

Research Questions for the Productivity and Economic Security Theme

Below is a list of some questions that the Network thinks are important, and of relevance to the Productivity and Economic Security Theme. It is offered as a way to stimulate the creative juices of the Network members, and to encourage each member to consider developing a Workshop or Collaboration proposal. It is by no means exhaustive, nor is it implied that proposals that draw on this list will be given priority for funding.

Possible Research Topics

1. To what extent has the changing nature of work (e.g., increased demand for highly-skilled workers and cognitive skills; decentralized forms of business organization and flexible work arrangements) impacted upon the employment prospects or propensities of mature age workers?
2. Has an increase in work intensity (e.g., evidenced by increasing working hours) lead to mature age adults being excluded from adequate employment?
3. What is the potential contribution to GDP of under-employed and non-employed people aged 55-65?
 - a. Who retires early and why?
4. How will the retirement of the baby boomers alter the size and character of the stock of human capital in Australia's workforce?
5. What forms of employer support are necessary to increase an employer's willingness to hire or retain a mature age workers?
6. Compared to younger workers, how mobile are mature aged workers between occupations/industries?
7. To what extent does unemployment and duration in unemployment influence mature age workers' job search intensity and therefore re-employability?
8. Are there age differences in work performance? In what sorts of jobs are mature age workers good/poor substitutes for younger workers?
9. What are the primary factors that affect the time lost from work, return-to-work, subsequent unemployment, and changes in occupation after an episode of significant illness or injury experienced by mature age workers?
10. The numbers of men receiving the DSP has rising strongly over the last few years. One potential cause for this rise is the inability of mature aged workers to regain employment after losing their jobs. To what extent is this true? What might be some solutions?
11. Mature aged workers are more likely to have health problems than are younger workers. Does this reduce their productivity; increase the use of sick leave; increase their use of workers compensation – relative to younger workers?
12. How does the increased prevalence of "grandparenting" influence the labour supply pattern across age cohorts (i.e., of the parents and the grandparents)?
13. Is an older workforce likely to affect the rate of technological change or the adoption of new workplace practices?
14. Which occupations and industries are likely to be to be most affected by high rates of retirement when the baby boomers begin retiring? Are there appropriate measures in place to ensure appropriately skilled workers are available to fill these gaps?