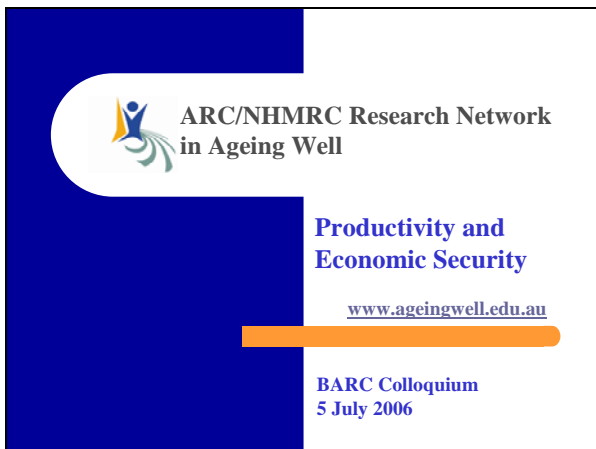


BARC Policy and Practice on Ageing Colloquium, Canberra, 4-5 July 2006

ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well Research Theme Workshop 1 - Productivity and Economic Security

Presentation Slides:



ARC/NHMRC Research Network
in Ageing Well

**Productivity and
Economic Security**

www.ageingwell.edu.au

BARC Colloquium
5 July 2006



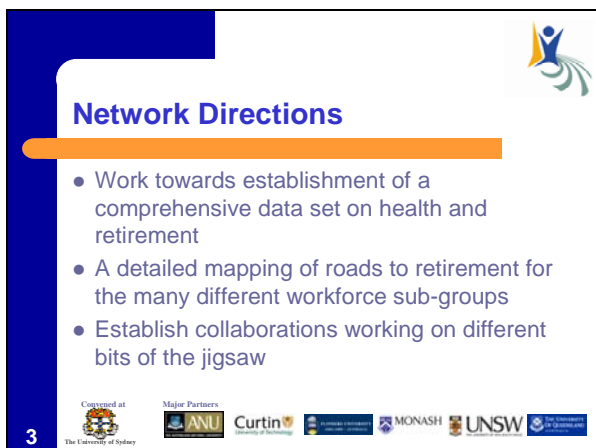
Key Issues

- Retirement income security
- A labour market for older Australians
- Tomorrow's older Australians - How do they differ from today's?
- The interaction of health and paid work

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Network Directions

- Work towards establishment of a comprehensive data set on health and retirement
- A detailed mapping of roads to retirement for the many different workforce sub-groups
- Establish collaborations working on different bits of the jigsaw

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Workshop Summary

Workshop Chairs:

Professor Sue Richardson (Theme Convenor)
Director, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University

Professor Peter Saunders (Co-convenor)
Social Policy Research Centre, The University of New South Wales

Rapporteur:

Anna Lane, Research Associate, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University

Discussion points:

Relationship between health and work

- Health and work/retirement is a two way relationship
 - Health (and the many variants of health) is the main reason why people leave the workforce - can people effectively return to work after an episode of illness or while managing a chronic condition?
 - How does work influence overall wellbeing, mental and physical health?
 - In what ways do the sorts of jobs that older people do differ from those done by younger workers and has this been changing?
 - A careful matching of abilities, both physical and cognitive, with jobs will be critical in retaining older people in the workforce

Retirement and work/retirement transition

- Is early retirement really a bad thing? We do not have a notion of what older people want and, instead, tend to think in terms of what they can do for the country. On the other hand, early retirement has a wider community impact – a public good effect.
- Willingness to work longer - some people simply don't want longer working lives. Given the consequences of their decision to retire on others, is there a case for providing sticks and carrots to induce longer working lives (i.e. postponement of retirement)?
- Does long term retirement planning actually result in a better retirement?
- We have school to work transition supports, perhaps we need to develop work to retirement transitions supports.
- The work-retirement transition, today, is dynamic
 - Phased retirement – providing mature age workers with alternatives to full time employment
 - There is a need to support mature age workers returning to work
 - Normative attitudes –community thinking about when and how it is normal to retire needs to change, towards acceptance of later retirement, and phased retirement.
 - Much necessary work – voluntary, unpaid but productive – is performed by those in retirement. Who will provide this source of labour if we engage in longer working lives?
 - Self-employment/entrepreneurship – need considerably more research in this area.
- Gender is important when discussing any issue related to the labour market and retirement transition.
- Geography is also a key issue in the work/retirement debate
 - Many people move when they retire, how does this influence the demography of Australia, provision of services, individual and regional social capital, work opportunities, etc?
 - Where do people in depressed areas look for income security?

Employment issues

- Age discrimination - what are the reasons why employers don't want older workers?
- Characteristics of older workers and their younger counterparts – are older workers substitutes for or complementary to younger workers?
- Need to consider the barriers or opportunities that occupations / industry sectors offer to older workers
- Need to understand how to roll out change in small businesses and who will promote it?
- A skills shortage is driving change in the labour market. With an ageing workforce there will be an associated change in the skill composition of the workforce
 - What skills are we losing?
 - What are the implications for the education system – refreshment of skills, transfer of skills?

Managing retirement incomes

- There is a mismatch between retirement intentions and actual retirements – this would indicate that people are not planning adequately for their retirement.
- Now that we have moved to a superannuation system there is greater risk associated with retirement income management
- Many people are not adept at managing diverse sources of income
 - The influence of cognitive capacity is a relationship that needs to be looked at further
- Post retirement management of income – there is a great possibility of exploitation of retirees by others
- What will be the influence of smaller family sizes on the intergenerational transfer of income and practical support?

Research needs

- We have rich/detailed data on health/work variables but less on retirement/income/asset variables.
- We need to supplement quantitative data with qualitative data.
- Exploratory studies are needed to gather information on what employer models are working well, e.g. :
 - Flexible work practices
 - Accommodating the particular needs of older workers
- There is uncertainty about the future:
 - Will the public pension continue?
 - What would a labour market designed for older workers look like?
 - We need to conduct some detailed forecasting (NATSEM?) to get a picture of what the future looks like under different circumstances?

Possible Network actions

- There is commonality between what is happening in Australia and other countries. The Network could monitor what is going on outside Australia (and outside of the Network's activities) and disseminate this information?
- Initiate research addressing the issues above in order to develop a comprehensive dataset on health and employment/retirement (both quantitative and qualitative) including the possibility of a population-based Health and Retirement Survey in collaboration with other Network Research Themes?
- Facilitate collaborations between researchers working in different areas both in terms of collaborating on multi-disciplinary research projects and through sharing of information (such as through the lodging of data on the Ageing Well Data Archive)?