



2010 Forum  
Geelong



# FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON AGEING TERTIARY WORKERS' WELLBEING: A REGIONAL CASE STUDY

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# Outline



1. What is an ageing worker
2. Implications for tertiary education workers
3. The Work Ability model
4. Local research / applications



# The Ageing Population: Australia in crisis!



- Who is the ageing worker?
  - Workers aged from 45 years to the age of eligibility for aged pension (ABS, 1996).
- By 2050 the median age in Australia is predicted to rise from 36.6 to 43.6 and one quarter of the population will be over 65.
- Nearly half (46 %) of people in the 50-64 age group are unemployed and 33 % rely on some form of social security payment.





# Ageing and well-being

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- People who lack job security or who are unemployed consistently report the lowest levels of self-rated health and subjective wellbeing.





# Ageing and families

- In 2001, of the 12.6 million persons who lived as a couple family with or without children, 3.1 million (24%) were mature age persons.
- Prolonging work life may also be necessary for maintaining and enhancing the wellbeing of families as the age of parents also progressively increases.





# Trends to early retirement

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- Early retirement stands to lose the Australian labour force over 1 million person years of potential working life (Jackson & Walters, 2009)



# Our ageing workforce: Higher Education

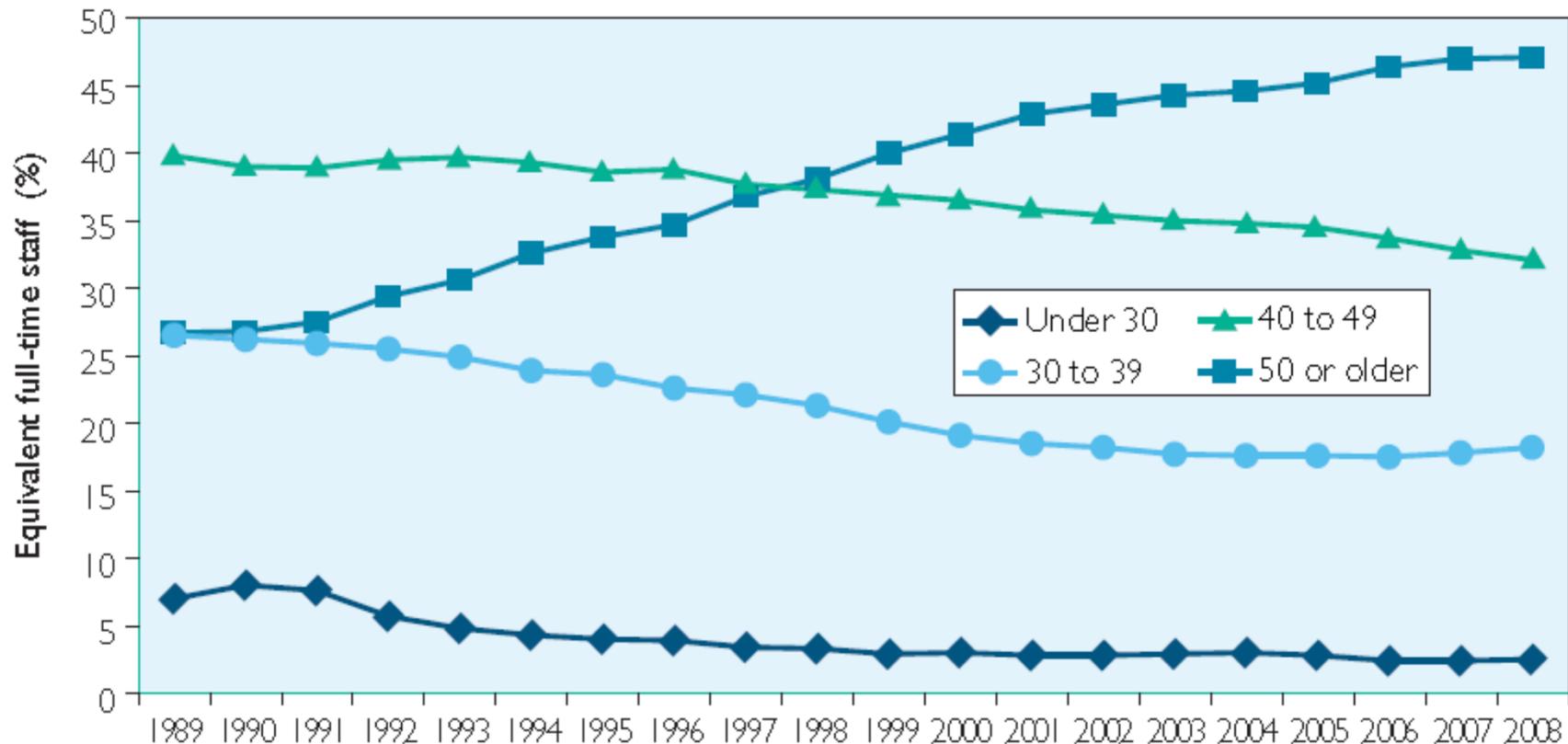


Figure 2 Teaching staff by age group (full time and fractional full time staff only)

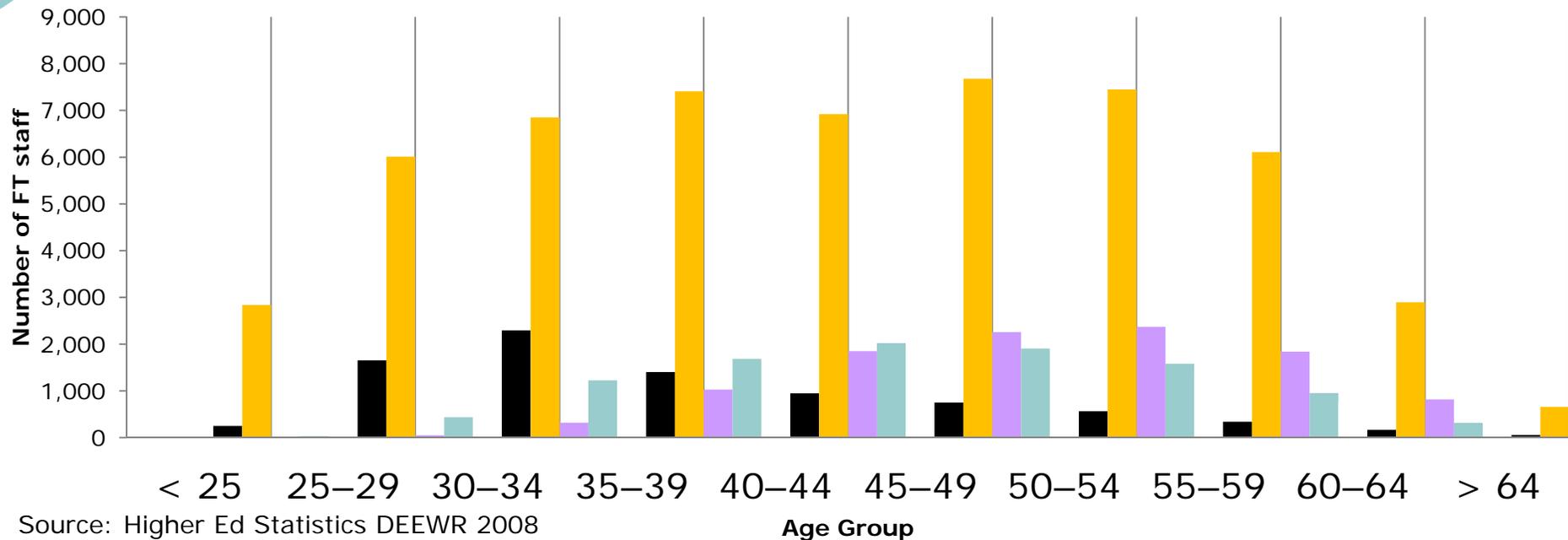
Source: Coates, H., Dobson, I., Edwards E., Friedman, Geodegebuure, L., Meek, L. (2009)

# Full Time Staff by age group and category



## Number of FTE staff by age group 2008

- Above Senior Lecturer
- Senior Lecturer (Level C)
- Lecturer (Level B)
- Below Lecturer (Level A)
- Non-Academic Classifications

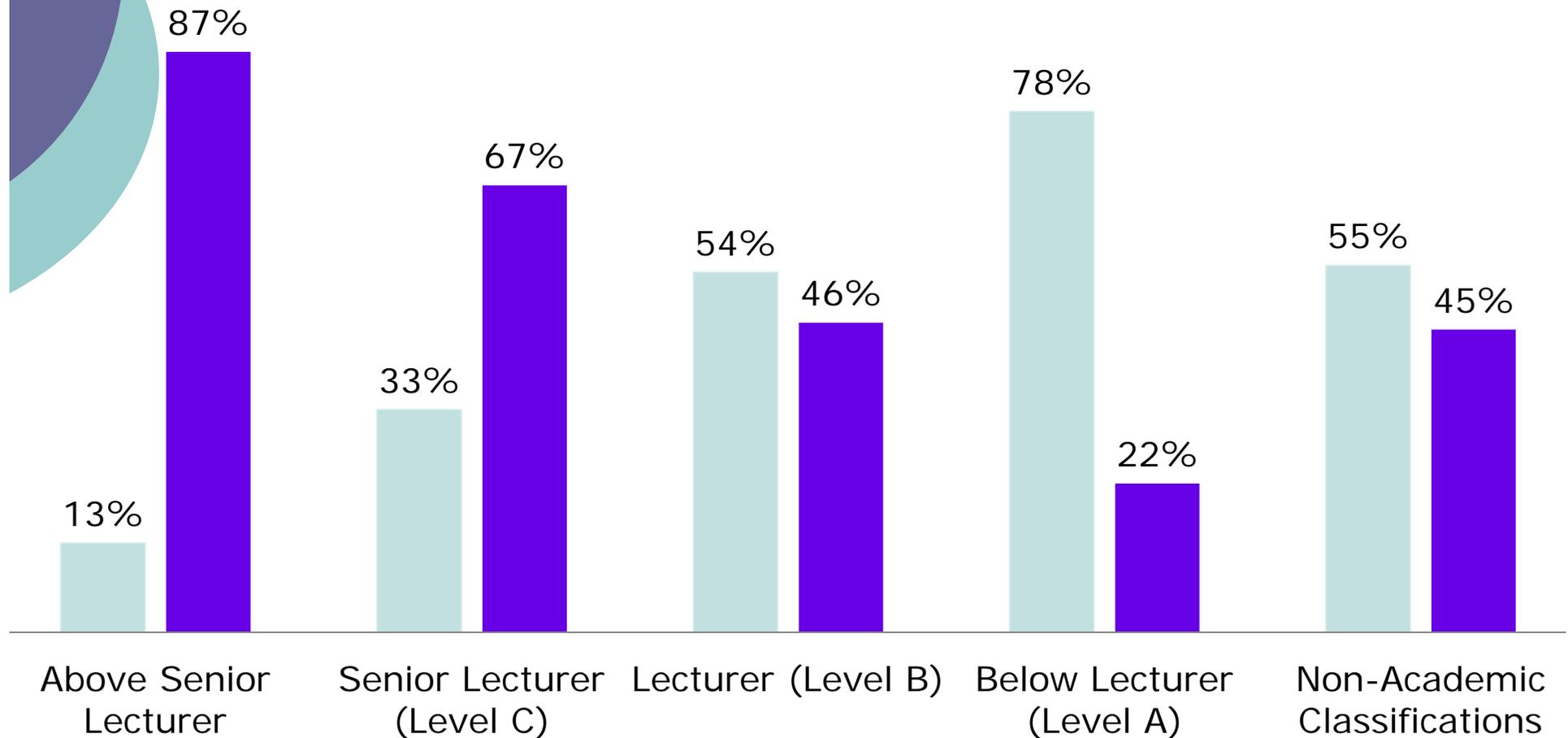


Source: Higher Ed Statistics DEEWR 2008



## Percentage of full time equivalent staff in HE 2008

■ % 44 years and under    ■ % 44 years and over



Source: Higher Ed Statistics DEEWR 2008



# Attractiveness of the Academy?

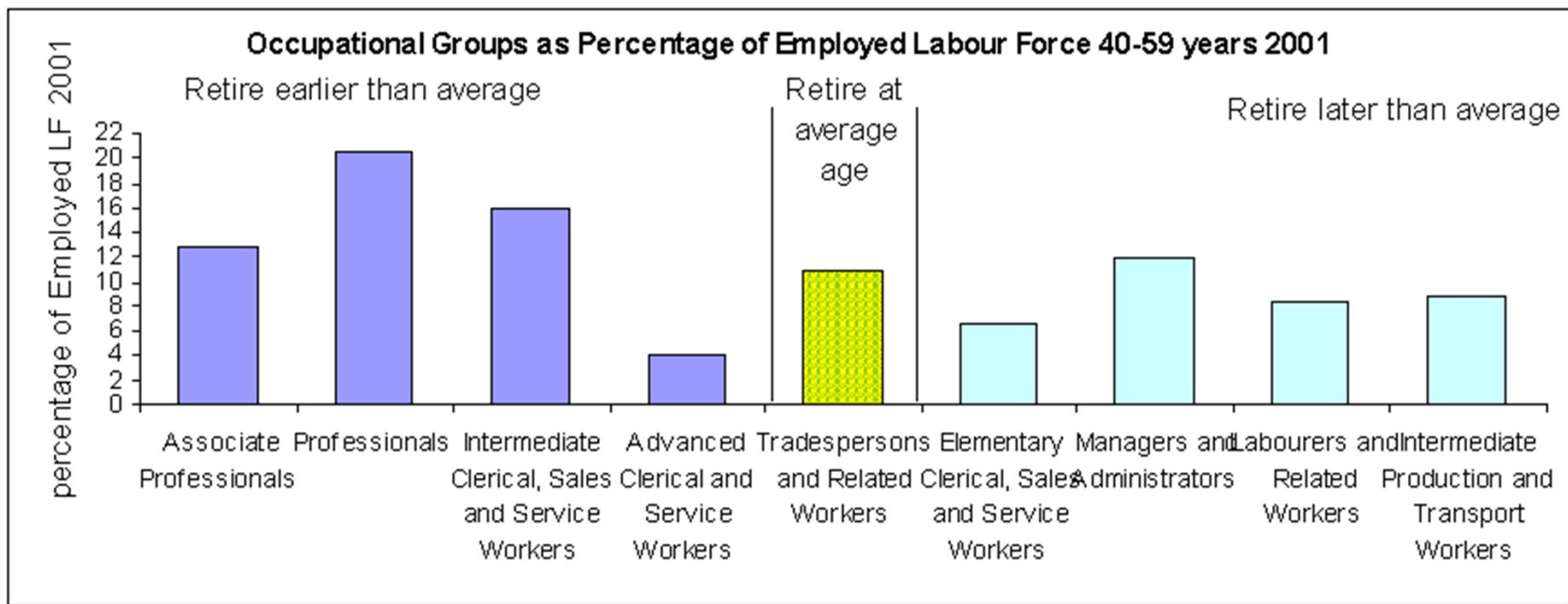
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- Job security
- Remuneration
- Job Satisfaction
- Propensity for job change
- Satisfaction with management

Source: Coates, H., Dobson, I., Edwards E.,  
Friedman, Geodegebuure, L., Meek, L. (2009),  
**Changing Academic Professions**



# Expected retirement age relative to average retirement age



June 2009

# Why Work Ability?

- What is work ability?
  - One's subjective or objective assessment of the ability to do the work that needs to be done.
  - It is a measure of one's mental and physical capacity to work
- There is evidence that improving work ability in older workers can help to keep workers in the workplace and reduce levels of early retirement.



de Boer, van Beek, Durinck, Verbeek & van Dijk, 2004; Pohjonen 2001; Tuomi, HUUHTANEN, NYKYRI & ILMARINEN, 2001)

# Work life balance

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- Negative work to family spill over is associated with strong intention to change jobs, industry, withdraw or retire from work altogether.
- Positive spillover has been found to be
- inversely related to intentions to leave (Haar & Bardoel, 2008).



# Prior research on work ability



- Work ability has been significantly related to:
  - **Physical demands** (Bugajska, Makowiec-Dabrowska, Jegier & Marszalek, 2005)
  - **Mental demands** (Lusa, Punakallio & Luukkonen, 2006)
  - **Job demands** (Camerino et al., 2004)
  - **Work satisfaction** (Palermo, Webber, Smith, & Khor, 2009)
  - **Stress** (Wu, Li, Wang, Wang & Li, 2006)
  - **Organisational Culture** (Knauth, Karl & Braedel-Kuhner, 2005)
  - **Socio-demographic factors** (Fischer et al, 2006)



# Rate Your Own Workability



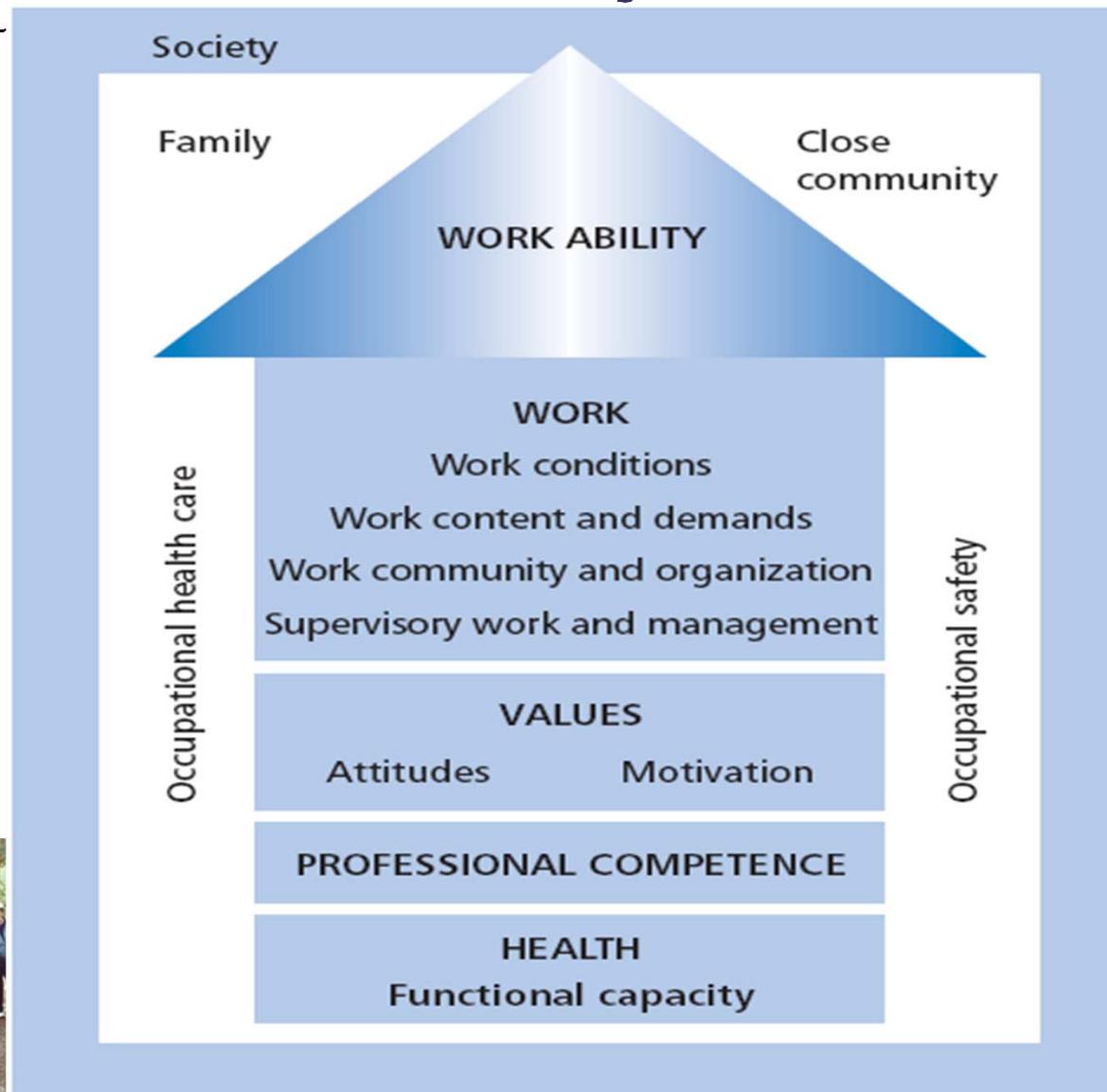
- Q.** Assume that your mental and physical ability to work at its best had a value of 10 points.
- How many points would you give your current ability to do your job?

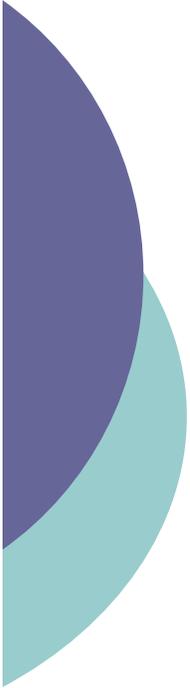
**1 = work ability at its worst**  
**10 = work ability at its best**





# The Workability Model



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of two overlapping semi-circles. The top one is dark purple and the bottom one is teal.

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Applying lessons to an Australian context

# **A REGIONAL CASE STUDY**



# Participants

- Recruited from a small regional institution
- Response rate was 33% with 37 respondents
- Majority were female (64%)
- Mean age was 53 years (SD = 10.5 yrs) with the average psychological age (the age you feel) being 47 years.
- 58 % employees, 22 % in a team leader role and 17% being in a management role.



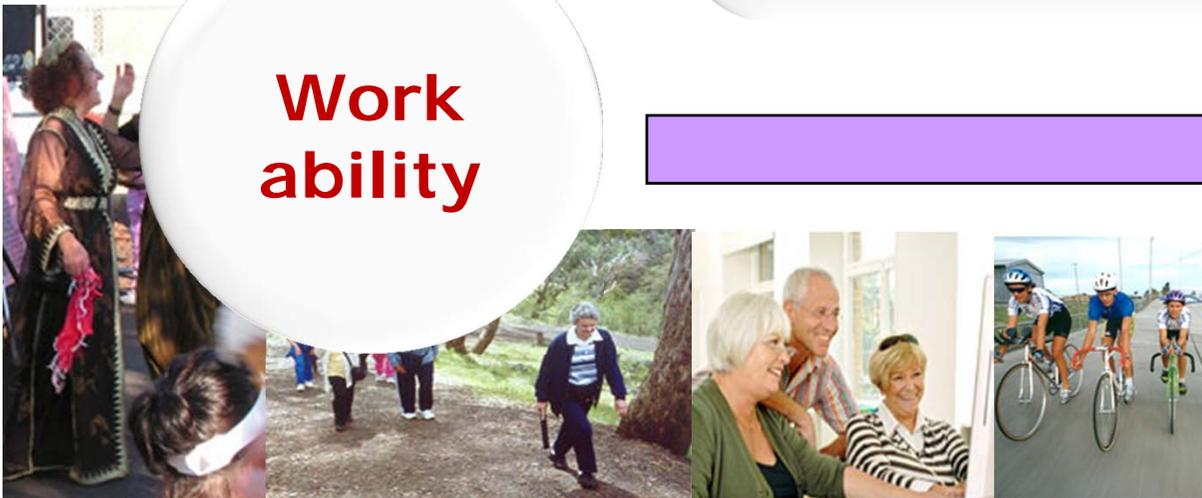


# Proposed Analysis

- Work life Balance
- Work Family Conflict
- Family Satisfaction
- Work Satisfaction
  - Stress
- Depression
- Health

**Work  
ability**

**Intention  
to  
Remain**



## Workability Survey Measures

- Work Family Conflict
- The Work-Family Spillover Scale
- Family Satisfaction Scale
- Job Description Index
- Personal Wellbeing Index
- Stress Index
- Depression Index
- Work Ability Measure
- Psychological Age
- Intention to Leave



# Intention to remain

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- Significantly correlated with:
- Work ability ( $r = -.38$ )
- Work family conflict ( $r = .44$ )
- Positive family to work spillover ( $r = -.38$ )
- Depression ( $r = .47$ )



# Predictors of Work ability

○  $R^2 = .35$



	Predictors	St Beta	sr2
4	(Constant)		-0.37
	age feel	-0.41*	0.05
	Negative Work to Family Spillover	0.08	0.03
	Negative Family to Work Spillover	0.05	0.11
	Work Satisfaction	0.14	0.20
	Personal Wellbeing	0.27	
5	(Constant)		-0.14
	age feel	-0.19	0.08
	Negative Work to Family Spillover	0.12	0.17
	Negative Family to Work Spillover	0.24	0.03
	Work Satisfaction	0.04	-0.07
	Personal Wellbeing	-0.11	0.29
	Physical Health	0.45*	0.41





# Implications

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- **Workability increases** when:
  - You feel younger.
  - You are healthy (mentally / physically).
  - You avoid work life interfering with family and have high job satisfaction and wellbeing.



# Predictors of Family Satisfaction $R^2 = .64$



	Predictors	St Beta	sr
5	(Constant)		4.52
	Work Family Conflict	-0.35*	-2.34*
	Negative Work to Family Spillover	0.09	0.44
	Negative Family to Work Spillover	-0.15	-0.90
	Positive Family to Work Spillover	0.44*	3.61*
	Personal Wellbeing	0.42*	2.17*
	Stress - Vocational Strain	0.03	0.23
	Stress - Role Overload	-0.00	-0.01
	Depression Index Score	0.06	0.35



# Implications

- **Family Satisfaction increases** when:
  - You have positive interference between domains of family and work (that is, you family life enriches your work life).
  - You have less work-family conflict.
  - You have high personal wellbeing (*especially if you are in a high stress environment*).





# Concluding Comments

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- Workplaces need to view their employees as “whole people”
- Interventions that include changing organisational culture are more likely to have successful outcomes
- Workability across the lifecycle



# If you would like to know more

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# Strategies for improving work life balance Workshop (Exemplar)

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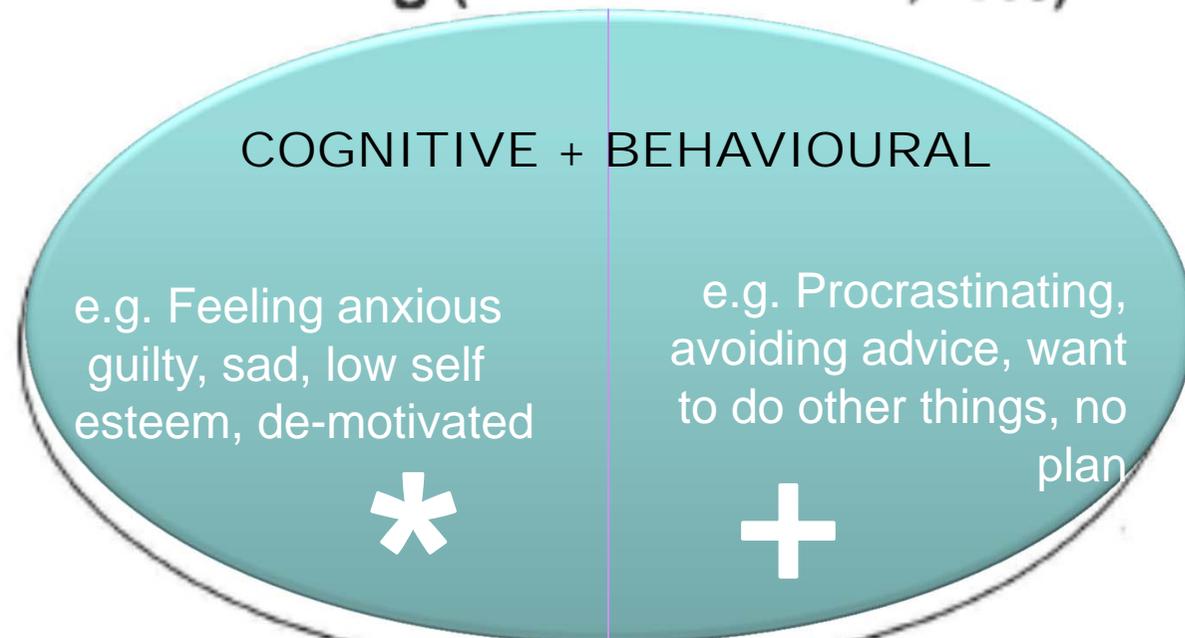


# Coaching Resource: Dual Systems Model

Why not work longer?

Barriers...

Dual systems approach to cognitive coaching (Neenan & Palmer, 2000)



Source: Zeus & Skiffington (2008);

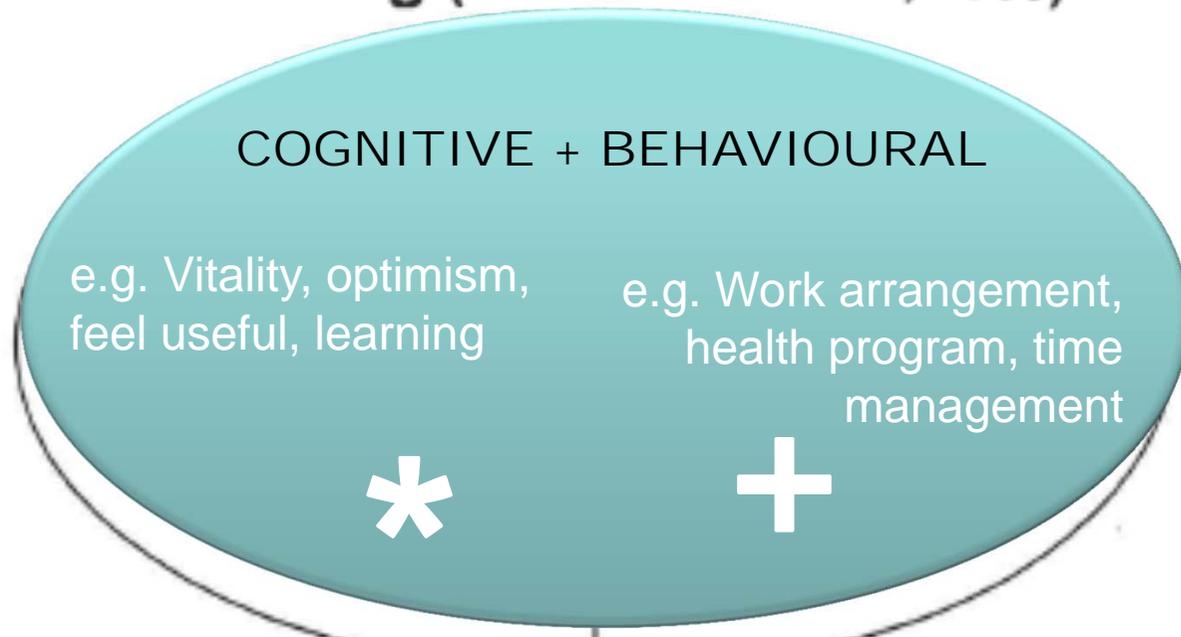
\* = psychological aspects  
+ = practical aspects or steps

# Coaching Resource: Dual Systems Model

Why not work longer?

Enablers...

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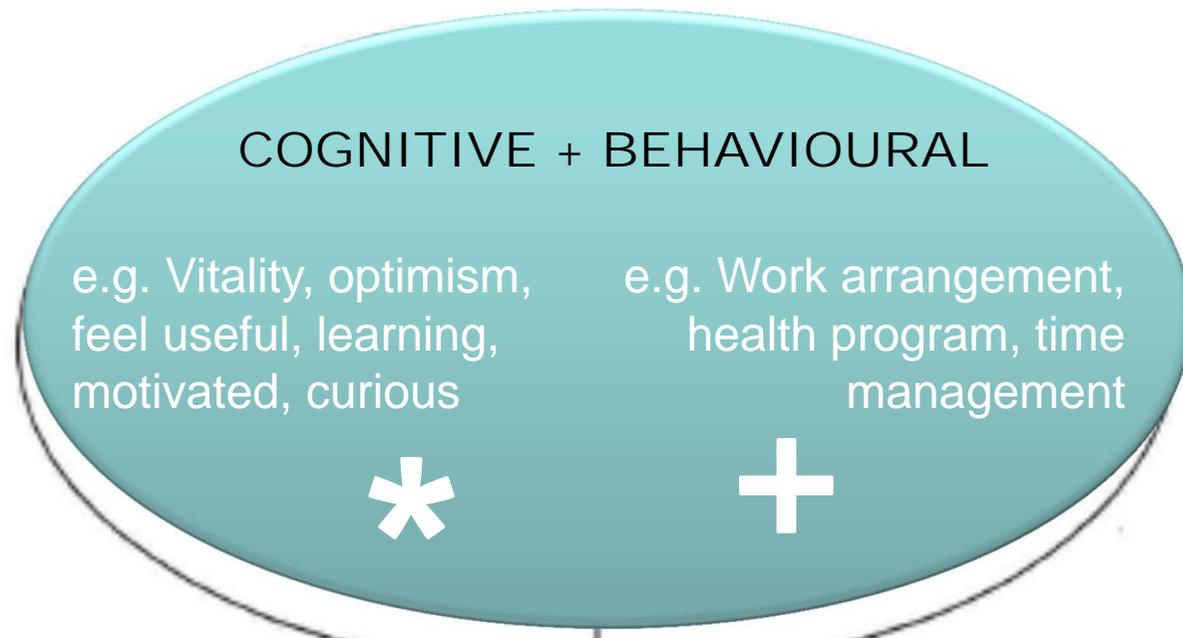
# Think about barrier(s) to working longer

With your partner, discuss the psychological and practical aspects of the situation...

Use the worksheets provided to map the issues for your partner...

**(15 minutes)**

Then swap  
**(15 minutes)**



\* = psychological aspects  
+ = practical aspects or steps

## Why not work longer? (practical)

### Enablers

Health body, healthy mind

Working conditions

Changing definitions about work

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Financial freedom

Working conditions

Demand from caring for others (e.g. grandchildren, ageing parents)

Flexibility doesn't equate to reductions in workload

No plan – haven't thought about it

Too hard

No process for general staff to volunteer post retirement e.g. adjuncts, conjoint positions)

Don't want to miss out on other things (e.g. travel)

Career peak for young people = 40 years – attitudes relate to having a stellar but short career

No career development opportunities here

Legislation (insurance, SUPER)

### Barriers

## Why not work longer? (psychological)

### Enablers

Need for autonomy  
Want to feel like you are contributing  
I don't feel / think old

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### Barriers

Fear of going senile in public  
Wrung out  
Feeling guilt (i.e. family responsibilities)  
Others' expectations (in relation to how I should spend my free time)  
"Ageing people belong to the community – they should be doing volunteer work"  
Denial  
"Working too long kills you (like it did my parents)"  
"55" attitudes – about retiring, SUPA payouts  
Small college syndrome – "we can't because we're small"



# Did you notice any self limiting beliefs?

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I can't...

I must...

It would be awful...

It has to be perfect...

# Addressing self limiting beliefs



- A: Activating event or situation – start with the goal
- B: Self limiting beliefs or fixed beliefs
- C: Consequences – emotional or behavioural
- D: Discussion and disputing the self belief
- E: Effective new beliefs and behaviours
- F: Future focus



Target Problem / Activating Event	Performance Blockers (thoughts)	Emotional, Behavioural and Psychological Reaction	Performance Enablers (thoughts)	Effective and New Approach
A	B	C	D	E-F
<b><i>goal: I need to develop new skills</i></b>	<b><i>technology is beyond me</i></b>	<b><i>insecure Fear</i></b>	<b><i>Uni provides a lot of great PD; maybe I can just try and see</i></b>	<b><i>Ask my manager for advice on a step by step approach to learning new skills</i></b>
	<b><i>'I can't learn new things they'll think I'm stupid</i></b>	<b><i>Fixed, stubborn, anxious</i></b>	<b><i>Maybe I will look hopeless at first, but I have learnt things before, and could again</i></b>	<b><i>Enrol in a course today</i></b>
	<b><i>why should i have to change anyway</i></b>	<b><i>anger</i></b>	<b><i>This is unhelpful, just stay focussed on one task at a time. I may end up enjoying myself</i></b>	<b><i>Tell my colleagues that I am wanting to update my skills and ask for their help</i></b>

Target Problem / Activating Event	Performance Blockers (thoughts)	Emotional, Behavioural and Psychological Reaction	Performance Enablers (thoughts)	Effective and New Approach
A	B	C	D	E-F
<b><i>goal: I want to reduce my hours</i></b>	<b><i>They will never be able to replace me</i></b>	<b><i>Rigid perfectionist, de-motivated</i></b>	<b><i>Flexible arrangements might mean my job is done differently, not less excellently</i></b>	<b><i>Ask a colleague to assist with preparing g for a conversation with my manager</i></b>
	<b><i>I will lose my job if I ask</i></b>	<b><i>anxiety</i></b>	<b><i>Uni needs to retain good workers, this could be a win win</i></b>	<b><i>Set up a meeting with my manager</i></b>
	<b><i>Why do I deserve special treatment anyway</i></b>	<b><i>Low self esteem</i></b>	<b><i>I am a valued employee with a wealth of skills and experience. Uni deserves to keep me around</i></b>	<b><i>Practice my arguments before hand thinking about win-win</i></b>
				<b><i>List all of my strengths, and their value to Uni</i></b>

# Work in pairs...

- Review your earlier work on barriers to working longer.
- Identify **one goal** that comes out of your analysis
- Help your partner apply an ABCDEF analysis to address any limiting beliefs or reactions.
- Help your partner come up with an effective alternative

**(20 mins then swap)**