45*. Melbourne: Productivity Commission.

⁷ Adair, T., & Temple, J. (2012). *Barriers to mature age employment: Final report of the Consultative Forum on Mature Age Participation*. Canberra: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2004). *Employment Outlook*. Paris: OECD.

⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2005). *Employment Outlook*. Paris: OECD.

¹⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2012). *Employment Outlook*. Paris: OECD.

¹¹ Adair, T., & Temple, J. (2012). *Barriers to mature age employment: Final report of the Consultative Forum on Mature Age Participation*. Canberra: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

¹² European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2003). *Age and working conditions in the European Union*. Luxembourg: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

¹³ Business Work and Ageing. (2004). *Furthering success: Education, training and employment transitions for disadvantaged older workers*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.

¹⁴ Spoehr, J., Barnett, K. & Parnis, E. (2009). *Experience works: The mature age employment challenge*. Adelaide: The Australian Institute for Social Research/National Seniors Australia.

Key findings

Prevalence of learning, education and training

Forty per cent respondents were currently or had recently undertaken LET.

- Those more likely to have recently engaged in LET were female, aged 50-59 years, people with higher levels of education, in managerial or professional occupations, and earning a higher income.

Sixty per cent reported they had not recently undertaken LET, some of whom had never undertaken LET activities since leaving school (5%).

- Those more likely to report not having recently engaged in LET were male, older, people with lower levels of education, those employed in 'other' occupations, and people earning a lower income.

Experiences of learning, education and training

The most popular types of LET that respondents were currently or had recently engaged in were:

- internal training courses at their place of work (16%)
- external training arranged by the employer (16%)
- further education with college/tertiary providers (15%).

The most popular modes of LET that respondents had currently or recently engaged in were via:

- classroom instruction (60%)
- online/distance education (37%)
- field training/work experience (18%).

The most popular study load of current/recent LET undertaken were:

- flexible/self-paced (34%)
- part-time (25%)
- a mixture of study loads (25%)

Very few indicated undertaking LET in a full-time capacity (6.5%).

The most common outputs associated with current/recent LET undertaken were:

- a short course certificate (51%)
- a certificate (e.g. trade) (27%).

LET currently/recently undertaken by older people was commonly funded by either the individual (41%) or by an employer (40%).

- The likelihood of employers funding current/recent learning, education, training undertaken increased as income increased (29% for those earning up to \$39K, 42% for those earning \$40-79K, and 50% for those earning \$80K+).
- Those earning a lower income were much more likely to fund current/recent learning, education, training themselves (51%) compared to those earning mid to high incomes (41% and 33% respectively).

Perceptions of learning, education and training

The most common areas LET was reported to have helped were:

- improved chances of obtaining/staying in paid work (41%)
- increased involvement in community (18%)
- improved digital/online involvement (14%).

In exploring how often older people were able to use the skills/knowledge from their most recent LET undertaking in paid and/or unpaid work:

- 51% indicated they were always/sometimes able to utilise recently acquired skills/knowledge
- 16% indicated they were rarely/never able apply the skills/knowledge they had recently developed.

Reported reasons why respondents had rarely or never being able to apply skills/knowledge from current/recent LET included:

- not having undertaken paid/unpaid work since completing the LET (24%)
- not having finished the course yet (18%)
- having undertaken paid/unpaid work in an area unrelated to most recent LET (14%)
- 'other' reasons, such as not acquiring new skills/knowledge to apply and that the LET undertaken was insufficient for learning needs (40%).

Areas where older people perceived LET would or would not assist them:

- one in five respondents believed that LET could help them do their job better (21%)
- few felt that LET could help them get a better job (7%), get a better paid job (7%), gain a promotion (4%) or find work with more hours (3%)
- forty per cent did not believe that LET would assist them to do their job better, help them find a job, help them get a better job, get a better paid job, gain a promotion or find work with more hours.

Common reasons why older people indicated LET would not help them included:

- they did not want to further their career (e.g. gain a promotion) (46%)
- stating they already possessed necessary skills/were already fully competent (32%).

Future intentions to engage in learning, education and training

Of those who had been engaged in the workforce in the past five years:

- one in five indicated that they were very likely to undertake LET within the next three years (19%)
- one quarter indicated they would be somewhat likely to undertake LET within the next three years (26%)
- half indicated that they were not at all likely to undertake LET in the next three years (50%).

As the self-rated currency of work-related skills and education increased so too did the likelihood of undertaking LET in the next three years:

- Of those who rated their work-related skills and education to be very out-dated, only 7% said they would be very likely to undertake training in the future
- However, 30% of those who reported their work-related skills and education to be very up-to-date indicated they would be very likely to undertake training in the next three years.

As the self-rated currency of work-related skills and education worsened, so too did the likelihood of undertaking LET within the next three years:

- Two-thirds of those rating their work-related skills and education as being very out-dated reported being not at all likely to undertake LET in the future, decreasing to 38% of those with very up-to-date skills being unlikely to undertake LET in the future.

Common reasons cited as to why LET would not be undertaken within the next three years were:

- did not need/intend to undertake paid or unpaid work (48%)
- did not think it would help them (17%)
- did not think that it was important (10%).

The most popular factors respondents cited that would encourage them to undertake LET within the next three years included:

- that the LET was held at a convenient time (27%)
- being able to learn at/close to home (27%)
- having input into what they were going to learn (19%).

When respondents were asked what specific areas of LET would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career, the three most popular areas were:

- computer skills (22%)
- administration, planning and organisation skills (13%)
- specific technical skills (11%).

Forty per cent indicated that, although believing undertaking LET would help them, none of the specific areas presented would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career (i.e. computer skills; administration, planning and organisation skills, specific technical skills, interpersonal/communication skills, team and client management skills, internet search skills, and project management skills).

Conclusion

Supporting the labour force participation of older workers is becoming increasingly important for a variety of reasons, some of which include increasing longevity, shifts in the age composition of the workforce and predicted labour shortages, recent economic uncertainty and proposed changes to government policy. Such factors create the need for many to extend their working lives, yet they may experience a range of labour market barriers. Combined, these factors make it increasingly important for older Australians to maintain or enhance work-related skills to ensure working life longevity. However, findings from this study highlight that many older people are not investing in ongoing learning, education, and training to strengthen and develop skills, and nor do they intend to invest in the future. Greater effort is required to encourage the uptake of LET among older Australians, especially given they are often the least qualified members of the workforce.

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Introduction

Background

Supporting labour force participation at older ages is becoming increasingly important for a variety of reasons, some of which include increasing longevity, shifts in the age composition of the workforce and predicted future labour shortages, the changing nature of work (e.g. globalisation, technological advancements), recent economic uncertainty, and policy changes (e.g. to the eligibility for the Age Pension). These factors mean many people will need to work longer.^{15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22}

Although working for longer may benefit individuals, employers and governments, there are a number of barriers to employment at older ages (e.g. age discrimination, poor health, disability, caring responsibilities, jobs disappearing in certain occupations). These barriers result in lower rates of labour force participation, underemployment and longer durations of unemployment among older people.^{23,24,25,26,27}

Only 32% of males and 19% of females currently aged 65–69 are in paid employment.²⁸ Additionally, unemployed older people are out of work for longer durations compared to younger people. On average, unemployed people aged 55 and over take 67 weeks to find work, compared with 38 weeks for people aged 15–54.²⁹

Long-term underinvestment in re-training and skills development is a potential barrier to employment at older ages. Older workers have been found to have lower rates of participation in training compared with younger workers. In particular, it is older people with low levels of qualifications, outdated skills, or skills associated with declining industries or occupations who face a lack of appropriate training opportunities to upgrade their skills.^{30,31,32}

Training and re-skilling programs have been identified by the Government's Intergenerational Report 2010 as a key public policy priority in Australia to ensure that older people have current skills to improve their employment prospects. Keeping work-related skills current is necessary to protect people from long-term unemployment or permanent withdrawal from the workforce. The changing nature of the work environment combined with the need for today's older people to work longer than previous generations, makes it vital for individuals to keep their skills current and in line with predicted future labour market demand.^{33,34,35}

¹⁵ Australian Treasury. (2010). *Intergenerational report 2010, Australia to 2050: future challenges*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

¹⁶ Productivity Commission. (2013). *An Ageing Australia: Preparing for the Future, Commission Research Paper*. Canberra: Productivity Commission.

¹⁷ Productivity Commission. (2005). *Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia*, Research Report. Canberra: Productivity Commission.

¹⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2006). *Ageing and Employment Policies: Live Longer, Work Longer*. Paris: OECD.

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2014). 6291.0.55.001 - *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, April 2014*. Canberra: ABS.

²⁰ Committee for Economic Development of Australia. (2015). *Australia's future workforce?* Melbourne: CEDA.

²¹ Productive Ageing Centre. (2012). *Ageing baby boomers in Australia: Understanding the effects of the global financial crisis*. Canberra: Productive Ageing Centre.

²² Commonwealth of Australia. (2014). *Budget 2014–15: Budget Paper No. 2: Budget Measures*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

²³ Hanley, G., McKeown, T., & O'Connell, M. (2007). *A novel way to improve the labour market attachment of older Australian workers*. Melbourne: Department of Management, Monash University.

²⁴ Australian Treasury. (2010). *Intergenerational report 2010, Australia to 2050: future challenges*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

²⁵ Giffillan, G., & Andrews, L. (2010). *Labour force participation of women over 45*. Melbourne: Productivity Commission.

²⁶ Commonwealth of Australia. (2014). *Budget 2014–15: Budget Paper No. 2: Budget Measures*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

²⁷ Adair, T., & Temple, J. (2012). *Barriers to mature age employment: Final report of the Consultative Forum on Mature Age Participation*. Canberra: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

²⁸ Calculated from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012). *TableBuilder Pro*. Canberra: ABS.

²⁹ These figures are for the months November 2013–April 2014. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012). 6291.0.55.001 - *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, April 2014*. Canberra: ABS.

³⁰ Taylor, P., Brooke, L., McLoughlin, C., & Di Biase, T. (2010). Older workers and organizational change: corporate memory versus potentiality. *International Journal of Manpower*, 31 (3), 374–386.

³¹ Spoehr, J., Barnett, K., & Parnis, E. (2009). *Experience Works: The Mature Age Employment Challenge*. Canberra: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

³² Lundberg, D., & Marshallay, Z. (2007). *Older Workers' Perspectives on Training and Retention of Older Workers*. Adelaide: NCVET.

³³ Australian Treasury. (2010). *Intergenerational report 2010, Australia to 2050: future challenges*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

³⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD.

³⁵ Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. (2010). *The Australian Blueprint for Career Development*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Benefits of learning, education and training

Evidence highlights that training has a positive effect on employment outcomes of older workers and improves employment security. However, research also demonstrates an age-related decrease in motivation associated with work development such as training.³⁶ There is a strong link between training history and employment outcomes, with training increasing an individual's likelihood of being employed.³⁷ Training and skill development have also been linked to improved pay conditions: salaries are generally positively correlated with the level of qualifications held.³⁸

On a macro level, LET contribute to Australia's knowledge base, productivity and global competitiveness. For individuals, benefits from LET include:

- improving skills, knowledge and personal wellbeing
- increasing socialisation
- improving prospects of gaining a promotion
- improving prospects of finding a more fulfilling job
- improving prospects of achieving work-related goals
- helping to gain a wage increase
- contributing to an active retirement
- building self-confidence
- increasing job satisfaction
- contributing as an investment to improve job security in an uncertain economic climate.³⁹

Barriers to learning, education and training

A number of specific barriers to accessing training by older workers have been identified. Many employers underinvest in training because they perceive that older workers have an insufficient number of years left in the workforce to provide an adequate return on the employer's investment.^{40,41} There are also stereotypes around older workers being unable or unwilling to learn new skills.^{42,43,44} However, research has revealed that many older people find value in training and demonstrate a willingness to learn new skills. Even so, where the individual has to pay for their own training, some may not believe it will be a worthwhile investment because of a limited number of years remaining in the workforce.^{45,46}

³⁶ Kooij, D., de Lange, A., Jansen, P., Kanfer, R., & Dijkers, J. (2011). Age and work-related motives: Results of a meta-analysis. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 32, 197–225.

³⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2004). *Employment Outlook*. Paris: OECD.

³⁸ Access Economics. (2006). *The Economic Benefits of Career Development Services*. Melbourne: The Career Industry Council of Australia.

³⁹ Williams, R. (2015). *Learning, education and training: Fact sheet*. Melbourne: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

⁴⁰ Encel, S., & Studencki, H. (2004). Older workers: can they succeed in the job market? *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, 23, 33–7.

⁴¹ Hanley, G., McKeown, T., & O'Connell, M. (2007). *A novel way to improve the labour market attachment of older Australian workers. Working Paper 9/07*. Melbourne: Department of Management, Monash University.

⁴² Spoehr, J., Barnett, K., & Parnis, E. (2009). *Experience Works: The Mature Age Employment Challenge*. Canberra: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

⁴³ Bittman, M., Flick, M., & Rice, J. (2001). *The Recruitment of Older Australian Workers: a Survey of Employers in a High Growth Industry*. Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

⁴⁴ Steinberg M. (1996). Attitudes of employees and employers towards older workers in a climate of anti-discrimination. *Australian Journal on Ageing*, 15, 154–158.

⁴⁵ Irving, P., Steels, J., & Hall, N. (2005). *Factors affecting the labour market participation of older workers: qualitative research*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

⁴⁶ Kerr, L., Carson, E., Goddard, J. (2002). Contractualism, employment services and mature aged job seekers: The tyranny of tangible outcomes. *Australian Review of Public Affairs*, 3, 83–104.

Research indicates that barriers to participation in LET are: time constraints, employer attitudes resulting in a lack of support, lack of access to childcare or transportation, insufficient information about learning options, financial constraints, and individual attitudes (e.g. lack of confidence, anxiety).⁴⁷ There is evidence to suggest that LET participation among older workers is strongly influenced by their own perception that they do not need or want further training.⁴⁸ Another study found that employees in managerial and supervisory positions and in late career stages were more likely to indicate lower needs for training.⁴⁹ The perception concerning the relative value of participating in LET is further compounded by evidence that older workers typically perceive substantially lower than average benefits or no extrinsic benefits from participation in training. For example, one study found that older employees were significantly less likely to gain a promotion or higher pay. This served to generate disinterest because of the absence of employment-based rewards that would normally influence the attractiveness of participating in LET.⁵⁰

Some of these barriers affect some population groups more than others. For example, family commitments and financial difficulties can pose a problem for women more than men, work commitments typically affect more men than women, while people who are unemployed have significantly reduced access to skills development compared with those who are employed.⁵¹

Purpose

This report is based on a survey of a nationally-representative sample of Australians aged 50 and over on the topic of LET among older people, including experiences of LET, perceived importance of LET, and future intentions of participating in LET. The study aimed to provide new insights into LET among older people by exploring the following areas:

- Incidence participation in of LET
- Perceptions of LET
- Future intentions to engage in LET

The purpose of the first report in this two-part series was to survey awareness of LET opportunities for older Australians, perceived importance of continued LET, uptake/prevalence of LET, barriers to participation in LET, and enablers and motivators of participation in LET.⁵²

Results presented in the first report show that the opportunity to learn new skills was ranked low in comparison to other factors that older Australians felt contributed to their quality of life as they get older, with work-related factors generally rated lower than personal interest and family factors. Forty per cent of older Australians indicated they have undertaken some form of LET within the last three years.

⁴⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2013). 4234.0 – *Work-related training and adult learning*. Canberra: ABS.

⁴⁸ Cully, M., VandenHeuvel, A. & Wooden, M. (2000). Participation in, and barriers to, training: The experience of older Adults. *Australian Journal on Ageing*, 19(4), 172–179.

⁴⁹ Guthrie, J. P., & Schwoerer, C. E., (1996). Older dogs and new tricks: Career stage and self-assessed need for training. *Public Personnel Management*, 25, 59–72.

⁵⁰ Chappell, C., Hawke, G., Rhodes, C., & Solomon, N., (2004). *Major research program for older workers: Stage 1 -The conceptual framework*. Sydney: Australian Centre for Organisational, Vocational and Adult Learning.

⁵¹ Ferrier, F., Burke, G., & Selby Smith, C., (2008). *Skills development for a diverse older workforce*. Adelaide: NCVER.

⁵² Williams R. (2015). *Never too late to learn: learning, education and training among mature age Australians*. Melbourne: National Seniors Australia.

Data and methods

Design

The study was cross-sectional in design and conducted by National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre using a questionnaire to survey National Seniors Australia members aged 50 years and over. The study was approved by the Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee.

Data

The data in this report were collected using the National Seniors Social Survey (Wave 4), designed by National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre staff. The survey was conducted from 29 November 2014 to 2 January 2015.

The National Seniors Social Survey (Wave 4) covered a range of topics, including finances, health and social issues. Questions relating to LET covered awareness, perceptions, demand, needs, barriers, motivators, and future intentions. A range of questions were used to obtain information from respondents about their demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

Method

A total of 10,000 National Seniors Australia members residing in all states and territories of Australia were invited to complete the survey. Of these, a total of 1,594 who indicated in Wave 3 of the survey they would be willing to partake in future waves of the study, were invited to participate again in Wave 4 of the survey. An additional 8,406 National Seniors members were randomly selected from the National Seniors membership database (approximately 200,000 members) and invited to participate in Wave 4 of the survey.

The sample was stratified according to place of residence (capital city or rest of state). The number of respondents allocated to each of the 48 strata (3 age groups x 2 sexes x 8 states / territories) was calculated proportionally to reflect the Estimated Resident Population in Australia aged 50 and over in June 2013.⁵³ The respondents within each stratum were selected randomly from the National Seniors Australia database. Selection was undertaken to ensure that two members from the same family were not chosen.

A paper survey was mailed to each of the selected members. Participants were given the option to complete the paper survey and return it by mail, or to complete the survey online.

Analysis

A total of 1,923 surveys were completed, a response rate of 19%. Survey weights were applied to each combination of age, gender and state/territory, to adjust for differences in response rates by these population groups, and to make the results representative of the Australian population aged 50 years and over. There were 50 cases with no information on at least one of these characteristics, reducing the total sample to 1,873 cases that could be used in the analysis. Analysis for this report included only those respondents categorised as '*having engaged in the workforce during the past five years*', that is, those respondents who were currently employed or looking for work, and those who had not permanently withdrawn from the paid workforce or had not retired in the past five years, bringing the total number included in the analysis down to 1,140 cases.

This report presents summary statistics of the LET variables and various cross tabulation results with other social and demographic variables. The statistical software package STATA 11.2 was used to conduct the analysis.

⁵³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2013). *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2013*. ABS cat no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

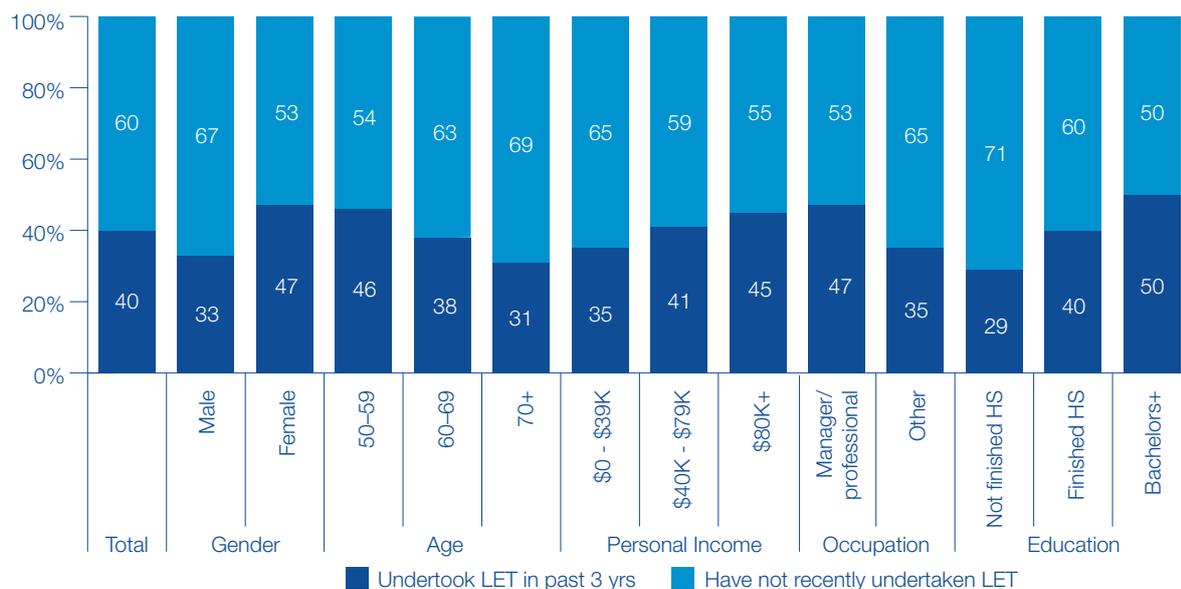
Findings

Prevalence of learning, education and training

Of those who had been engaged in the workforce in the past five years, 40% indicated they were currently undertaking or had undertaken LET during the past three years (*Figure 1*). However, 60% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years reported they had not recently undertaken LET, some of whom had not undertaken LET activities since leaving school (5%, figures not shown).

Females more commonly reported recently undertaking LET when compared to males (47% vs 33%). A higher proportion of those aged 50-59 (46%) reported recently undertaking LET when compared to those aged 60-69 (38%) and those aged 70+ (31%). Recently undertaking LET was more common among those with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification (50%) and those who had finished high school (40%) compared to those who had not finished high school (29%). Those more likely to report recently undertaking LET also included those in managerial or professional occupations (47%) compared to those in 'other' occupations (35%) and those earning a higher income (45%) compared to those earning lower incomes (35%).

Figure 1: Undertaken learning, education and training within the last three years (% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years)

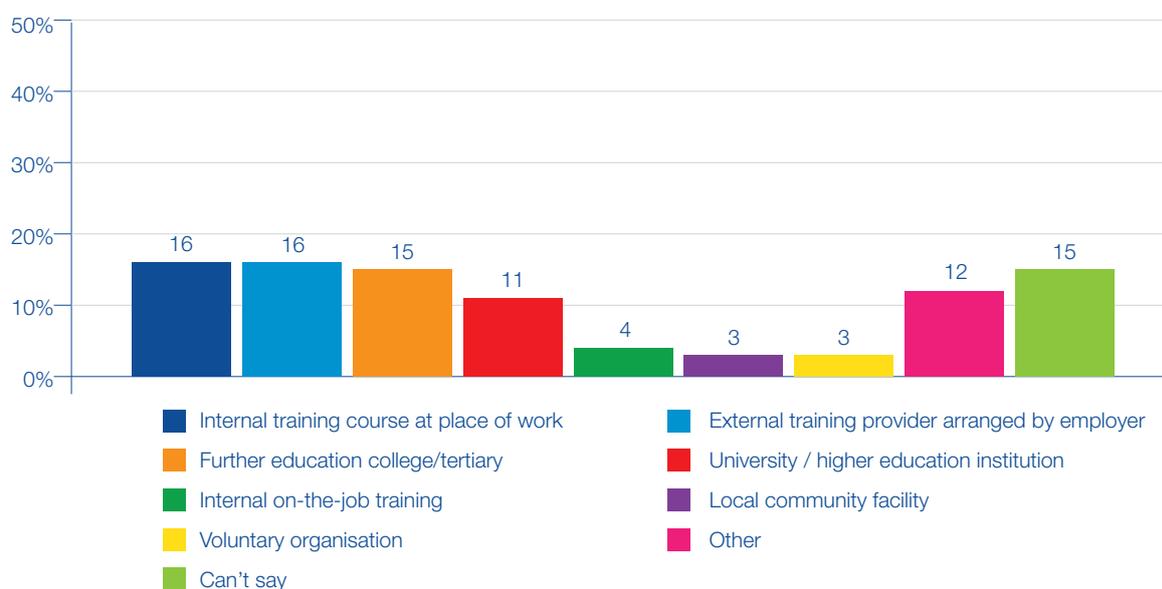


N= 994 | LET = learning education and training | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

Experiences of learning, education and training

The most popular types of LET that respondents were currently or had recently engaged in were internal training courses at their place of work (16%), external training arranged by their employer (16%), and further education with college/tertiary providers (15%) (Figure 2). Those more likely to participate in an internal training course at their place of work were those employed full-time and those earning a higher income. Those more likely to undertake external training arranged by their employer were males and those aged 60-69 years. Those more likely to participate in 'further education college/tertiary' were the younger age groups and those in the mid-level to low income brackets. The least popular types of LET that respondents had currently or recently engaged in were: voluntary organisation (e.g. U3A) (3%), local community learning centre (3%), and internal on-the-job training at place of work (4%). Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution.

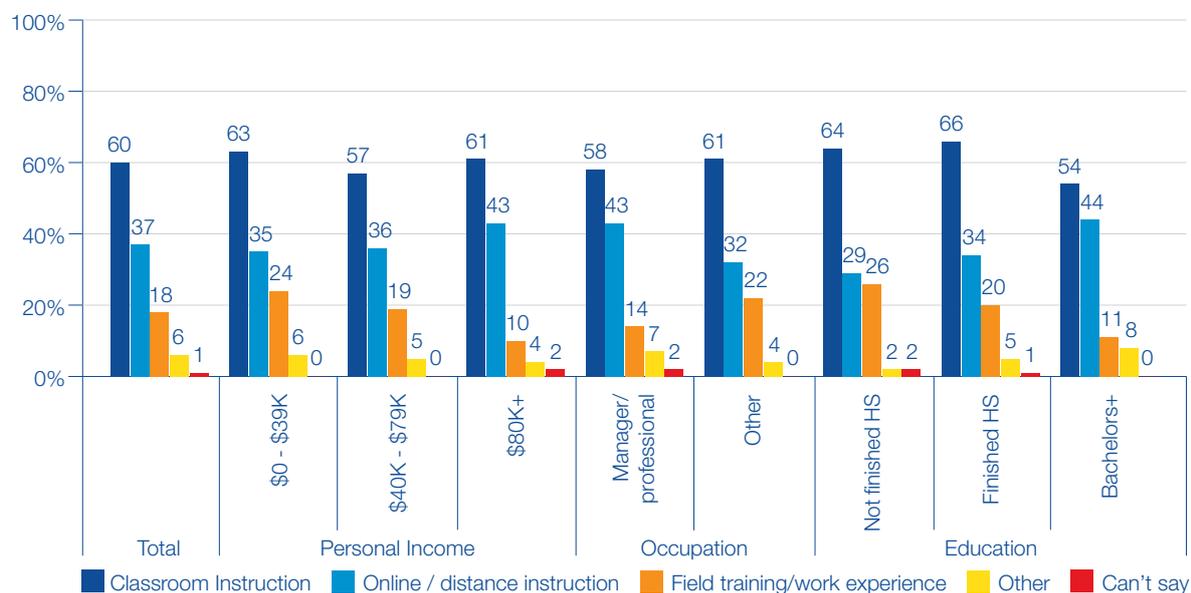
Figure 2: Type of organisation current/most recent learning, education and training was undertaken through (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)



N=387

The most popular mode of LET that respondents were currently or had recently engaged in was via classroom instruction (60%). Just over one-third of those who were currently undertaking or had recently undertaken LET had done so via online/distance education (37%). Approximately one-in-five respondents who were currently undertaking or had recently undertaken LET had done so through field training/work experience (18%) (Figure 3). Currently/recently undertaking LET via online/distance instruction was more popular among those earning a higher income and those employed in managerial/professional occupations, whereas currently/recently engaging in LET via field training/work experience was more common among those earning a lower income and those employed in 'other' occupations. Although still popular among those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification, classroom instruction had the lowest uptake among this group (53%) compared to other education categories (not finished high school 64% and finished high school 66%). On-line/distance instruction was more popular among those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification (44%) compared to those who had finished high school (34%) and those who had not finished high school (29%). Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 3: Current/most recent mode of learning, education and training (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)

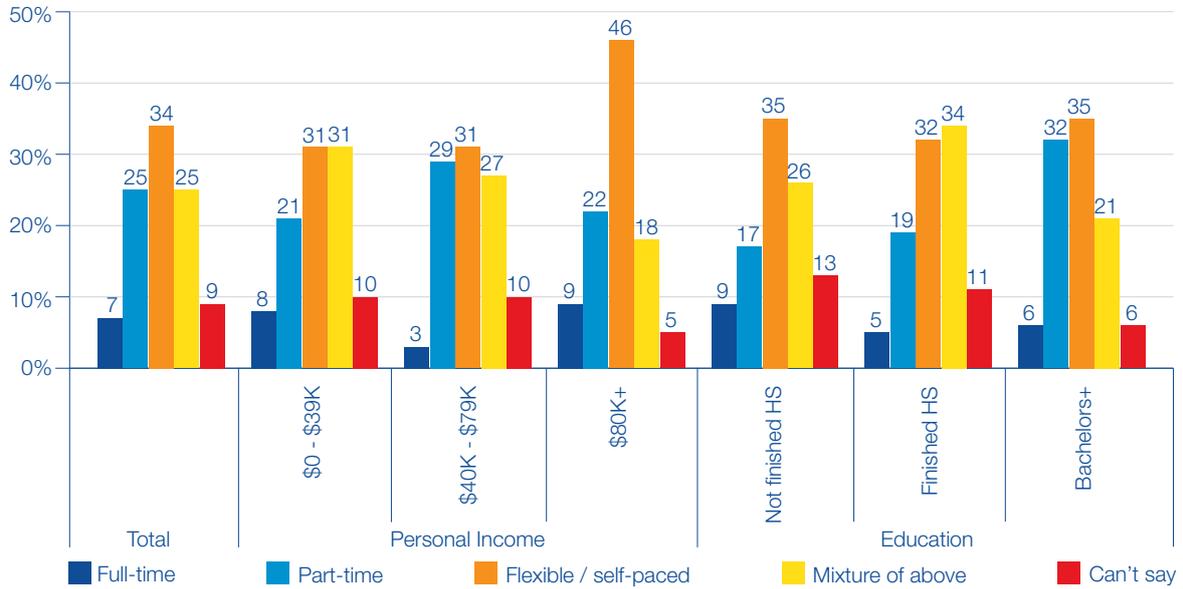


N=394 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

One-third of respondents who were currently undertaking or had recently undertaken LET had done so via a flexible/self-paced study load (34%) (Figure 4). One-quarter of respondents who were currently undertaking or had recently undertaken LET had done so in a part-time capacity, with very few undertaking LET in a full-time capacity (6.5%). A further quarter of respondents currently undertaking or recently undertaken LET engaged a mixture of study loads (e.g. part-time and self-paced) (25%). Those with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification were more likely to engage in part-time study (32%) compared to those who had not finished high school (17%) and those who had finished high school (19%). Those earning a higher income were more likely to undertake a flexible/self-paced study load (46%) compared to those earning mid-level incomes (31%) and lower incomes (31%). Those earning a lower income were more likely to undertake a mixture of study loads (31%) compared to those earning a higher income (18%). Those who had finished high school were more likely to undertake a mixture of study loads (34%) compared to those with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification (21%). Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 4: Study load of current/most recent learning, education and training (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)



N=385 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

The most common qualification/certificate associated with LET that respondents were currently undertaking or had recently undertaken was a short course certificate (51%) (Table 1). Approximately one-quarter of respondents had obtained a certificate (e.g. trade) from current/recent LET undertaken (27%). Less popular qualifications/certificates obtained from current/recent LET undertaken were diplomas (9%), undergraduate degrees (3%) and Masters/PhDs (4%). Those most likely to obtain a short course qualification through current/recent LET were males, older respondents, those employed full-time, those earning a higher income, those employed in managerial/professional occupations and those who had finished high school/obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher. Those most likely to obtain a certificate through current/recent LET were earning mid-level to low incomes, in 'other' occupations, and had not finished high school. Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 1: Qualification/certificate associated with current/most recent learning, education and training (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)

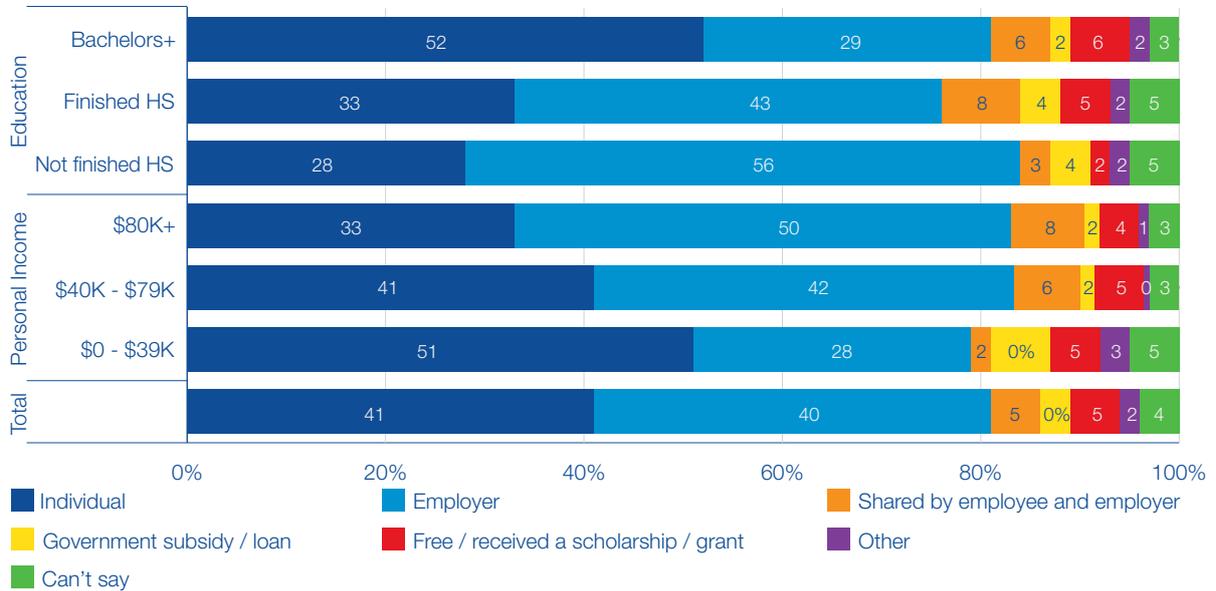
		Short course	Certificate (e.g. trade)	Diploma	Degree	Masters / PhD	Can't say
Total		51.1	26.9	8.8	2.6	4.2	11.2
Gender	Male	60.3	23.7	7.4	1.9	2.0	8.5
	Female	43.9	29.4	9.9	3.2	5.8	13.2
Age	50-59	45.0	28.9	12.6	2.1	6.0	12.8
	60-69	54.0	25.8	7.1	2.8	2.9	9.9
	70+	62.9	25.2	0.0	3.9	5.4	12.3
Employment status	Part-time	43.3	28.9	7.4	4.8	6.3	15.0
	Full-time	55.1	23.9	11.5	2.2	4.1	7.9
	Other	43.9	39.4	7.6	0.0	0.0	9.2
Personal Income	\$0 - \$39K	46.1	32.2	9.2	3.5	3.5	10.1
	\$40K - \$79K	48.3	32.2	9.4	2.6	4.3	9.3
	\$80K+	61.6	15.1	5.5	2.5	5.2	12.2
Occupation	Manager/ professional	54.9	19.5	8.1	2.2	6.8	10.8
	Other	46.8	35.0	9.7	2.6	1.4	11.8
Education	Not finished HS	45.9	38.3	10.2	0.9	0.0	13.5
	Finished HS	51.0	25.9	15.8	2.0	0.0	8.2
	Bachelors+	54.0	20.5	4.2	4.1	9.1	11.0

N=394 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

LET currently/recently undertaken by older people was commonly funded by either the individual (41%) or by an employer (40%) and less commonly funded by a shared arrangement between the employee and employer (5%) or through a government subsidy/loan (3%) (Figure 5). Those earning a lower income were much more likely to fund current/recent LET undertaken themselves (51%) compared to those earning mid-level to high incomes (41% and 33% respectively). The likelihood of employers funding current/recent LET undertaken increased as income increased (28% for those earning up to \$39K, 42% for those earning \$40-79K, and 50% for those earning \$80K+). As level of education increased so did the likelihood of individuals funding current/recent training undertaken themselves (28% of those who had not finished high school, 33% of those who had finished high school, and 52% of those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher). Alternatively, as education level increased the likelihood of employer-funding current/recent LET decreased (56% of those who had not finished high school, 43% of those who had finished high school, and 29% of those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher). Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 5: Funder of current/most recent learning, education and training (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)

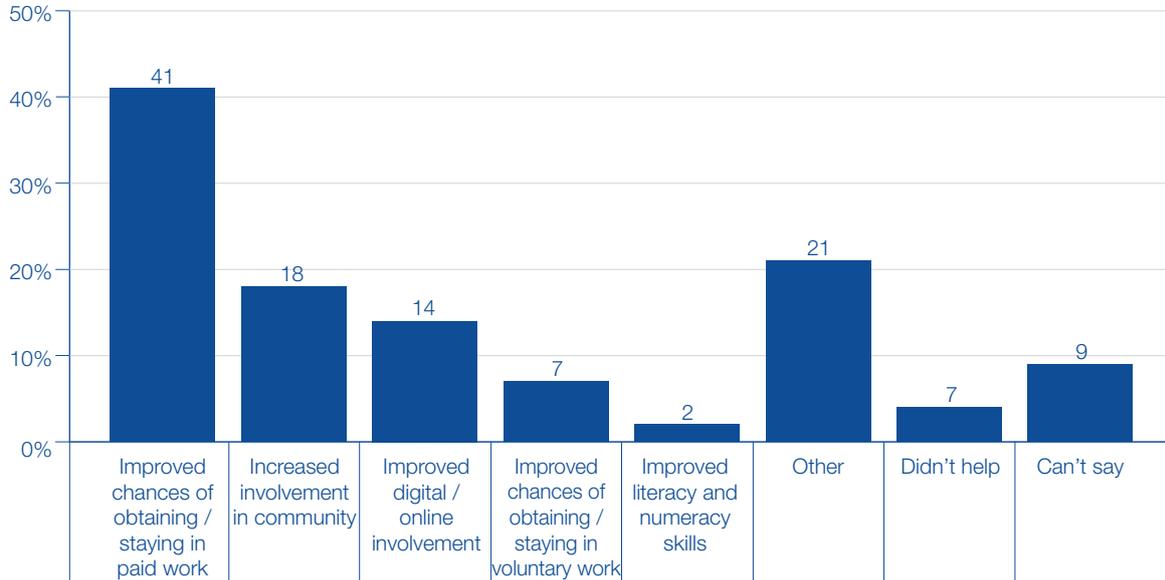


N=389 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

Perceptions of learning, education and training

'Improved my chances of gaining/staying in paid work' was the most common way in which respondents indicated recently undertaken LET had helped them (41%) (Figure 6). This was followed by 'increased my involvement in community' (18%) and 'improved my digital/online involvement' (14%). Only a small proportion indicated that recently undertaken LET had 'improved my chances of gaining/staying in voluntary work' (7%) and very few indicated that recently undertaken LET had helped to 'improve my literacy and numeracy skills' (2%). 'Other' common ways in which recent LET was cited to help included: maintaining/enhancing specialised skills, keeping the brain/mind active, attaining a personal goal, obtaining a pay rise, and improving general knowledge/skills.

Figure 6: Areas current/most recent learning, education and training has helped (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)

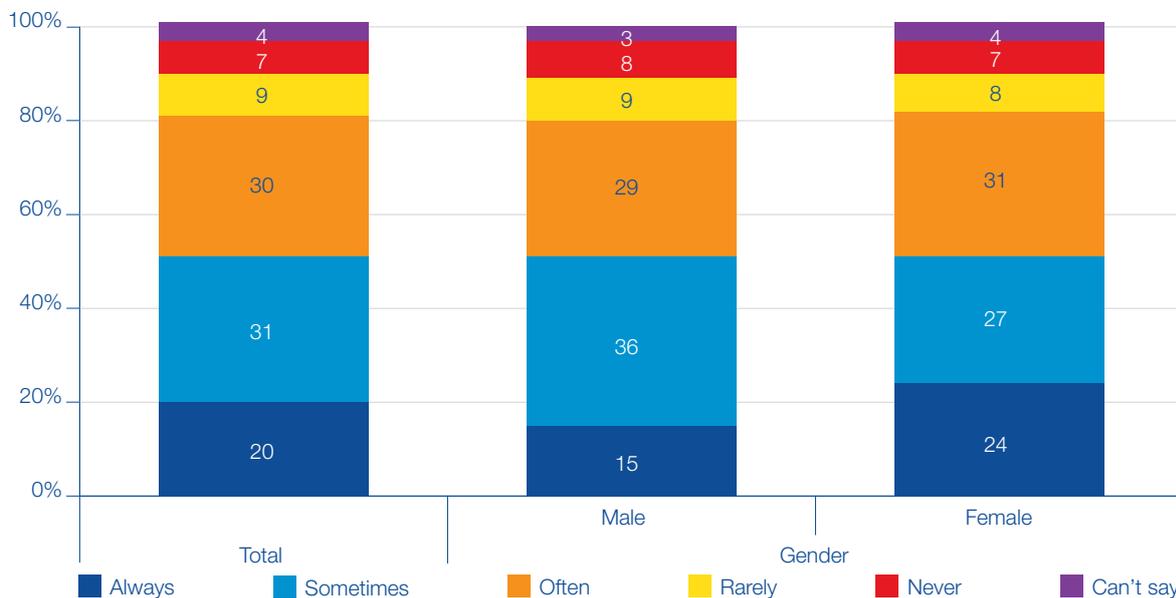


N=394

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

In exploring how often older people were able to use the skills/knowledge gained from the most recent LET undertaken in paid and/or unpaid work, 51% indicated they were always/sometimes able to utilise recently acquired skills/knowledge, with 16% indicating they were rarely/never able apply the skills/knowledge they had recently acquired (Figure 7). More females compared to males reported being able to always apply recently acquired skills/knowledge (24% compared to 15%).

Figure 7: Opportunity to apply skills/knowledge gained from current/most recent learning, education and training (% of those who had undertaken LET during the last three years)



N=387

Reasons as to why respondents reported rarely or never being able to apply skills/knowledge from current/recent LET included not having undertaken paid/unpaid work since completing the LET (24%), not having finished the course yet (19%) and having undertaken paid/unpaid work in an area unrelated to most recent LET (14%). 'Other' reasons for not being able to apply new skills/knowledge most commonly included that the LET undertaken did not meet learning needs. Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution (Table 2).

Table 2: *Reasons why skills/knowledge from current/most recent learning, education and training, were not able to be applied in paid/unpaid work (% of those who reported rarely or never applying skills/knowledge from current/most recent LET)*

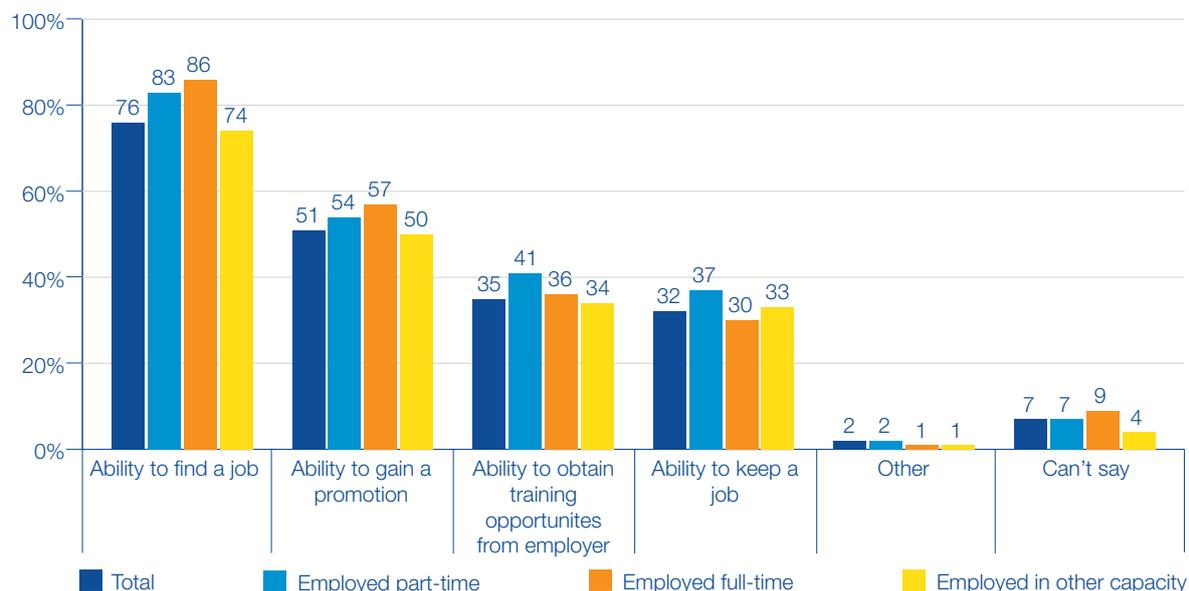
	Total
Have not undertaken paid/unpaid work since completing LET	24.3
Have not yet finished my course/had the opportunity to	18.5
Undertook paid/unpaid work in an area unrelated to most recent LET	13.9
Other	40.2
Can't say	13.2

N=61 | LET = learning, education and training

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

Respondents who had been engaged in the workforce during the past five years were asked if they believed age affected an individual's prospects in a range of work related areas. Approximately one-third believed that age affected an individual's ability to obtain training and skills development opportunities from an employer (*Figure 8*). Those employed part-time were more likely to believe that age affects an individual's ability to obtain training and skills development opportunities from an employer (41%) compared to those employed full-time (36%). Other areas in which respondents indicated age to be an influencing factor were one's ability to find a job (76%), one's ability to gain a promotion (51%) and one's ability to keep a job (32%).

Figure 8: Areas that older people perceive to be affected by one's age (% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years)



N=1140

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

The most commonly cited area where older people believed LET could help them in the future was to do their job better (21%). Ten per cent believed that undertaking LET could help them find a job (Table 3). Few felt that LET could help them get a better job (7%), get a better paid job (7%), gain a promotion (4%) or find work with more hours (3%). Forty per cent of respondents did not believe that LET would assist them to do their job better, help them find a job, help them get a better job, get a better paid job, gain a promotion or find work with more hours. A further 16% could not say how LET would assist them. Women, those in the 50-59 age group, those earning mid-level or higher incomes, those employed in managerial/professional positions, and those who had finished high school or those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to state LET would help them do their job better. Those aged 60-69 were most likely to indicate there were no areas in which LET could assist them (46%).

Table 3: Areas in which older people perceive that learning, education and training would assist them (% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years)

		Do your job better	Find a job	Get a better job	Get a better paid job	Gain a promotion	Find work with more hours	None of the above	Can't say
Total		21.0	9.7	6.7	6.5	3.9	3.0	40.3	16.4
Gender	Male	18.2	11.5	6.1	5.6	3.4	2.5	40.8	17.6
	Female	24.0	7.8	7.4	7.4	4.5	3.6	39.8	15.2
Age	50-59	29.2	13.1	9.6	12.0	8.3	4.1	30.1	18.0
	60-69	19.3	9.6	6.3	4.7	2.3	2.8	46.1	16.9
	70+	7.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.5	1.6	37.4	9.7
Employment status	Part-time	30.6	7.5	8.0	10.1	3.6	4.9	40.6	14.8
	Full-time	33.4	13.0	10.7	8.5	8.3	1.8	37.9	14.9
	Other	9.8	28.1	6.4	5.8	1.1	7.2	32.1	14.2
Personal Income	\$0 - \$39K	13.5	10.6	6.6	7.2	2.2	5.1	38.9	17.3
	\$40K - \$79K	26.6	8.3	7.8	7.2	4.6	2.3	39.7	15.7
	\$80K+	27.0	10.3	5.4	5.0	4.9	0.6	42.7	15.2
Occupation	Manager/professional	26.1	10.8	5.6	4.5	3.4	1.7	43.6	14.3
	Other	19.2	9.7	8.1	8.3	4.7	4.3	40.4	19.2
Education	Not finished HS	16.7	7.5	7.1	7.6	4.1	2.6	41.1	18.2
	Finished HS	22.4	11.3	6.6	6.1	3.9	4.0	39.2	17.9
	Bachelors+	25.0	11.3	6.6	5.6	3.8	2.9	40.3	13.3

N=1140 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

Commonly cited reasons as to why LET would not be helpful in any area included individuals not wanting to further their career (e.g. gain a promotion) (46%), and individuals stating they already possessed necessary skills/were already fully competent (32%) (Table 4). A small number indicated LET would not help them in any area because: they did not see LET as a good return on investment (7%); they were not confident in their ability to undertake learning (4%), and that they believed LET was not for them (3%). Only a small proportion indicated that LET would not be helpful due to a lack of available courses covering content they wanted to undertake, suited to the needs of older people, or suited to their level of ability. 'Other' reasons specified as to why LET would not help in any area included impending retirement, ill health and age. Indicating that LET would not be helpful in any area due to not wanting to further career was more common among those with an employment status of 'other' or part-time, those earning a lower income, and those who had not finished high school/finished high school. Indicating that LET would not be helpful in any area because they already possessed necessary skills/were already fully competent was more common among males compared to females, 50-59 year olds versus 60-69 year olds and those aged 70+, respondents earning a higher income, and those employed in 'other' occupations compared to those in managerial/professional occupations. Due to the small number of responses to some items, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 4: Reasons why learning, education and training would not help (% of those who reported learning, education and training would not help them in any area)

		Not wanting to further career	Already fully competent	LET not a good return on investment	Not confident in ability to undertake learning	No suitable courses available - suited to older people	Not for me	No suitable courses available - content	No suitable courses available - for level of ability	Other	Can't say
Total		46.2	31.9	6.6	4.3	3.5	2.6	1.5	1.5	15.6	8.8
Gender	Male	44.0	35.0	8.0	2.9	3.6	1.6	0.9	1.2	17.2	10.5
	Female	48.6	28.4	5.1	5.9	3.4	3.7	2.1	1.7	13.8	7.0
Age	50-59	47.3	37.2	12.6	4.8	3.3	3.1	0.9	3.0	7.1	8.8
	60-69	47.4	30.5	5.1	4.2	3.6	2.7	1.9	0.9	16.3	8.3
	70+	35.6	28.4	3.1	4.1	3.7	1.5	0.0	1.8	29.7	11.9
Employment status	Part-time	54.1	37.9	6.1	3.4	3.4	1.9	0.7	1.2	8.1	8.2
	Full-time	46.4	42.6	8.8	5.3	1.4	2.0	2.1	3.3	11.4	2.8
	Other	56.6	40.3	18.6	0.0	8.3	3.4	0.0	0.0	18.1	2.9
Personal Income	\$0 - \$39K	43.7	22.3	10.0	7.9	5.7	3.0	1.2	1.2	19.2	12.5
	\$40K - \$79K	47.0	34.8	3.6	3.4	1.4	2.6	2.3	1.2	15.2	9.8
	\$80K+	50.7	42.1	6.3	2.5	0.8	2.6	0.7	2.9	10.0	1.6
Education Occupation	Manager/professional	45.2	27.0	8.9	4.2	4.0	1.5	0.7	1.4	19.1	7.3
	Other	46.3	36.3	5.2	4.7	2.4	3.6	2.2	1.6	13.6	9.5
Education	Not finished HS	42.5	33.4	5.0	6.4	5.2	5.0	1.6	1.6	13.4	13.0
	Finished HS	43.0	29.4	6.8	4.1	3.1	2.6	2.0	0.0	18.2	5.0
	Bachelors+	51.8	31.4	8.4	2.2	2.0	0.0	1.0	2.4	16.4	6.7

N=475 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

Future intentions to engage in learning, education and training

Half of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years indicated they were not at all likely to undertake LET in the next three years. One in five of those who had been engaged in the workforce in the past five years indicated they were very likely to undertake LET within the next three years. One quarter of respondents indicated they would be somewhat likely to undertake LET within the next three years (Table 5). More females than males indicated they would be very likely to undertake LET within the next three years (24% compared to 15%). A higher proportion of people aged 50-59 indicated they would be very likely to undertake LET within the next three years (27%) when compared to those aged 60-69 (16%) and those 70 years and over (8.3%). Those earning a high income (24%) more commonly reported being very likely to undertake LET within the next three years compared to those earning a low income (15%). Those employed in managerial/professional occupations and those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification more commonly indicated being very likely to undertake LET in the near future. More males than females indicated they would not be at all likely to undertake LET within the next three years (56% compared to 43%). A higher proportion of people aged 60-69 (54%) and those 70 years and over (66%) indicated they would not be at all likely to undertake LET within the next three years when compared to those aged 50-59 (40%). Those earning a low income (57%) more commonly reported being not at all likely to undertake LET within the next three years compared to those earning mid-level incomes (49%) and higher incomes (42%). Those employed in 'other' occupations and those who had not finished high school or who had finished high school (but not gone on to further education) more commonly indicated being not at all likely to undertake LET in the near future.

Table 5: Likelihood of undertaking learning, education and training in the next three years (% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years)

		Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely	Can't say	Total
Total		19.3	25.6	49.9	5.2	100
Gender	Male	15.0	23.9	56.2	5.0	100
	Female	23.9	27.5	43.0	5.5	100
Age	50-59	27.1	26.8	39.7	6.4	100
	60-69	16.2	25.9	53.6	4.3	100
	70+	8.3	17.7	66.1	7.9	100
Employment status	Part-time	23.9	27.0	45.0	4.1	100
	Full-time	23.5	28.9	39.5	8.0	100
	Other	13.2	36.7	45.8	4.3	100
Personal Income	\$0 - \$39K	14.7	24.3	56.8	4.2	100
	\$40K - \$79K	19.0	28.0	48.5	4.5	100
	\$80K+	24.4	28.8	41.7	5.1	100
Occupation	Manager/professional	27.0	24.9	44.8	3.3	100
	Other	14.0	26.3	53.4	6.3	100
Education	Not finished HS	10.7	23.0	60.2	6.1	100
	Finished HS	19.8	22.9	51.9	5.3	100
	Bachelors+	27.9	30.7	37.6	3.7	100

N=997 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification

As self-rated currency of work-related skills and education improved so too did the likelihood of undertaking LET in the next three years (Table 6). Of those who rated their work-related skills and education to be very out-dated, only 7% said they would be very likely to undertake training in the future. However 30% of those who reported their work-related skills and education to be very up-to-date indicated they would be very likely to undertake training in the next three years. This pattern was also evident among those indicating they were somewhat likely to undertake LET in the next three years, with 16% of those with very out-dated work-related skills and education indicating they would be somewhat likely to undertake LET in the future, increasing to 29% of those reporting very up-to-date work-related skills and education.

Table 6: Likelihood of undertaking learning, education, training in the next three years by self-rated currency of work-related skills and education (% of those engaged in the workforce during the past five years)

Likelihood of undertaking LET in the next 3 years	Self-rated currency of work-related skills and education			
	Very out-dated	Fairly up-to-date	Very up-to-date	Can't say
Very likely	7.1	14.4	29.8	3.3
Somewhat likely	16.1	25.5	28.8	14.1
Not at all likely	66.7	55.2	37.9	68.1
Can't say	10.1	4.8	3.4	14.4
Total	100	100	100	100

N=988

The most common reason respondents stated for not considering undertaking LET within the next three years was that they did not need/intend to undertake paid or unpaid work (48%) (Table 7). This was followed by respondents stating they did not think it would help them (17%) or that they did not think that it was important (10%). 'Other' responses most commonly included lack of interest, impending retirement, ill health and age. Neither cost nor time demands appeared to be large deterrents to future uptake of LET. Older respondents were more likely to cite they 'didn't need' LET as a reason for not considering undertaking LET in the future (50% for 60-69 year olds and 54% for those over 70 years) compared to those age 50-59 (39%). Older people in part-time employment more commonly indicated they 'didn't need' LET as a reason for undertaking LET in the future (43%) compared to those employed full-time (28%). Those employed in managerial/professional roles were more likely to cite not considering LET because they did not need it or did not intend to undertake work in the future (56%) compared to those categorised in 'other' occupations (43%). Those who had finished high school (57%) and those with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification (55%) were more likely to indicate not needing LET compared to those who had not finished high school (39%).

Table 7: Reasons for not considering undertaking learning, education and training in the future
 (% of those who reported they would be not at all likely to undertake LET in the future)

		Don't need to / don't intend to undertake paid or unpaid work	Don't think it would help	Don't think it is important	Don't have time	Can't afford	Not supported by employer	Don't know where get advice/ understand what it involves	Not supported by family	Other	Can't say
Total		47.5	16.5	9.6	7.2	5.4	2.0	0.5	0.2	17.5	8.5
Gender	Male	48.2	17.3	10.9	5.3	3.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	19.6	7.7
	Female	46.6	15.3	7.9	9.9	7.8	2.2	1.3	0.5	14.7	9.7
Age	50-59	39.0	19.6	8.5	12.4	8.6	4.2	0.9	0.8	15.1	12.6
	60-69	50.1	14.9	9.9	5.4	4.6	1.3	0.3	0.0	17.0	7.6
	70+	53.6	18.5	10.9	4.7	1.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	28.2	3.5
Employment status	Part-time	42.6	18.0	15.8	7.5	5.9	1.4	0.9	0.0	14.3	10.9
	Full-time	28.0	19.0	11.0	13.5	3.2	5.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	11.0
	Other	33.6	27.6	7.7	10.7	20.9	0.0	3.2	0.0	12.3	9.8
Personal Income	\$0 - \$39K	45.8	18.7	7.1	7.3	10.4	1.2	0.2	0.0	17.6	7.3
	\$40K - \$79K	50.2	15.0	12.8	8.3	4.8	2.7	0.7	0.0	18.4	6.8
	\$80K+	48.0	17.0	6.1	8.6	0.0	3.0	1.1	0.0	16.5	6.9
Occupation	Manager/ professional	56.3	12.5	8.6	5.0	5.3	2.1	0.0	0.0	13.8	7.2
	Other	42.7	18.5	10.0	8.3	5.2	1.9	0.9	0.3	20.3	9.2
Education	Not finished HS	38.6	16.8	11.6	9.4	5.3	3.1	1.0	0.4	17.7	11.5
	Finished HS	56.6	17.7	6.3	5.6	7.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	19.5	2.9
	Bachelors+	54.6	13.9	9.5	5.0	3.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	15.5	8.7

N=501 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification
 Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

The most popular factors older people cited that would encourage them to undertake LET within the next three years included that it was held at a convenient time (27%), being able to learn at/close to home (27%), and having input into what they were going to learn (19%) (Table 8). Cost (13%), gaining a qualification to further their career (12%), and time off work to attend LET (12%) were also motivators for some. Other factors that were less frequently cited to encourage LET were support/encouragement from supervisor/manager (9%), ability to learn close to work (7%), and support/encouragement from family/friends (6%). Almost one-quarter of respondents indicated that none of the factors previously listed would encourage them to undertake LET within the next three years. More females (32%) than males (22%) indicated they would be encouraged to undertake LET in the near future if it was held at a convenient time. More respondents who were employed in managerial/professional occupations reported

they would be encouraged to undertake LET in the near future if it was held at a convenient time (32%) when compared to those employed in 'other' occupations (26%). The proportion of respondents encouraged to undertake LET if it was held at a convenient time increased as income increased (from 20% among those earning up to \$39K to 35% among those earning \$80k+) and also as level of education increased (from 18% among those who had not finished high school to 38% of those who held a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification). As level of education increases so too does the proportion of respondents indicating they would be encouraged to undertake LET if they were able to learn at home or close to home (increasing from 22% among those who had not finished high school to 33% of those who held a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification).

Table 8: Factors that would encourage uptake of learning, education and training within the next three years (% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years)

		Held at convenient time	Ability to learn at / close to home	A say in what is learnt	If it was cheaper	If qualification gained helped further career	Time off work to attend	Support from supervisor / manager	Ability to learn close to work	Support from family / friends	None of the above	Other	Can't say
Total		27.1	26.7	19.0	13.4	12.0	11.7	8.5	7.2	5.7	24.3	6.6	9.4
Gender	Male	22.4	24.5	16.9	8.9	10.3	8.2	6.5	5.8	4.7	28.0	6.9	10.5
	Female	32.1	29.1	21.2	18.2	13.8	15.4	10.7	8.8	6.8	20.3	6.3	8.1
Age	50-59	31.1	29.8	20.2	20.9	21.9	17.1	11.7	10.4	8.2	24.4	6.6	7.7
	60-69	27.9	27.9	20.2	11.6	8.7	10.8	8.3	6.8	5.0	24.3	6.5	11.1
	70+	11.5	11.6	8.9	2.3	2.3	1.1	1.0	0.6	2.9	23.6	7.1	5.0
Employment status	Part-time	34.1	31.2	24.6	17.4	12.3	11.9	10.2	9.8	7.5	23.0	5.4	11.3
	Full-time	33.1	28.5	18.8	16.9	20.1	25.9	16.8	13.3	4.4	23.3	5.9	8.2
	Other	25.9	34.7	15.7	19.7	16.9	3.5	2.4	3.5	13.0	17.0	6.4	9.6
Personal Income	\$0 - \$39K	20.2	23.8	17.4	13.4	9.7	5.3	3.6	4.9	6.8	25.8	8.5	8.6
	\$40K - \$79K	30.5	29.2	18.8	16.4	14.4	14.0	10.7	9.4	4.1	26.2	5.3	8.8
	\$80K+	35.3	27.9	22.3	10.5	12.4	18.3	13.0	8.7	5.1	20.7	6.6	8.7
Occupation	Manager/ professional	32.1	30.3	23.4	14.8	12.6	13.6	9.5	8.4	7.9	22.9	7.7	7.7
	Other	25.8	26.1	17.6	13.6	12.5	11.4	8.7	7.1	4.7	27	6.3	10.9
Education	Not finished HS	17.5	21.6	15.3	9.6	9.7	9.8	8	6.2	3.1	28	5.8	12.5
	Finished HS	27.9	26.6	18.1	14.3	14.9	13.5	8.6	6.4	5.6	26.8	4.7	8
	Bachelors+	37.5	32.7	24.1	17	12.9	12.2	9.2	9.2	8.6	18.3	9	6.6

N=1140 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification | Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

When respondents were asked what specific areas of LET would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career, the three most popular areas were computer skills (22%), followed by administration, planning and organisation skills (13%), and specific technical skills (11%) (Table 9). Forty per cent indicated that although believing undertaking LET would help them, none of the specific areas presented would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career. More females than males reported that computer skills would help them find work, find more hours or further their career (26% compared to 19%). A higher proportion of 50-59 year olds (29%) reported computer skills would help them find work, find more hours or further their career than older respondents (19-20% for those 60 years and over). More females than males reported administration, planning and organisational skills would help them find work, find more hours or further their career (15% compared to 11%). A higher proportion of 50-59 year olds (18%) reported administration, planning and organisational skills would help them find work, find more hours or further their career than older respondents (11% for 60-69 year olds and 7% for those aged 70 years and over).

Table 9: Specific leaning, education and training areas that older people believe would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career (% of those who reported undertaking LET would help them)

		Computer skills	Administration, planning and organisation skills	Specific - technical / discipline	Interpersonal / communication skills	Team and client management skills	Internet search skills	Project management	Sales / marketing skills	Literacy or numeracy skills	None of the above	Other	Can't say
Gender	Male	19.0	11.0	12.8	9.5	7.5	9.0	9.0	5.4	2.3	40.4	5.7	16.8
	Female	25.6	15.3	9.2	10.8	10.7	8.7	7.4	3.6	3.3	38.9	5.5	15.0
Age	50-59	29.1	18.3	17.2	13.8	14.4	8.4	11.6	8.2	3.7	32.2	5.7	12.4
	60-69	18.9	11.2	8.8	9.1	6.9	8.9	6.9	3.1	2.1	43.3	5.6	17.4
	70+	20.3	7.0	3.0	3.5	3.4	10.7	4.5	0.0	4.4	41.7	4.6	19.0

N=828 | HS = high school | Bachelors+ = respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification
 Note: Total does not sum to 100% as multiple responses were allowed

Discussion

As outlined in the first report of this two-part series⁵⁴, and again in this report for contextual purposes, findings from this study showed that 40% of older Australians had undertaken some form of LET in the last three years. Those more likely to have done so were females, those aged 50-59, those with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification, those earning a higher income and whose occupation was manager/professional.

However, 60% of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years reported they had not recently undertaken LET, and a small proportion had not undertaken any LET activities since leaving school. Those most likely to have not recently undertaken LET were males, older respondents, those with a lower level of education, those in 'other' occupations, and those earning a lower income. These results indicate there is much potential to encourage uptake of LET among older people, by promoting the benefits it can offer (e.g. reducing risk of unemployment) and the necessity for ongoing LET (e.g. technology and systems change rapidly in today's society), particularly for more vulnerable groups (lower income, lower qualifications).

Older people most commonly reported the most recent LET they had undertaken was either via an internal training course or an external training provider arranged by their employer. These findings reveal that many LET opportunities for older people are employer-driven, pointing to less opportunity among those unemployed or self-employed. Some older people reported undertaking training via further education colleges/tertiary such as TAFE and university/higher education institutions/Open University. Findings indicate there is demand for a variety of LET opportunities beyond the age of 64, and despite the need for many adults to work beyond this age, the majority of Commonwealth government programs in the adult education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector are targeted at those aged 15–64. For older people to work beyond the age of 64 they need to be supported to do so (e.g. improved access to training opportunities, removal of financial disincentives, tax incentives, and subsidies).

Classroom instruction was the most popular mode of LET among older people who had recently undertaken LET, followed by online/distance LET and field training/work experience. The most popular study load among older people who had recently undertaken LET was flexible/self-paced, followed by a mixture of loads and part-time, with very few undertaking LET in a full-time capacity. Although the survey did not reveal if these modes of delivery and study loads were all selected by choice or driven by what was available within the individual's workplace, these findings are still worth taking into account when planning, developing and improving LET opportunities for older people, accounting for that fact that they are not a homogenous group and have diverse needs.

The most common qualification/certificate obtained from most recent LET was a short course certificate, followed by certificate (e.g. trade). Less popular qualifications/certificates obtained from recent LET undertaken were diplomas, undergraduate degrees and Masters/PhDs. Lower uptake among more time-intensive LET options may be attributable to these not being viewed as a good return on investment (e.g. older people nearing the end of their careers so having limited time left in the workforce).

⁵⁴ Williams R. (2015). *Never too late to learn: learning, education and training among mature age Australians*. Melbourne: National Seniors Australia.

Current or recent LET was most commonly reported to be funded by either the individual or by an employer. Less common funding sources were shared arrangements between the employee and employer or through a government subsidy/loan. The low number accessing LET through a government subsidy/loan is most likely driven by the few subsidies/loan schemes available for those over the age of 64, calling for VET programs to be available to all adults who need them. Additionally, some older people may be unfamiliar with financial support/subsidies available for training, requiring strategies to improve awareness and access to relevant information.

The most common way individuals reported recent LET had helped was that it 'improved chances of gaining work or staying in work'. Results showed that a large proportion of those who had recently undertaken LET found it to be beneficial, with half indicating they were always or sometimes able to utilise the skills and knowledge they had acquired. Common reasons cited why respondents rarely or never applied skills and knowledge from recent LET included not having undertaken paid or unpaid work since completing the LET, not having finished the course yet, and undertaking paid or unpaid work in an area unrelated to recent LET. 'Other' common reasons included not acquiring new skills or knowledge to apply, and that the LET undertaken was insufficient to learning needs. The proportion reporting rarely or never being able to apply acquired skills and knowledge raises questions as to the suitability/quality of LET some are undertaking. Encouraging older people to engage in career planning can help direct individuals to appropriate education and training options, and match training to personal interests, identified skill deficits, or occupations with strong current or future demand.

Approximately one-third of respondents believed that age affected an individual's ability to obtain training and skills development opportunities from an employer. It is uncertain if respondents believed the effect of age to be positive or negative; regardless it highlights again the importance of promoting continuous learning across all ages and that age does not influence a person's learning outcomes.

Respondents commonly reported believing that undertaking future LET would not help them in any of the following ways: to do their job better, help them find a job, help them get a better job, get a better paid job, gain a promotion or find work with more hours. Only one in five believed undertaking LET could help them do their job better, one in 10 believed undertaking LET could help them find a job, and very few felt LET could help them get a better job, get a better paid job, gain a promotion or find work with more hours. These results point to the possibility that many older people may not understand the benefits of LET across the lifespan or that a limited range of appropriate courses suiting the diverse needs of older people are available. Common reasons cited for why undertaking LET in the future was not helpful in any area included individuals not wanting to further their career (e.g. gain a promotion), and individuals stating they already possessed necessary skills and were already fully competent. These findings again emphasise the need for wide promotion of the benefits training can have across different career phases, highlighting that it is not only for individuals aiming to climb the corporate ladder, and that today's work environment necessitates the improvement of skills throughout a working life. Half of those engaged in the workforce in the past five years indicated they were not at all likely

to undertake LET in the next three years. One in five respondents who had been engaged in the workforce in the past five years indicated they were very likely to undertake LET within the next three years. One quarter indicated they would be somewhat likely to undertake LET within the next three years. Females, people aged 50-59 years, those earning a high income, those employed in managerial/professional occupations and those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification more commonly indicated being very likely to undertake LET in the near future. Males, people aged 60 years and over, those earning a low income, those employed in 'other' occupations, and those who had not finished high school or who had finished high school but not gone on to further education more commonly indicated being not at all likely to undertake LET in the near future. Appropriate training is vital for many older people to ensure their skills are relevant and to increase their employability. However, there is much need for investment in training to be targeted at higher risk groups, such as those with low qualifications or in manual occupations.

As self-rated currency of work-related skills and education improved so too did the likelihood of undertaking LET in the next three years. Conversely, as self-rated currency of work-related skills and education worsened so too did the likelihood of undertaking LET in the next three years. This pattern may possibly be driven by self-deselection, where anxiety associated with undertaking training, such as concerns about failing or not being able to cope with learning new skills, stops people from accessing training opportunities.⁵⁵ Those who lack confidence in their ability to undertake training may need to be encouraged and supported to participate, particularly those with lower levels of numeracy and literacy or little previous experience in undertaking training.⁵⁶ Some may have problems identifying skills gaps as well as identifying learning opportunities that meet their skill requirements.^{57,58} Encouraging older people to engage in career planning can be one mechanism to assist in determining learning and skill development requirements to ensure they are equipped for their future working lives.^{59,60}

The most common reason by far that respondents offered for not considering undertaking LET within the next three years was that they did not need or intend to undertake paid or unpaid work, followed by respondents stating they did not think it would help them or that they did not think it was important. 'Other' responses most commonly included lack of interest, impending retirement, ill health and age. Neither cost nor time demands appeared to be large deterrents to future uptake of LET. Older respondents, those employed part-time, those employed in managerial/professional roles, those who had finished high school or those with a Bachelor's degree or higher qualification were most likely to cite they 'didn't need' LET as a reason for not considering undertaking it in the future. The proportion citing they 'didn't need' LET highlights the need for awareness raising campaigns that promote the need/benefits for life-long learning and strengthening skills throughout a working life due to the changing nature of work.

⁵⁵ Irving, P., Steels, J., & Hall, N. (2005). *Factors affecting the labour market participation of older workers: qualitative research*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

⁵⁶ Selby Smith, C., Smith, A., & Smith, E. (2007). *Pedagogical issues for training of mature-aged workers in manufacturing industry*. Sydney: Manufacturing Skills Australia.

⁵⁷ Business Work and Ageing. (2004). *Furthering Success: Education, Training and Employment Transitions for Disadvantage Older Workers*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.

⁵⁸ Irving, P., Steels, J., & Hall, N. (2005). *Factors affecting the labour market participation of older workers: qualitative research*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

⁵⁹ Lourey E. (2015). *Prevalence of career planning among mature age Australians*. Melbourne: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

⁶⁰ Lourey E. (2016). *Change is inevitable, so plan for it. A survey of career planning among mature age Australians*. Melbourne: National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre.

The most popular factors respondents cited that would encourage them to undertake LET within the next three years included that it was held at a convenient time, being able to learn at or close to home, and having input into what they were going to learn. When respondents were asked what specific areas of LET would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career, the three most popular areas were computer skills, administration, planning and organisation skills, and specific technical skills. However, 40% indicated that although believing undertaking LET would help them, none of the specific areas presented would help them find work, find work with more hours or further their career. The high proportion of those indicating no area would help them demands further exploration, and again may be indicative of low awareness as to how LET can support labour force participation.

Hanley and colleagues outline several initiatives that could help improve access to training for older workers: government levies that could require businesses to devote a set figure to the development of older workers; compulsory training standards for a variety of industries to ensure all workers have up to date skills; and government campaigns demonstrating the benefits of training older workers.⁶¹ Bittman and colleagues⁶² outline international strategies designed to address education and skill levels of older workers that are applicable to Australia, including: awareness raising campaigns, training targets, and reimbursement models for work-based learning. One of the most comprehensive strategies noted was Norway's Competence Reform Strategy, which comprises three components: (1) adults who do not have primary or secondary school qualifications are legally entitled to undertake such education, where teaching methods use adult learning principles, are founded on prior learning, and tailored to individual needs; (2) a national accreditation system for recognising non-formal competencies both within the workplace and within the education system; and (3) employees who have worked for at least years (and with the same employer for two years) have a legal right to full-time or part-time study leave. This is complemented by means-tested study loans.⁶³

Australia's ageing population, expectations of prolonged working lives and the growth of technology, means increasing older people's participation in learning, education and training is essential. To do so requires increasing general awareness of the benefits of strengthening and developing skills, and encouraging a cultural shift where people not only aspire to improve their skills over a working life but are also supported to do so.

⁶¹ Hanley, G., T. McKeown, T., & O'Connell, M. (2007). *A novel way to improve the labour market attachment of older Australian workers Working Paper 9/07*. Melbourne: Department of Management, Monash University.

⁶² Bittman M, Flick M & Rice J. (2001). *The Recruitment of Older Australian Workers: a Survey of Employers in a High Growth Industry, Social Policy Research Centre, Report 6/01*. Sydney: University of New South Wales.

⁶³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Ageing and Employment Policies: Live Longer, Work Longer*. Paris: OECD.



GPO Box 461, Melbourne VIC 3001 **P: 03 9296 6800** **F: 03 9650 9344**
E: info@productiveageing.com.au **W: productiveageing.com.au**