Department of Labour
TE TARI MAHI

45 PLUS: CHOICES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

FINAL REPORT – STAGE 3 QUALITATIVE STUDY

November 2006

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Research New Zealand

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Introduction

This report presents the results of the third and final stage of research commissioned by the Department of Labour (DoL) to identify:

- the reasons for non-participation in paid employment of those aged 45 years and over
- the potential role of career information, advice and guidance (CIAG) in assisting that group
- what options for targeted CIAG would be most beneficial to this group and have the greatest uptake.

Stage 3 was a qualitative study to provide in-depth understanding of issues identified in an earlier survey of over 850 people aged 45 years or more who were not in paid employment at the time of the survey (Stage 2).[1]

The issues included personal or life situation matters, such as non-injury related disabilities or carer responsibilities, and job skill and workplace issues.

The research focused on subgroups of mature non-participants identified in the survey. Subgroups included people who were actively looking for paid employment and those who were not, and groups based on age, gender, ethnicity and carer responsibilities and/or disabilities.

The interviewing for Stage 3 was completed between 06 and 21 June 2006 with a sample of 24 mature non-participants, carefully selected to represent the subgroups identified above.

In reporting on the qualitative results of this stage of the research, the findings were linked to and compared with those of the Stage 2 survey. New Zealand residents aged 45 years or more and who are not participating in paid employment are referred to as mature non-participants in this report.

1.2. Key findings

1.2.1.   Key drivers underpinning interest in entering/re-entering the workforce

The qualitative research began with the assumption that some of the subgroups identified in the survey would be more actively looking for paid employment than others. The research found that, while demographic and situational characteristics helped to describe the subgroups, they did not necessarily account for their behaviour in relation to employment.

Two more fundamental drivers underpinned mature non-participants' interest in entering/re-entering the workforce:

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[1] The first stage of the research involved the completion of a national and international search and review of the literature on career information, advice and guidance (CIAG).

- The level of importance paid employment played in satisfying their emotional wellbeing.
- The level of importance paid employment played in satisfying their financial wellbeing.

Each driver can be conceptualised as a continuum. At one extreme, the driver is highly motivating, stimulating interest in participating in paid employment, while at the other, the driver is demotivating, acting as an inhibitor.

For example, at the motivating end of the emotional wellbeing continuum, the benefits associated with paid employment include enhanced self-esteem, having a purpose and a sense of achievement, a social identity, a social network and life, an opportunity to contribute to society and the economy, and mental and physical stimulation.

At the motivating extreme of the financial wellbeing driver, the income derived from paid work is valued because it covers living expenses and can pay for luxuries or extras, such as travel or renovations.

At the demotivating end of the emotional wellbeing continuum, mature non-participants gain satisfaction from their interests and hobbies, community and voluntary work, and socialising with or caring for family and friends rather than from work.

Similarly, those at the demotivating end of the financial continuum do not need income from work to satisfy their financial needs or wants.

Understanding where a mature non-participant is positioned relative to these drivers helps explain their attitude to entering/re-entering paid employment, their attitude to the management of barriers and inhibitors, and their likely interest in using CIAG.

1.2.2.   Segmentation of mature non-participants

Cross-referencing the two drivers provides a framework within which to group mature non-participants based on their level of interest in entering/re-entering the workforce. The framework has four discrete segments; two which comprise of people who are motivated and two which comprise of people who are less motivated (Figure 1).

Figure 1: A segmentation of mature non-participants' motivation to participate in the workforce
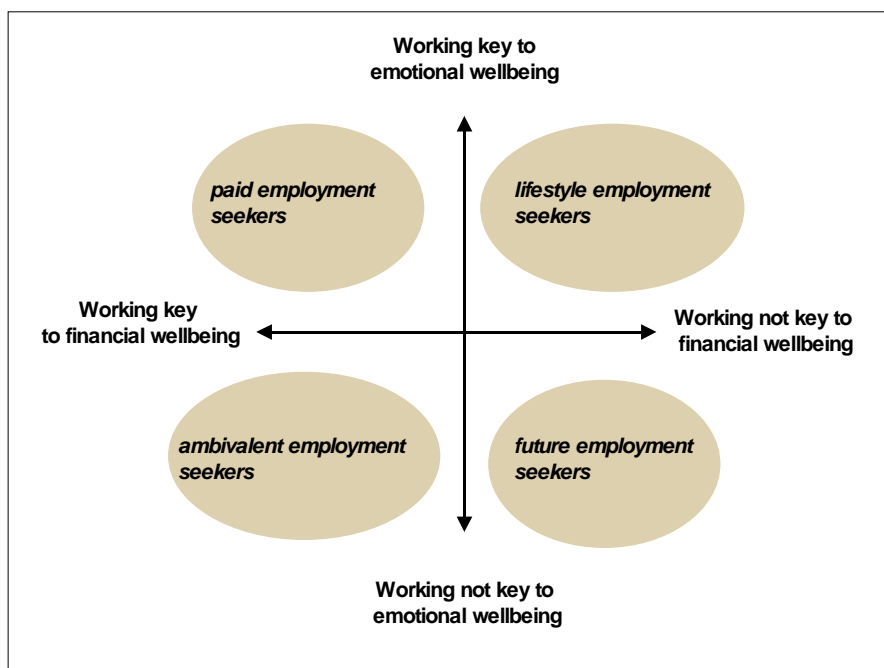
Because of the small sample, it is not possible to accurately quantify the relative size of these four segments. However, based on the results of the Stage 2 survey, it is reasonable to presume that the two motivated segments, the paid employment and lifestyle employment seekers, account for a smaller proportion of mature non-participants than the two less motivated segments, the ambivalent employment and future employment seekers. The survey suggests that there could be four to five times as many non-motivated mature non-participants as motivated people.

1.2.3. Segment descriptions

Again, because of the small sample, it is not possible to categorically describe each segment. However, based on the results of the Stage 2 survey, mature non-participants in the motivated segments will tend to be:

- male
- aged 45 to 54 years old
- people with higher educational qualifications
- māori, Pacific or Asian peoples
- people who have been fired or made redundant

In comparison, mature non-participants in the less motivated segments will tend to be:

- female
- caring for children
- people with lower educational qualifications
- māori, Pacific or Asian peoples

- people who have left paid employment for personal of life situation reasons.

Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples are found in both the motivated and less motivated segments. This illustrates the fact that ethnicity and other demographic factors are more likely to be descriptors, rather than the real factors driving a mature non-participant's intentions to enter/re-enter paid employment or not.

1.2.4. Entering/re-entering paid employment

The Stage 2 survey identified a number of personal or life situation, job skill and CIAG issues that inhibited mature non-participants from entering/re-entering the workforce. The Stage 3 interviews found that mature non-participants' responses to these issues depended on their motivation to participate in paid employment.

The paid employment seekers and lifestyle employment seekers were motivated to overcome the potential inhibitors to entering/re-entering the workforce. They considered them as obstacles, rather than barriers, to their involvement in the workforce.

For example, they were more likely to overcome job skill inhibitors by seeking training, or by retraining, if necessary, and/or by being prepared to travel or move to a new location. They might overcome transport issues by using public transport, if available, or car-pooling.

In contrast, the ambivalent employment seekers and future employment seekers were more likely to regard potential inhibitors as barriers that prevented them participating in paid employment. They were less interested in overcoming job skill related barriers and more likely to identify issues associated with access to jobs and training. These included:
- where and how to access further training and education
- costs associated with training
- lack of relevant jobs in the local area
- access to and costs of transport to travel to work or training

1.2.5. Perceptions/experiences of ageism

Ageism was also identified in the Stage 2 survey as an issue that might inhibit some mature non-participants from entering/re-entering the workforce. It was examined in greater detail in the qualitative research. Respondents perceived or had experienced the following:
- The physical and mental changes associated with ageing, such as lower energy levels, physical strength/stamina and mental agility, affected their ability to perform to their best or carry out a full-time job. These issues were more relevant to some occupations and positions than others, for example, jobs requiring speed and strength.
- Job-seeking agencies are primarily interested in younger job seekers. Experiences included being told by recruitment agents that they would have limited chance of success in applying for jobs because of their age.

The youthfulness of the staff and other job applicants in these agencies left some mature non-participants feeling out of place and uncomfortable.

- Employers prefer younger employees. Experiences that supported this included:
    - employers raising age related concerns at interviews, including concerns about the imminence of retirement, questioning applicants' willingness to adapt to a new work environment, and questioning their willingness to answer to younger management
    - believing and/or being told that they would not fit the culture or 'look' of the organisation, because of their age
    - being repeatedly unsuccessful with job applications.

People's responses to ageism depended on the segment they were in. Individuals in the motivated segments, the paid employment and lifestyle employment seekers, were more likely to reject ageist attitudes as myths or misconceptions rather than seeing them as real barriers. Most believed that their maturity was an asset in the work environment.

These groups were also likely to respond positively to the physical and mental changes associated with ageing by seeking work and a work environment that suited them, for example, working reduced hours, or in less challenging positions than they previously occupied.

However, those who were less motivated to enter/re-enter the workforce, the future employment and ambivalent employment seekers, were more likely to see ageism as a real barrier to entering/re-entering the workforce. This was especially true for those who had been out of employment for some time.

1.2.6.   Career information, advice and guidance

The Stage 2 survey also showed that a lack of job-seeking knowledge was a key inhibitor to entering/re-entering the workforce.

In examining this further, the qualitative research found that knowing how to gain job-seeking assistance depends on how motivated mature non-participants are to re-enter the workforce, and how recently they have looked for work. In the Stage 2 survey, 38 percent of mature non-participants had been out of the workforce for more than 10 years.

Those in the more motivated segments, the paid employment and lifestyle employment seekers, were more up to date with the job-seeking process. Given that they were more likely to be actively looking for work, they were also more likely to be familiar with, and more confident about, the process of job hunting, including where to look for jobs (e.g. newspapers, the Internet), how to 'sell' themselves to a potential employer, how to create a CV, and where to go for CIAG services.

Some respondents in these segments had sought help from agencies offering CIAG services. These included Career Services, recruitment agencies generally,

employment agencies targeting mature job seekers, and Work and Income. All had found these services unsatisfactory because:

- they saw them as being geared towards the needs of younger job seekers
- the level of service provided was limited because staff appeared to lack CIAG expertise
- the services offered limited job opportunities
- they were ineligible for their services, for example, those not receiving a government benefit were not eligible for Work and Income services.

In contrast, those who were less motivated to seek employment, the ambivalent employment and future employment seekers, were more likely to have been out of work for longer, and to have limited job-seeking knowledge and experience. They were also less likely to know what CIAG assistance is available and where to find it.

1.2.7.   The ideal CIAG service

Against this background, respondents were invited to describe their ideal CIAG service. Most imagined a service that was specifically developed to meet the needs of mature non-participants (i.e. people aged 45 or more), and would have the following features:

- It would be provided in different forms at different points in the CIAG process. The initial interface would involve at least one face-to-face consultation. The perceived benefits of meeting with someone face-to-face included:
    - reducing any anxiety associated with job seeking
    - providing a service tailored to their specific needs.
- It would have CIAG consultants with appropriate personal attributes and qualities. These included:
    - Age: The service would be staffed exclusively by consultants aged 45 or more. Mature non-participants believed that they would be able to relate more easily to someone of a similar age, and that mature staff would understand their situation and circumstances.
    - CIAG expertise: The consultants would be CIAG experts, knowledgeable about the issues mature non-participants might face in re-entering the workforce and how to overcome them.
- The service would provide interpreters/consultants fluent in relevant languages (e.g. Asian and Pacific languages). This is the only issue that respondents identified as specifically relevant to ethnicity.
- The level and focus of the service provided would be tailored to the specific needs of the individual. Those having trouble overcoming personal or life situation issues would probably receive more face-to-face assistance. For those with simpler needs, on-going communication with the CIAG service would be by telephone or email.
- Information would be provided about the service on the Internet. A dedicated website would provide:
    - a job search database
    - CV templates
    - information about training options and support

- o helpful tips, for example, on interviewing skills and dealing with ageism.
- The web-based information service would be supported by:
  - o access to computers with hands-on support at the CIAG service's premises - those who were less confident in using computers were uncomfortable with the notion of accessing computers in other public venues, such as libraries and Internet cafés
  - o a 'how to' pamphlet with simple, user-friendly directions to help access and navigate the website
  - o an 0800 help line to provide support if they were having problems accessing or navigating the site, for example, from home.
- The CIAG service would be located in the local community, as this would facilitate easy (face-to-face) access and ensure that the service introduced people to jobs in the local market.

Most respondents thought that the DoL was the most appropriate organisation to offer CIAG services to assist mature non-participants who wish to work.

This was because:
- the DoL has a history as a job-searching agency, which is particularly relevant to the age group in question
- they saw it as the DoL's role to improve employment services
- providing CIAG services through a government agency would mean that the service was free and, therefore, more accessible.

While an ideal CIAG service would be of interest to those who wanted to work, respondents believed that, on its own, it would have little impact on mature non-participants in the less motivated segments. In order to increase workforce participation among those who were currently uninterested in entering/re-entering the workforce, respondents envisaged a well-executed and targeted information programme promoting the benefits that paid employment can offer. This would have the added benefit of reinforcing the interest of those in the more motivated segments.

2. INTRODUCTION

As part of its work on removing barriers and enhancing choices for people wishing to participate in the labour market, the Department of Labour (DoL) has identified that a large number of people aged 45 years or more are not in work. Research suggests that the ability of people aged 45 years or more to participate in the labour market could be supported by raising awareness of the benefits of participation, and by providing targeted career information, advice and guidance (CIAG).[2] Along with many Western countries, New Zealand is faced with skill and labour shortages, and an ageing population. Enabling all those who wish to work to do so would help mitigate these issues.

Based on the results of the Household Labour Force Survey (a quarterly survey of 15,000 households across New Zealand), Statistics New Zealand estimates that, for the year ended March 2003, 34 percent of the total working age population of 2,986,600 were not in the labour force and were not actively looking for employment.

While the largest concentration of those not in the labour force are younger people (who are more likely to be in full- or part-time education) and older people (who are more likely to be retired), non-participation rates start increasingly noticeably from the age of 55, particularly among women.

Against this background, DoL commissioned Research New Zealand to undertake research to identify:
- the reasons for non-participation in paid employment of those aged 45 years and over
- the potential role of CIAG in assisting that group
- options for targeted CIAG that would benefit this group most and have the greatest uptake.

New Zealand residents aged 45 years or more and who are not participating in paid employment are referred to as mature non-participants in this report.

2.1. Research design

The research was conducted in three stages:

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[2] Career information, advice and guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make education, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and in the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education programmes (to help individuals develop their self awareness, opportunity awareness and career management skills), taster programmes (to sample options before choosing them), work search programmes and transitions services. (*Bridging the Gap*, OECD, 2004)

- 45 Plus: Choices in the labour market - Stage 1: A review of relevant international and New Zealand research on programmes of career information, advice and guidance for older unemployed adults.
- 45 Plus: Choices in the labour market - Stage 2: A large-scale national survey of New Zealand residents aged 45 years or more who were not in paid employment at the time of the survey.
- 45 Plus: Choices in the labour market - Stage 3: A qualitative study of particular subgroups of non-working New Zealand residents aged 45 years or more, who were identified as being of interest as a result of the Stage 2 survey.

This report presents the findings of Stage 3. Where appropriate, it integrates the findings of the Stage 2 survey and notes similarities and differences between these two stages of the research.

2.2. Conclusions from the Stage 2 survey

To set the context for the qualitative study, the main conclusions from the Stage 2 survey are set out below. This survey was completed between 21 January and 20 March 2006 with a representative sample of 868 people aged 45 years and older who were not in paid employment at the time of the survey. The sample was stratified by age and ethnicity, and certain subgroups (Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian peoples and those aged 45 to 69) were over-sampled to ensure statistically robust subsamples for the purpose of analysis and reporting.

The survey questions focused on:
- past experiences in and reasons for leaving the workforce
- attempts to enter/re-enter the workforce
- the extent to which job skill training had been undertaken to enter/re-enter the workforce
- awareness of and access to CIAG to enter the workforce
- reasons for not seeking to enter/re-enter the workforce
- barriers to entering the workforce.

2.2.1. *Mature non-participants are a diverse group*

According to the Stage 2 survey:
- most mature non-participants are NZ European/Other (81 percent); others are Māori (8%), Asian (7%) and Pacific peoples (4%)
- most were born in New Zealand; one-quarter (27 percent) were born elsewhere
- they can be found in rural areas (11 percent), small to medium-sized towns (31 percent) and larger urban centres (57 percent)
- they own or have day-to-day day access to a car (91 percent) or public transport (69 percent)
- most live in households without children i.e. single person and couple-only households (74 percent); others live in households with children (23 percent) and households that are run as flats (2 percent).

2.2.2. *Financial status*

Many mature non-participants may not need to work for financial reasons:

- Eighty percent of those interviewed were currently receiving income from National Superannuation, benefits or some other government allowance.
- Forty-five percent lived with someone who was receiving income from National Superannuation, benefits or some other government allowance.
- Sixty percent had other sources of household income, such as from a partner's paid employment or investment income.

2.2.3. *Past work experience*

Almost all mature non-participants (99 percent) interviewed for the Stage 2 survey had worked in paid employment for three months or more at some time in the past. They had worked in a wide range of occupations and industries.

Fourteen percent had been out of the workforce for less than one year, 13 percent for one to two years, while 71 percent had not worked in paid employment for three years or more, and 38 percent had not worked in more than 10 years. This is clearly a function of age, as 42 percent of those who had not worked in the last 10 years were aged 65 years or more.

2.2.4. *Reasons for leaving the workforce*

The reasons for mature non-participants leaving the workforce varied:
- Many left voluntarily - to retire (30 percent), to do something different (6 percent), because they did not want to work anymore (5 percent) and/or did not need the income (2 percent), or to return to school or university (1 percent).
- Some left involuntarily, through dismissal or redundancy (10 percent).
- Others left because of personal disabilities or for health reasons (19 percent), or as a result of an injury (4 percent).
- Some left for personal or family related reasons, such as carer responsibilities (8 percent), because they had children (5 percent), or because they had married (4 percent).

2.2.5. *Mature non-participants' interest in returning to paid employment*

A reasonable proportion of mature non-participants (19 percent) were interested in entering/re-entering paid employment at the time of the survey. They were actively:
- checking job advertisements (63 percent)
- looking for work through friends, family and other contacts (41 percent)
- applying for jobs (39 percent), or sending out CVs (27 percent)
- contacting or registering with Work and Income (23 percent), or contacting recruitment agencies (16 percent).

They tended to be younger (aged 45 to 54 years old), male, and to have left paid employment in the last year (30 percent, compared with 14 percent of all mature non-participants). They were likely to have been dismissed or made redundant from their last job (21 percent, compared with 10 percent of all mature non-participants).

2.2.6. Reasons non-participants were not looking for paid employment

Respondents who were not looking for paid employment were classified into three, non-mutually exclusive groups:

- Those who were not seeking work for personal health reasons.
- Those who considered themselves permanently retired or financially secure and/or who did not want to work.
- Those with carer responsibilities that made it difficult for them to work.

The group not looking for paid employment was more likely to be female (68 percent), to have been out of the workforce for more than six years (50 percent, compared with 30 percent of those currently trying to re-enter the workforce), to have left the workforce voluntarily for personal health reasons or because of carer responsibilities, and to have low or no educational qualifications.

2.2.7. Job skill and workplace related barriers to taking up paid employment

Most of those interviewed said that they faced job skill or workplace barriers that made it difficult for them to take up paid employment. Only 11 percent said that they did not have any such issues.

Those who were looking to enter/re-enter the workforce and those who were not mentioned these barriers to the same extent. The most frequently reported barriers were:

- having the types of skills that employers want (54 percent of those looking to enter/re-enter, compared with 55 percent of those not trying to do so)
- employers believing that older workers will not pick up skills for the job quickly enough (52 percent, compared with 47 percent).
- being under qualified for available jobs (48 percent, compared with 50 percent)
- believing the costs associated with training or studying for new skills are too high (46 percent, compared with 44 percent)
- lacking work experience (32 percent, compared with 29 percent)
- not having access to training to gain new skills (27 percent, compared with 37 percent).

Mature non-participants with higher educational qualifications were significantly more likely to be attempting to re-enter the workforce - 56 percent had qualifications beyond secondary school, compared with 34 percent of those not currently looking for work. Those who had no school qualifications were more likely to report that job skill and workplace barriers would make it difficult for them to take up paid employment.

2.2.8. Personal and life situation related barriers to taking up paid employment

In the Stage 2 survey, 89 percent of mature non-participants said that they faced personal or life situation barriers that would make it difficult for them to take up paid employment. Only 11 percent of those surveyed said that they did not have any such issues.

People who were looking to enter/re-enter the workforce were less likely to identify these barriers than those who were not. This is in contrast to the fact that both groups identified job skill or workplace barriers to the same extent (see above).

The personal or life situation barriers most frequently reported were:
- having a personal health issue or a disability (64 percent of those not actively looking to enter/re-enter the workforce, compared with 41 percent of those who were looking for work)
- having less leisure time for oneself (37 percent, compared with 25 percent)
- having less time with family, friends and whänau (37 percent, compared with 25 percent)
- carer responsibilities for a partner/parent or disabled person (29 percent, compared with 18 percent)
- carer responsibilities for children (26 percent, compared with 19 percent).

One in five (20 percent) of those not looking to enter/re-enter the workforce said that having less time to do volunteer work or work in the community was a barrier for them. Those looking for work did not mention this. On the other hand, 44 percent of those seeking work did say that the cost of returning to education was a barrier. Those not looking to enter/re-enter the workforce did not mention the cost of education.

Overall, the Stage 2 survey found that more women than men reported personal or life situation barriers. Māori and Pacific peoples (who were much more likely to have carer responsibilities) were more likely to do so than NZ European/Others.

2.2.9. Levels of awareness of where to go for career information, advice and guidance

The Stage 2 survey found that 23 percent of mature non-participants did not know where to go for CIAG, should they want to return to the workforce.

Eighteen percent said they would go to the classified advertisement section of the newspaper, but this section typically contains little CIAG information.

2.2.10. Subgroups of interest – the focus of the Stage 3 qualitative research

Respondents for the qualitative research were recruited primarily on the basis that they were either actively looking (i.e. motivated) or not looking (i.e. non-motivated) to take up paid employment at the time. Mature non-participants who claimed they were absolutely not interested in working in paid employment or were retired were excluded.

The Stage 2 survey found that several subgroups were more likely to identify barriers to participating in paid employment. They were:
- people with non-injury related disabilities or health issues
- people with carer responsibilities

- māori and Pacific peoples
- people from rural areas
- women.

This helped determine who was recruited to represent the non-motivated group of mature non-participants for the qualitative study.

2.3. The objectives of the Stage 3 qualitative research

The research objectives for the qualitative research were to:
- provide greater understanding of the drivers and inhibitors to workforce participation among different subgroups of mature non-participants
- provide a better understanding of how specific barriers operate, particularly about ageist attitudes and issues relating to disability
- identify the best ways to present and deliver CIAG information to achieve the greatest uptake
- identify how accessible different forms and channels are for providing CIAG
- identify ways to optimise uptake among key subgroups.

2.4. Contents of this report

The remainder of this report comprises sections on:
- understanding what drives interest in entering/re-entering the workforce
- understanding how people react to barriers to entering/re-entering the workforce
- understanding how best to increase the participation of mature non-participants in the workforce, that is, the role of CIAG.

Chapter 6 includes a detailed account of the research design for Stage 3 of the research. It describes the characteristics of the 24 respondents and the criteria for their selection.

The interview guide is included as Appendix 1.

3. UNDERSTANDING WHAT DRIVES INTEREST IN ENTERING/RE-ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

The qualitative research began with the assumption that some of the subgroups identified in the survey would be more actively looking for paid employment than others. The research found that, while demographic and situational characteristics helped to describe the subgroups, they did not necessarily account for their behaviour in relation to employment.

Instead, the interviews showed that, while some demographic or situational factors help to explain the position of some subgroups, two fundamental factors or drivers underpin mature non-participants' interest in entering/re-entering the workforce. These drivers apply to all the identified subgroups.

Because of their significance, these drivers have been used to group mature non-participants into four discrete segments. This approach provides a way to understand what motivates or inhibits mature non-participants in seeking paid employment.

This chapter explains the two fundamental drivers and describes the characteristics of each of the four segments. Where possible, it relates these to the original subgroups of interest, and links them to the results of the Stage 2 survey.

3.1. The fundamental drivers

A key finding of the qualitative research is that mature non-participants' interest in participating in paid employment depends on the relative importance it plays in satisfying two personal drivers:
- Their emotional wellbeing.
- Their financial wellbeing.

These drivers apply to all the subgroups identified in the Stage 2 survey as being of interest, and are more likely to account for a person's participation in paid employment than demographic characteristics such as gender, age or ethnic background.

For example, two mature male non-participants may be the same age, but one might be interested in paid employment and the other may not. The research found that the main explanation for these different attitudes was the different level of importance they place on paid employment, in terms of it satisfying their emotional and/or financial wellbeing.

3.2. Using the drivers to segment mature non-participants

Each of the drivers can be conceptualised as a continuum. At one extreme of the continuum, the driver is highly motivating, stimulating interest in participating in paid employment; at the other extreme, it is demotivating and acts as an inhibitor. By applying the two drivers in this way, it is possible to group mature non-participants into four discrete segments. Each segment is based on a unique

combination of the drivers. The segmentation helps to explain mature non-participants' different responses to the potential inhibitors to entering/re-entering the workforce identified in the Stage 2 survey and their interest in CIAG.

3.2.1.   Emotional wellbeing

The role paid employment plays in satisfying the emotional wellbeing of mature non-participants is the most significant driver of interest in re-entering the workforce (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The role of emotional wellbeing in motivating participation in paid work
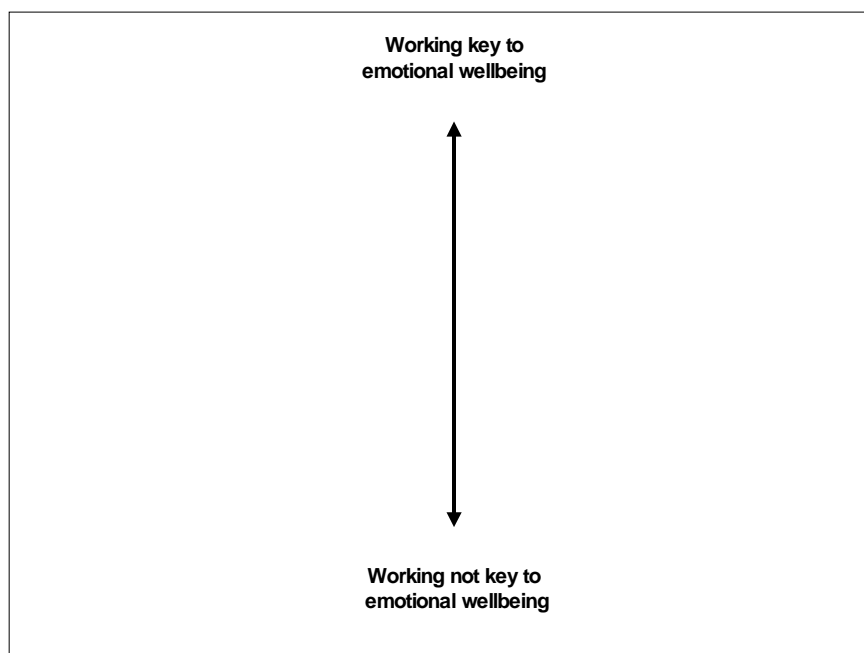
At one end of this continuum, the emotional benefits associated with participation in paid work play a significant role in motivating interest in re-entering the workforce. This research found that these benefits include:

- enhanced self-esteem - having a purpose and a sense of achievement
- a social identity - some people define themselves by the work they do
- a social network and social life
- an opportunity to contribute to society and the economy
- mental and physical stimulation.

Meeting people and social life is what I miss most, being home 24/7. When I go shopping now, I have a choice of three shops, and I choose the one where I know someone, so I can have a chat. And keeping the brain stimulated, because you can so easily fall into the trap of being dull and bored, when you've been used to a job where your brain has to be quick, and the most exciting thing that happens around here is when the phone rings and it's the wrong number. You miss the interaction.

Keeping me active and busy… working is the key to a long life, you keep on track, so your mind doesn't get stale. You get self-esteem

working. You think, if someone wants to employ you, you're not useless, old and on the rubbish heap.

At the other end of the continuum, emotional wellbeing is not associated with participation in paid employment, but is achieved by participation in one or a number of the following: further education, recreational interests and hobbies, community and voluntary work, and caring for and socialising with family and friends.

> *I'm really busy with looking after my grandchildren. It's so important to spend the time with them. I wouldn't want to give that up, especially while they're young.*

3.2.2. *Financial wellbeing*

The role paid employment plays in satisfying financial wellbeing is the other driver determining the level of interest in participating in paid employment (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The role of financial wellbeing in motivating participation in paid work
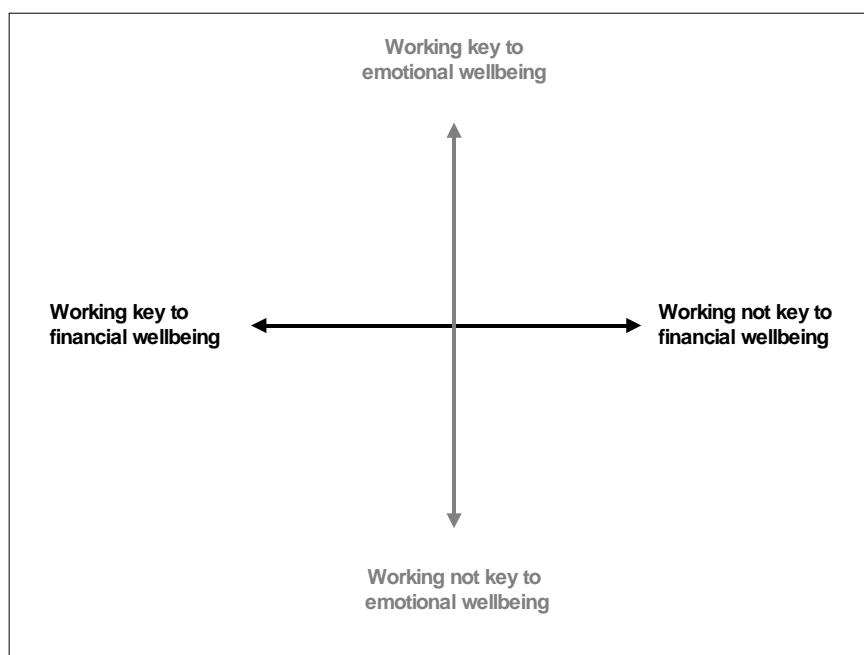
At one end of this continuum, the financial benefits associated with paid employment strongly motivate interest in entering/re-entering the workforce. The income derived from paid work may be valued because it covers living expenses such as the mortgage or rent, food and bills, and/or as a way to pay for luxuries or extras, such as travel or renovations.

> *I'd be ecstatic if I got a job! Being out there and capable and independent. I'd be able to afford the luxurious things that I can't when I don't have a job. I wouldn't be struggling to get by.*

I'd get new clothes … and boots … and a new hairdo! We can't afford these things on one wage.

At the other end of the financial wellbeing continuum, participation in paid employment is not required to satisfy financial needs/wants, as these are satisfied by other means. Other income sources identified in this stage of the research include one or more of the following:

- Retirement funds
- Inheritance
- Being supported by a partner
- Government benefits.

Money doesn't worry me anymore. I've been lucky that I've always been a saver. I've got a bit behind me, and then, being redundant, I invested it. So, I'm not particularly worried about the money side of it.

3.3. The four segments of mature non-participants

Four discrete segments were identified (Figure 4). Two describe mature non-participants who are motivated to enter/re-enter the workforce, and two describe those who are not motivated to do so. The segments are designated as:

- paid employment seekers
- lifestyle employment seekers
- ambivalent employment seekers
- future employment seekers.

Figure 4: A segmentation of mature non-participants' motivation to participate in the workforce
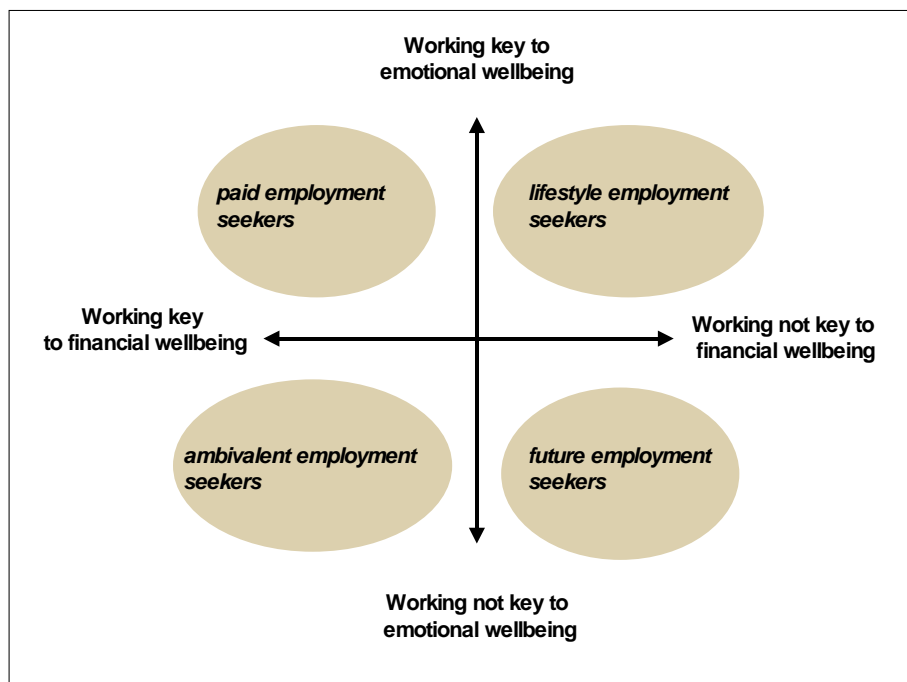
3.3.1.   The motivated segments

Paid employment seekers and lifestyle employment seekers are the most motivated to enter/re-enter the workforce (Figure 5). They are motivated by the financial and/or emotional benefits associated with working, and are most likely to be actively seeking paid work.

Figure 5: The motivated segments' relationship with the fundamental drivers
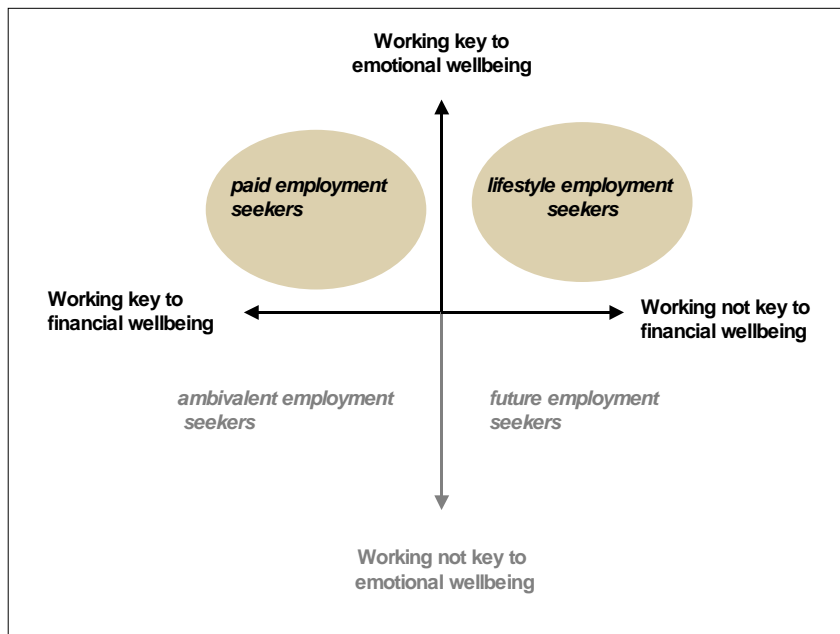
Paid employment seekers

Being out of paid employment does not sit comfortably with mature non-participants in this segment. Not only do they miss the financial benefits of paid work, but being out of work affects their emotional wellbeing in that it reduces their self-esteem, results in feelings of boredom and restricts their social life.

The following case studies illustrate the mindset of paid employment seekers:

> *Cheryl and Stanley are both actively looking for work.*
>
> *Cheryl is a Pacific woman in her forties living in the greater Wellington area. She has teenage children at home, rents her house and has bills to pay. Cheryl quit her job recently, because she wanted to upskill and there was no potential in her workplace to do so. Having worked all her adult life, and having switched jobs frequently in the hospitality industry, she assumed she would find another job quickly. Cheryl is very actively job seeking. She is driven by her financial responsibilities and commitments, and desperately wants a job that will accommodate her desire to extend herself into a management position. The longer Cheryl is out of work, the more distressed she is becoming. Although she started out very positive, she is becoming quite depressed, worries about*

money and misses the stimulation of working. Cheryl is finding it hard to find the right job in her area, so she is going to start looking further afield. Although it will mean a longer working day, and finding someone to look out for her teenagers after school, she is prepared to commute to the city, as there are more opportunities there.

Stanley is a NZ European male in his fifties living in an urban area. He left his job for health reasons, and his employer couldn't offer him alternative work in the organisation. Not being the family breadwinner makes him feel worthless. Being at home all day and not working leaves him feeling lonely and isolated. Although Stanley is unable to carry out the job for which he is trained, he has been accessing training through Work and Income so that he can find something to suit his health condition. The courses Stanley is taking provide him with some mental and social stimulation, but he really wants to reap the financial benefits of paid employment and to enjoy the social aspects of being part of a work group.

Lifestyle employment seekers

Lifestyle employment seekers are also highly motivated to work because they need or want the emotional benefits they associate with working.

Unlike paid employment seekers, lifestyle employment seekers do not need paid employment to satisfy their financial needs. They are comfortable living on the income that they receive from other sources, such as investments or support from a partner.

Not needing to work for financial reasons allows lifestyle employment seekers the luxury of looking for work that suits their interests and values. They are more likely to be involved in the voluntary sector doing community work and working for charities, or they may choose low paying, part-time or casual work in areas of personal interest such as in the arts, culture and recreation.

This segment is illustrated by the following case studies:

Fred and Angela have never been without work per se, although this has not always been in paid employment.

Fred is a NZ European male in his late sixties who lives in Nelson. He is a builder by trade and, after 20 years of owner-operation, was well set up. He had a heart attack and decided to sell up. Fred is well able to support himself and his wife off their savings. He has worked all his life and believes he's still got a lot to offer. He still has his contacts around town and picks and chooses where and how he can help out. Fred doesn't do it for the money. He loves his work, and believes that being active and stimulated keeps him alive.

Angela is a NZ European woman in her early sixties living in an urban centre. She is semi-retired and lives off her late husband's estate. Angela has been very involved in voluntary work because she enjoys helping others and doing something that makes a difference. She would do paid work, too, if she found something that suited her interest in the art world. Angela often looks after her grandchildren. This wouldn't stop her from working, though. If she were to get a job she wanted, she'd simply say she couldn't help out when she was working.

Motivated segments and the subgroups

Given the small sample and the qualitative nature of the research, it is not possible to comment with confidence on the relationship between these motivated segments and the subgroups of interest identified in the Stage 2 survey. However, given that the Stage 2 survey found that 19 percent of the representative sample of mature non-participants had looked for paid employment in the last six months, it is likely that these two segments account for a relatively small proportion of mature non-participants.

Based on the results of the survey, it is also likely that people in the motivated segments will have the following characteristics:
- Male: The survey found that men (25 percent) were more likely than women (15 percent) to be looking for paid employment.
- Aged 45 to 54 years old: Mature non-participants in this age group were significantly more likely than the sample as a whole to have looked for work in the last six months (50 percent). Those aged 65 years and older were significantly less likely to have done so (7 percent).
- Fired, laid off, or made redundant: The survey found that mature non-participants who had looked for work were significantly more likely than the sample as a whole to report they had been fired, laid off, or made redundant (21 percent).
- Higher educational qualifications: The survey found that mature non-participants who had not retired and who had looked for work in the six months prior to the survey were likely to have higher education qualifications.
  - Fifty-six percent had qualifications beyond secondary school, compared to 34 percent of non-retired respondents who had not looked for work.
- Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples: The survey found that Māori (27 percent), Pacific peoples (27 percent) and Asian peoples (30 percent) had looked for work in the six months prior to the survey. This compared with 14 percent of NZ European/Others.

3.3.2. Less motivated segments

Mature non-participants who are less motivated to participate in paid employment include those whose interest is driven only by the financial benefits associated with paid employment (ambivalent employment seekers), and those whose interest is not currently driven by either the emotional or financial benefits associated with paid employment (future employment seekers). The emotional

wellbeing of both these segments is not satisfied by participation in paid work, but by participation in other activities (Figure 6).

Figure 6: The less motivated segments' relationship with the fundamental drivers
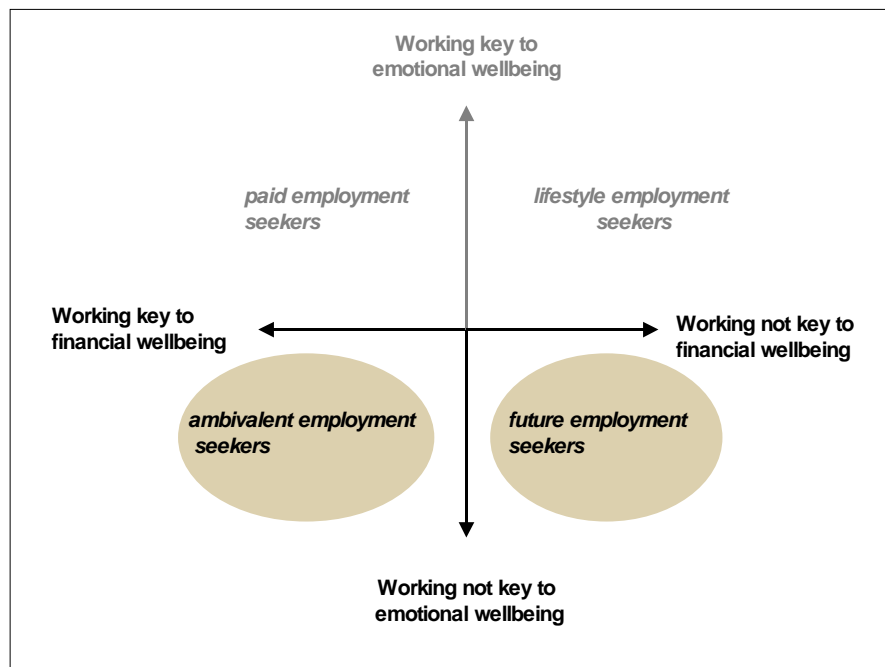
Ambivalent employment seekers

This segment's interest in participating in paid employment is purely and simply driven by the financial benefits of doing so. Unlike the more motivated segments, the paid employment seekers and lifestyle employment seekers, ambivalent employment seekers are not driven by the emotional benefits associated with participation in the workforce. In fact, given that these needs are satisfied through involvement in other activities, working may be regarded as getting in the way of those activities.

Interest in entering/re-entering the workforce is determined by whether or not ambivalent employment seekers have income from other sources, such as government benefits or retirement funds, and how well this income meets their financial needs. Given their ambivalence about working, mature non-participants in this segment may simply 'make do' with their income from other sources and/or supplement this periodically with paid work to pay for extras or to make big purchases.

This segment is illustrated by the following case studies:

> *Although dissatisfied with their financial situation, Joanne and John are not actively job seeking.*
>
> *Joanne is a NZ European in her fifties living in an urban area. She ideally wants more money coming in, but has no real desire to*

work, as she enjoys having free time to indulge in her non-work activities. Joanne also believes that her carer responsibilities looking after her extended family's needs are important, as they keep her active and stimulated and make her feel important. Although she is happy not working, if a job paid well and fitted around her other activities, Joanne might be tempted, as it would mean she could have more money to do what she wants.

John is a Māori male in his late forties living in a rural area. He stopped work at the local freezing works because he started to lose his sight. He has been on a benefit ever since. John keeps busy around the garden, looking after the children and fishing with his mates. Although he wouldn't mind a bit more cash, travelling to work would be a hassle as there aren't many jobs in the area, and he wouldn't have as much time or energy to socialise or look after his grandchildren.

Future employment seekers

The financial and emotional needs and wants of future employment seekers are currently satisfied through other sources. They may be financially supported by a sickness benefit and actively involved in further education, or they may be a carer supported by their partner. As such, they have no interest in entering/re-entering the work force at present, although they acknowledge that their interest may change in the future, for example, when their health improves, or they are no longer required as a carer. (Mature non-participants who identified themselves as having absolutely no interest in participating in paid employment were excluded from this stage of the research.)

This segment is illustrated by the following case studies:

Although they know they will need to re-enter the workforce in the foreseeable future, neither George nor Mike are motivated to do anything about it now.

George is a Māori male in his forties living in an urban area. He looks after his daughter and plans to find work once she goes to school next year. At the moment, he's enjoying being a full-time parent, but once she's at school, he'll need to find something to do with himself, and will welcome the extra dollars.

Mike is a NZ European in his forties living in a provincial area. He is currently on a sickness benefit. He isn't interested in working at the moment, because his benefit is enough to live on and he is enjoying spending time with close family. Mike will be driven to seek work once he recovers from his illness.

Again, given the small sample and the qualitative nature of the research, it is not possible to comment with confidence on the relationship between the less motivated segments and the subgroups of interest identified in the Stage 2

survey. However, based on the survey which found that 81% of the representative sample of mature non-participants had not looked for paid employment in the last six months, these segments are likely to be substantial in size. The survey results suggest that people in these segments are likely to have the following characteristics:

- Left paid employment because of personal or life situation issues: Mature non-participants who had not looked for paid employment were significantly more likely to have left the workforce because of their personal or life situation. They cited personal health reasons or a disability (28 percent), or the need to look after a partner, child or other person (14 percent).
    - o Māori and Pacific peoples were significantly more likely to report that a personal health reason or a disability made it difficult for them to re-enter the paid workforce.
- Caring for children: The survey found that people who had not looked for paid employment in the six months prior to the survey were more likely to say they were caring for children (or some other person, in the case of Pacific peoples).
    - o Carers, as a group, were more likely than non-carers to be younger (45 - 54 years), women, and Māori, Pacific or Asian peoples.
- Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples: Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples reported a greater number of job skill or workplace barriers to entering/re-entering paid employment than NZ European/Others.
    - o Pacific peoples identified a significantly greater number of issues overall (both job skill related and personal or life situation related) than those in other ethnic groups.
- Lower educational qualifications: Educational qualifications could also play a significant role in whether people were looking for paid employment:
    - o Māori and Pacific peoples were significantly more likely to say that they had no school qualifications (39 percent and 47 percent respectively) than NZ European/Others (25 percent) and Asian peoples (8 percent).
    - o Pacific peoples were also significantly less likely to have a qualification beyond secondary school (24 percent), compared to NZ Europeans/Others (46 percent) and Māori (43 percent).
- Female: In general, the survey found that women experience a greater number of barriers to re-entering the workforce than men do and were, therefore, less likely than men to have looked for paid employment in the six months prior to the survey:
    - o On average, women identified 3.4 job skill or workplace issues and 2.4 personal or life situation issues, whereas men reported 3.1 and 2.0 respectively.
    - o Women were also significantly more likely to identify the following job skill or work place issues and personal or life situation issues than men:
        - Having the right types of skills that employers are looking for (identified by 55 percent of women, compared with 43 percent of men).

- Employers believe older workers will not pick up job skills quickly enough (48 percent, compared with 41 percent).
- Being under qualified for the jobs available (46 percent, compared with 32 percent).
- Lack of work experience (35 percent, compared with 21 percent).
- Difficulties getting transport to work (22 percent, compared with 15 percent).
- Having less time with family, friends and whänau (49 percent, compared with 31 percent).

3.4. Summary

The Stage 2 survey found that a small, but not insignificant, proportion of mature non-participants were interested in entering/re-entering the workforce. The qualitative research identified two fundamental drivers that accounted for their motivation to return to paid employment. These were the importance of paid employment in satisfying their emotional and financial wellbeing.

This suggests that, while demographic characteristics may, in part, be used to target motivated people, these characteristics in themselves will not account for their behaviour.

4. UNDERSTANDING RESPONSES TO THE INHIBITORS TO ENTERING/RE-ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

The Stage 2 survey measured the relative importance of a number of inhibitors to workforce participation. These were personal or life situation issues, job skill and workplace issues, and CIAG issues. This stage of the research investigated these inhibitors further, and the results are presented in this chapter.

The chapter also discusses why mature non-participants respond differently to these inhibitors, depending on the segment they are in, and relates the issues that particularly affect the subgroups of interest identified by the survey.

4.1. Key points

Potential inhibitors to re-entering the workforce include:
- personal or life situation related issues
- job skill related issues
- CIAG service related issues.

Mature non-participants respond differently to these inhibitors, depending on their motivation to re-enter the workforce.

Those in the motivated segments, the paid employment and lifestyle employment seekers, see these issues as obstacles to overcome; those in less motivated segments, the ambivalent employment and future employment seekers, see them as barriers which inhibit their involvement in paid employment.

4.2. The relationship between the inhibitors and the motivation to work

The Stage 2 survey identified a number of personal or life situation concerns, job skill issues and CIAG issues that inhibited mature non-participants from entering/re-entering the workforce. The qualitative interviews showed that mature non-participants' responses to these issues depended on their motivation to participate in paid employment.

Those who were highly motivated by the fundamental drivers associated with paid employment, the paid employment seekers and lifestyle employment seekers, were also motivated to overcome potential inhibitors to entering/re-entering the workforce. They considered them as obstacles, rather than barriers, to their involvement in the workforce.

People in the motivated segments were likely to have been out of the workforce for shorter periods of time than people in the less motivated segments. They were also more likely to identify fewer potential inhibitors to re-entering the workforce.

In contrast, those who were less motivated, the ambivalent employment seekers and future employment seekers, were more likely to regard potential inhibitors as barriers to participating in paid employment.

They were more likely to have been out of work for a significant period of time and to identify a greater number of potential inhibitors relevant to their situation and circumstances. The combination of these factors reinforced their reticence to enter/re-enter the workforce.

4.3. Personal or life situation issues

The Stage 2 survey identified two key personal and life situation issues that inhibited some mature non-participants from entering/re-entering the workforce. These were non-injury related disabilities or health issues, and carer responsibilities. The survey results relating to these issues are summarised below.

4.4. The Stage 2 survey findings

The Stage 2 survey found that the majority of mature non-participants faced personal or life situation barriers that might make it difficult for them to take up paid employment. Only 11 percent of those surveyed reported not having any such issues.

Personal or life situation issues most frequently identified were:
- having a personal health issue or a disability (64 percent of those not actively looking to enter/re-enter the workforce, compared with 41 percent of those who were looking for work)
- having carer responsibilities for children (26 percent, compared with 19 percent)
- having carer responsibilities for a partner/parent or disabled person (29 percent, compared with 18 percent).

4.4.1. Non-injury related disability/health issues

Non-injury personal health issues or a disability were frequently identified in the Stage 2 survey as factors that made it difficult for some mature non-participants to enter/re-enter the workforce. These issues were investigated further in the qualitative stage of the research.

For the most part, these qualitative results support the findings of the Stage 2 survey. The qualitative research also found that non-injury related disabilities/health issues that inhibited individuals from working varied widely in terms of their severity and longevity. The respondents interviewed reported heart problems, short-term and degenerative sight related problems, clinical depression and a degenerative muscular disorder. They had been offered neither alternative duties nor alternative working times or conditions by their former employers.

> *They couldn't offer me any other work, because it's a small place.*

> *I had to quit, because of the pain getting worse. There wasn't anything they could do to help [no alternative duties] because there's not much else I could do [but manual labour].*

> *I wouldn't expect them to find me work other than what I was doing, as that's what I'm skilled for. I'm not going to want to sit in*

> *the office or anything else. I can't see that that would be helping*
> *things, so I just left.*

The qualitative research also found that the two fundamental drivers defined earlier were the key determinant of mature non-participants' interest in entering/re-entering the workforce, rather than the severity of their disability/health issue. This explains why some of those with more serious health issues were actively job seeking, while others with relatively minor problems were not.

Those in the more motivated segments, the paid employment and lifestyle employment seekers, were more likely to be looking for work that accommodated their health and disability issues, such as work with flexible hours, or employers and work environments that were supportive, or to retrain if it was not possible to resume work in their original occupation.

> *The doctor has said I can't work because it will put pressure on my*
> *heart. But I'm not one to sit home alone in front of the telly. I'm*
> *out there busying myself, looking for work that will suit what I can*
> *handle now.*

The less motivated groups, the ambivalent employment and future employment seekers, were more likely to consider that their disability/health issues made it difficult for them to work, although, with the right support, they might be able to do so.

4.4.2. Carer responsibilities

In the Stage 2 survey, carer responsibilities were the other frequently identified personal or life situation issue that made it difficult for some mature non-participants to enter/re-enter the workforce.

Respondents who were interviewed for the qualitative research and had full- or part-time carer responsibilities included those caring for their children, grandchildren, partners or parents. Most were women.

The interviews indicate that carer responsibilities are different from the other issues that may inhibit people from entering/re-entering the workforce, as caring is important to the emotional wellbeing of some mature non-participants. Its impact depends on the relative importance of caring versus paid employment in satisfying mature non-participants' emotional wellbeing, and also whether participation in paid work is key to satisfying their financial wellbeing.

Paid employment seekers who strongly associate work with their emotional and financial wellbeing will look for alternative caring arrangements to allow them to participate in the workforce.

In contrast, future employment seekers, who do not need to work for financial reasons and who value the emotional benefits associated with caring, will remain out of work for as long as caring remains their priority.

There's no one better than me to look after my mother. And it's the last time I'll spend with her.

Like paid employment seekers, lifestyle employment seekers and ambivalent employment seekers, who value the benefits they associate with both paid work and caring, will look for flexible work arrangements, such as part-time or casual work, or working from home.

I am looking for something that I can work around looking after my mother. There are jobs out there that are flexible like that, so I'll find something that suits.

I'm looking for someone to look after the kids after school once I get a job.

4.5. Job skill and workplace issues

In addition to personal and life situation issues, the Stage 2 survey identified a number of job skill and workplace issues that inhibited some mature non-participants from re-entering the workforce.

These issues are summarised below and were further investigated in Stage 3 of the research. The results in relation to lack of relevant job skills, access to training and perceptions or experiences of ageism are reported here. Issues specifically relating to CIAG are discussed in Section 4.4. For the most part, the results support the findings of the Stage 2 survey.

4.6. The Stage 2 survey findings

The Stage 2 survey found that the majority of mature non-participants faced job skill or workplace issues that made it difficult for them to take up paid employment. Only 11 percent of those surveyed reported not having any such issues.

- The job skill or workplace issues most frequently reported as making it difficult to return to work were:
  - having the right types of skills that employers are looking for (identified as an issue by 50 percent of those surveyed)
  - employers believing that older workers will not pick up the skills for the job quickly enough (45 percent)
  - being under-qualified for the jobs available (40 percent)
  - the cost of training or studying for new skills (40 percent)
  - lack of work experience (30 percent)
  - having access to training to gain new skills (27 percent).
- As noted previously, there was a significant relationship between respondents' highest educational qualification and whether or not they were more likely to identify specific job skill related issues. The largest gap was between those with no school examinations and those who had achieved a qualification beyond secondary school.
- Thirty percent of the respondents reported that they had undertaken job skill training or education to enter/re-enter the workforce, with those who

had been looking for work (within the last six months) being more likely to report this (45 percent) than those who were not looking (29 percent).

- While gender was not a factor in undertaking job skill training, age and ethnicity were. Younger respondents aged 45 to 54 were significantly more likely to have undertaken training than older cohorts, as were Māori (37 percent) and NZ European/Others (30 percent), while Pacific peoples had the lowest rate of undertaking job skill training (18 percent).
- The higher the education level of the respondent, the more likely they were to report that they had undertaken training at some time.
- One quarter of those who had undertaken job skill training reported having difficulties doing so. Māori (40 percent) were more likely to report this than NZ European/Others (23 percent). Among those who reported having difficulties, the most frequently reported were:
    - education or training issues (reported by 7 percent of all who undertook job skill training)
    - the cost of training (5 percent)
    - disability/health issues or access/transportation issues (both 4 percent)
    - being too busy or having to use computers (both 3 percent).

4.6.1.   *Lack of relevant job skills and access to training*

Some respondents in the qualitative research identified not having relevant job skills and/or access to training or education as inhibitors to them entering/re-entering the workforce. They attributed their lack of relevant job skills to:

- being out of work for a significant period, which made their skills out of date, redundant, or rusty
- having a disability or health issue that meant that they could not resume work in their previous role or industry
- being under- or over-qualified for the jobs that they wanted and/or jobs not being available in the places they were interested or prepared to look in.

Respondents in the motivated segments, the paid employment and lifestyle employment seekers, were more likely to overcome these job skill related inhibitors by seeking training or by retraining, and/or by being prepared to travel or move to a new location. They overcame transport related issues by using public transport, if available, or car-pooling.

Once I got a bit better, I started doing retraining courses through WINZ [Work and Income], so I'm looking for jobs in different areas now.

In the area I live, there aren't many jobs. But if I don't find something around here soon, I'll be catching the train to Wellington. More jobs there. It'll take longer in the day, and cost for transport, but it's also probably better paid.

I have been lucky enough to get my HT licence through WINZ [Work and Income], and they found some opportunities for me to get some [unpaid] job experience, so I can show them I have the

experience. There's no point doing courses, unless you can back it up with on-the-job experience. Even if you're not paid, it'll pay off in the long run when you get the job.

In contrast, those in the less motivated segments, the ambivalent employment and future employment seekers, were more likely to see job skill and training issues as barriers to their return to the workforce. They were less interested in overcoming these barriers and were more likely to identify issues associated with access to jobs and training, such as:

- where and how to access further training and education
- costs associated with training
- lack of relevant jobs in the local area
- access to and costs of transport to travel to work or training.

I got made redundant because of the changes [in the industry], so there's no point looking for work in that. I don't really know what I could do, so I haven't looked for work.

I don't know computers, and that's the main thing now, so I'd be on the back foot anywhere.

I wouldn't know what training I need … I suppose computers, but I don't know who provides it, and it's probably quite costly.

The qualitative research suggests that issues relating to access to jobs and training are more prevalent among mature non-participants in rural or provincial areas, where there are fewer jobs or training options, greater distances to travel and no or limited public transport.

4.6.2.   Perceptions/experiences of ageism

Ageism was identified in the Stage 2 survey as an issue that might inhibit some mature non-participants from entering/re-entering the workforce.

The qualitative research found that, while some mature non-participants had experienced ageism personally, others believed that it existed based on hearsay. Regardless of whether ageism was perceived or experienced, it could act as a real inhibitor. Respondents had experienced or believed the following:

- The physical and mental changes associated with ageing, such as lower energy levels, physical strength/stamina and mental agility, affected their ability to perform optimally or carry out a full-time job. These issues were more relevant to some occupations and positions than others, for example, jobs requiring speed and strength.
- Job-seeking agencies are primarily interested in younger job seekers. Experiences included being told by recruitment agents that they would have limited chance of success in applying for jobs because of their age. The youthfulness of the staff and other job applicants in these agencies left some mature non-participants feeling out of place and uncomfortable.

One of the employment companies I went to, I was treated like dirt! I was interviewed by a girl who couldn't have been more than 21. She looked down her nose at me all the time she was talking to me. She talked to me like I was an idiot… as if I had Alzheimer's… forget it!

- Employers prefer younger employees. Examples included:
  - employers raising age-related concerns at interviews, including raising concerns about the imminence of retirement, questioning applicants' willingness to adapt to a new work environment, and questioning their willingness to answer to younger management
  - believing and/or being told that they would not fit the culture or 'look' of the organisation because of their age
  - being repeatedly unsuccessful with job applications.

It is harder to get a job when you're my age, because they think the younger ones are smarter, because they can use computers.

As with job skills and training issues, respondents responded in different ways to perceptions or experiences of ageism. Individuals in the motivated segments, the paid employment seekers and lifestyle employment seekers, were more likely to reject ageist attitudes as myths or misconceptions, rather than take them on board as real barriers. They were more likely to believe that their maturity was an asset to the work environment.

I think it's gone full circle. Employers are looking for mature people now because they want the experience. They've been through the young person scenario, where they stay five minutes and don't learn the job anyway. Now they realise it's better to pay a little more, get the experience and a person who's got a work ethic.

I'm confident to sell myself. Even if they [potential employers] are looking for the young ones… But they [younger job seekers] don't have my life experience. So that's what I tell them [potential employers], and it gets their interest I think.

Those in the motivated segments were also likely to respond positively to the physical and mental changes associated with ageing by seeking work and a work environment that suited them better. Examples were working reduced hours, or in less challenging positions than they previously occupied.

I wouldn't want to work full-time at my age. I don't think I'd be able to keep up with the others in the work. So I'm looking for something more flexible, with shorter hours.

I wouldn't want a management position at my age. I'd rather have something more low-key, or something that I could mentor the younger ones in.

However, those less motivated to enter/re-enter the workforce, the future employment seekers and ambivalent employment seekers, were more likely to believe ageism was a real barrier to entering/re-entering the workforce. This was especially true for those who had been out of employment for some time.

> *I wouldn't stand a show … I am too old, and they wouldn't be interested. You look around the office, and there's no one over 35, so you might as well leave.*

> *I just knew from his attitude, he just wasn't interested in me, because of my age. I just wasn't the right 'fit'. They [staff] are all 30 something, or 20 something, and I would be out of place. It's all pretty much like that out there from what I've seen and what they've told me, so really, what's the point?*

4.7.　Career information, advice and guidance issues

The Stage 2 survey revealed that a lack of job-seeking knowledge was another key inhibitor to entering/re-entering the workforce. The survey results relating to these issues are summarised below.

4.8.　The Stage 2 survey findings

Most (71 percent) mature non-participants had been out of the workforce for three years or more, with 38 percent not having worked for 10 or more years. Fourteen percent had been out of the workforce for less than one year, and 13 percent for one to two years.

As reported earlier, 19 percent claimed they had looked for paid employment in the six months prior to the survey and, of these, 70 percent had engaged in at least one of the job-seeking activities covered in the survey. The most frequently reported job-seeking activities were:
- checking the job advertisements in the newspaper (63 percent)
- looking for work through friends, family and other contacts (41 percent)
- applying for jobs (39 percent)
- sending out CVs (27 percent)
- searching the Internet (25 percent)
- contacting or registering with Work and Income (23 percent).

Against this background, 23 percent of respondents interviewed for the Stage 2 survey said they would not know where to go for CIAG if they wanted information to assist them to find paid employment:
- The main information source respondents mentioned was Work and Income (reported by 21 percent of those surveyed). Other frequently mentioned sources were a career advisor, employment consultant or company (13 percent), or friends and family (13 percent).
- Younger respondents were significantly more likely to seek advice from friends and family, a career advisor or employment consultants than older respondents.
- Those looking for work were significantly more likely to mention Work and Income or friends and family than those not currently seeking work.

These were investigated further in the qualitative stage of the research. For the most part, the results were similar to those of the Stage 2 survey.

4.8.1. Job-seeking knowledge and experience

While the Stage 2 survey found that a lack of job-seeking knowledge is a key inhibitor, Stage 3 indicated that knowing how to gain job-seeking assistance is related to how motivated mature non-participants are to re-enter the workforce, and how recently they have looked for work. This finding is important, given that, in the Stage 2 survey, many mature non-participants had been out of the workforce for a long time.

Those in the more motivated segments, the paid employment seekers and lifestyle employment seekers, were more likely to be up to date with the job seeking process. Given that they were more likely to be actively looking for work, they were also more familiar with, and more confident about, the process of job hunting. Most knew where to look for jobs, for example, in newspapers and on the Internet, how to 'sell' themselves to a potential employer, how to create a CV and where to go for CIAG services.

> *I'm looking in the right places and haven't found anything yet that suits, but I've been getting good feedback and I feel confident I'll get something soon.*
>
> *I have my CV together and I think it looks pretty good. I've been to an employment agency to get help with this and they seem quite positive.*
>
> *I've never had a CV, so I went to a place that advertised that they help with these. It wasn't such a big deal really.*

Some respondents in the more motivated segments had sought help from agencies offering CIAG services. These included Career Services, recruitment agencies generally, employment agencies targeting mature job seekers, and Work and Income. All found these services to be less than satisfactory.

- Career Services, recruitment agencies generally: Mature non-participants experienced or perceived these services as being geared towards the needs of younger job seekers. This made some mature non-participants feel uncomfortable, and inhibited others from seeking these services at all.

  > *I went into a job-searching place here as they advertised that they help write CVs, but the place was crowded with school leavers … it was quite off-putting. I got my CV done and quickly left … they probably offered other things, but I didn't feel comfortable. It really wasn't for me!*

- Employment agencies targeting mature job seekers: Mature non-participants who had accessed these services were attracted to them because they believed the agencies would be better able to meet their

needs. Although they felt comfortable dealing with agency personnel, the service provided was limited because staff appeared to lack CIAG expertise - one was run on a voluntary basis - and they had very little to offer in the way of job opportunities.

I went to a place here that was advertised for mature adults to help get work. They were very friendly but they couldn't offer much because they didn't have much on their books. Bit of a waste of time, really.

The mature place I went to worked on donations and voluntary help. I don't think they're operating anymore.

- Work and Income: Recipients of government benefits who sought help from Work and Income valued the training they offered, such as computer courses. Some respondents had sought assistance from Work and Income only to discover that they were not eligible for help because they were not receiving a government benefit.

I went into WINZ [Work and Income] to look at their jobs they had available, but because I can't get a benefit [yet] I wasn't allowed to contact the ones they had.

The interviews also revealed that those who were less motivated to seek employment, the ambivalent employment and future employment seekers, were more likely to have been out of work for longer, and/or to have limited job-seeking knowledge and experience. They were also less likely to be aware of what CIAG assistance is available and where to find it.

I wouldn't know where to start … get a CV together, what would I say? Housewife for ten years? How should I present myself? I've been out of work for so long that I have no idea what I could do. I wouldn't know what I could offer … what skills do I have? I know, but how would they help an employer? I could tell them I can do this or that, but where's the proof? Because I don't have any recent jobs to say that I can do it.

I feel that I'm really out of touch with the job market. If you're out of touch, you feel less confident, and you don't know where to start looking.

4.9. Summary

The Stage 2 survey measured the relative importance of three different types of issues in inhibiting workforce participation: personal or life situation issues, such as non-injury related disabilities/health issues and carer responsibilities, job skill and workplace issues, such as access to training and ageism, and CIAG issues.

The qualitative research found that mature non-participants who were motivated to enter/re-enter paid employment because of its relative importance to their

emotional and/or financial wellbeing would work to overcome these impediments or adapt their situation in order to join the workforce.

Other non-mature participants might experience the same challenges, but because they were not motivated to enter/return to paid employment, they saw them as insurmountable barriers.

This indicates that mature non-participants will regard initiatives such as CIAG differently depending on their level of motivation to join the workforce.

5. INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF MATURE NON-PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKFORCE

This chapter discusses the type of CIAG service that will best help mature non-participants who wish to work to do so. It is based on feedback from respondents who were interviewed for Stage 3 of the research. The chapter also discusses how to stimulate less motivated mature non-participants' interest in re-entering the workforce.

5.1. Key points

Respondents were asked to imagine a CIAG service specifically developed to meet the needs of mature non-participants. Respondents expected to access the service through different forms and channels at different points in the CIAG cycle, and to have:
- at least one face-to-face consultation at the outset to provide a needs-based assessment, and preliminary guidance and advice
- ongoing communication with the CIAG service by telephone or email
- CIAG related information provided via the Internet, supported by access to computers and hands on support at the CIAG service premises. A 'how to' guide and 0800 help line would provide support for those accessing this elsewhere, such as from home.

An ideal CIAG service would also include:
- mature, empathetic consultants who are CIAG experts
- a local community presence to facilitate easy face-to-face access, and to ensure that the CIAG service provides knowledge and information relevant to the local job market.

Respondents regarded the Department of Labour as the most suitable organisation to provide CIAG services targeted at mature non-participants.

In order to raise the level of interest of those in the less motivated segments to return to work, respondents imagined a targeted information programme promoting the benefits that paid employment could offer. This would have the added benefit of reinforcing the interest of those in the more motivated segments.

An understanding of any relevant issues employers may have regarding employing mature employees is a key information gap in this CIAG research.

5.2. Enabling those who want to work to do so

To assist those who wish to work, respondents imagined a CIAG service specifically designed to meet the needs of mature non-participants. They expected the service to address the job skill, workplace and CIAG issues discussed in the previous chapters. The service would also need to help mature non-participants to overcome relevant personal or life situation issues, such as non-injury related disability/health issues and carer responsibilities.

5.2.1.   The ideal CIAG service - positioning

Some of those actively job seeking were aware of and had accessed CIAG services, including Work and Income, recruitment agencies, and 'mature' job-seeking agencies. However, none of these services appears to have fully met their needs.

Whether they had experienced CIAG services or not, respondents agreed that the best CIAG service would specifically target their age group of people aged 45 or more. An all-age CIAG service would not suit them, because they saw such agencies as catering primarily for younger age groups.

> *I'd feel more comfortable in a place that had my age group there. The other places are all filled with 23 year olds, or are for school leavers. You know there's nothing there for you, they'd just laugh. But a place for mature people would give me more confidence that they could help put me on the right track.*

> *If I saw a place for a mature group, I'd be curious about what they had to offer. I'd check out how they could help me get work. Otherwise I'd feel out of place, because I'd be the only older one.*

> *It needs to be an age thing [targeted at mature people] … "We are here. Come in and feel happy to come in here. We aren't going to ask you a million questions you don't know anything about." Not a place full of teenagers looking for jobs.*

The ideal CIAG service would be described as a service for 'mature' job seekers. Respondents found other terms, such as 'older' and 'aged', less appealing and even derogatory, suggesting that they were 'past it'. The term 'mature', in contrast, had positive connotations, implying wisdom and experience.

5.2.2.   The ideal CIAG service - forms and channels

Respondents were asked specifically about the appropriateness of a CIAG service provided over the Internet, given the ubiquitous nature of technology and the assumed lower rates of use by mature people. Their responses showed that a totally Internet-based CIAG service did not appeal to most, and would prevent some from accessing the service. Mature non-participants wanted different forms of service and opportunities to connect at different points in the CIAG process.

An initial needs-based assessment

Given a choice, the mature non-participants interviewed for Stage 3 preferred the initial interface with a CIAG service to include at least one face-to-face consultation. This would help:
- reduce anxiety associated with job seeking
- provide a service tailored to their specific needs.

> *You can't beat face-to-face. You can read people, and you can't get that over a computer.*

Some older people have been out of the workforce for so long they would be frightened, unless it was, "Come in and see me," not over the phone or anything. They need the personal interaction to trust it.

Respondents imagined that the face-to-face consultation would involve an assessment of their particular situation and circumstances, and identify any issues they needed to resolve in order to enter/re-enter the workforce. It would provide preliminary guidance and advice based on their specific needs.

The level and focus of the service would be tailored to individual needs. Those having trouble overcoming personal or life situation issues would probably require more face-to-face assistance. Those with simpler needs thought that, following the initial face-to-face consultation, their ongoing communications with the CIAG service could be by telephone or email.

CIAG information provision

Most respondents agreed that the Internet is the logical source for information about CIAG, rather than providing the entire CIAG service. They envisaged a dedicated website providing:
- a job search database
- CV templates
- information about training options and support
- helpful tips on interview skills, dealing with ageism and other matters.

Those who did not have computer access or were not skilled in computer use thought that the web-based information service should be supported by:
- access to computers with hands-on support at the CIAG service's premises - those who were less confident in using computers were uncomfortable with the notion of accessing computers in other public venues, such as libraries and Internet cafés

  It would need to be, "We will do it together," not just send me off to use the computer. Like in the library, they're not user friendly, and there's no one to help, they're too busy, so I don't bother.

- a 'how to' pamphlet with simple, user-friendly directions to help access and navigate the website
- an 0800 help line to provide support if they were having problems accessing or navigating the site, for example, from home.
  Just knowing there's support on the sidelines would be enough, if you got stuck with the computer.

5.2.3.   The ideal CIAG service - the consultants

Respondents who were interviewed for Stage 3 believed that the personal attributes of CIAG consultants were pivotal to the success of the CIAG service if it was to meet their needs. They identified two most important qualities:
- Age: Mature non-participants imagined a CIAG service that was exclusively staffed by consultants aged 45 or more. The presence of

mature staff would help confirm that the service specialised in understanding and meeting the employment related needs of mature non-participants. Respondents believed they would be able to relate better to someone in a similar age group. They assumed mature staff would have a better understanding of their situation and circumstances.

It needs to be manned by someone mature. I think that's more important than anything else. It doesn't matter if it's a man or woman, or if they're Māori, or not.

It would depend on the people they got to run it. You would want someone in their 40s who would empathise with you.

It needs to be an uplifting person to build up your morale, help you with confidence and self-esteem. Someone empathetic, who knows what it's like. Someone you can relate to.

- CIAG expertise: Respondents perceived the consultants as being CIAG experts, knowledgeable about the issues mature non-participants might face in re-entering the workforce and how to help them overcome these.

Some place to go where they could help you explore the options. Maybe you're looking for the wrong thing. Someone to help guide you.

Just knowing you could go and talk to someone, and they'd know what you're talking about would be great.

They need to know what they're doing, to help you in the right ways. Otherwise it's a waste of my time.

Respondents with English as a second language thought the service needed to provide interpreters or consultants fluent in Asian, Pacific and other languages. This was the only issue that respondents identified as specifically relevant to ethnicity.

5.2.4. The ideal CIAG service – the physical location

Some respondents thought the physical location of the CIAG service was also important. They considered the ideal was a presence in the local community because this would facilitate easy face-to-face access, and ensure that the service introduced them to jobs in the local market.

There's no point having this available only in the main centres, because they won't know what jobs are around here.

It needs to work in the community, so that it can point you in the right direction.

5.2.5. The ideal CIAG service – the service provider

None of the CIAG services that respondents had used had, in their opinion, provided an optimal service. Respondents identified the DoL as the most appropriate organisation to offer CIAG services to mature non-participants who wish to work. This was because:

- the DoL has a history as a job-searching agency - this is particularly relevant given the age group in question
- they considered it to be the DoL's role to improve employment services
- providing CIAG services through a government agency would mean that the service was free and, therefore, more accessible.

It's their job as government agency to promote employment.

It used to be the place to go to look for work, so they make sense promoting a job service.

Work and Income was the only other government agency mentioned as a possible service provider. However, some negativity is associated with Work and Income, and respondents questioned whether they would use a service offered by Work and Income.

Some people referred to a stand-alone agency supported by the larger government agencies, but branded differently. Respondents gave ACC and Workbridge as comparisons.

Finally, some respondents suggested that a private organisation might offer the CIAG service, but they did not favour this because they expected that the service would attract a fee.

5.3. Increasing interest in entering/re-entering the workforce

While a well-designed CIAG service is likely to attract and help those who want to work, on its own, it is unlikely to have an impact on mature non-participants in the less motivated segments given their lack of interest in entering/re-entering the workforce.

In order to increase workforce participation among those who are currently uninterested in entering/re-entering the workforce, respondents envisaged a well-executed and targeted information programme promoting the benefits that paid employment can offer. This would have the added benefit of reinforcing the interest of those in the more motivated segments.

Key messages

Respondents envisaged that the programme would promote paid employment as a satisfying means of achieving financial and emotional wellbeing. Its key messages would be:

- the financial benefits of working - more money to satisfy needs and wants
- the emotional benefits of working, including:
- enhanced self-esteem - having a purpose and a sense of achievement
- a social network and social life

- an opportunity to contribute to society and the economy
- mental and physical stimulation.

Respondents suggested that a case study approach would be an effective way to present success stories of mature New Zealanders enjoying the benefits of working.

The programme would also need to address issues associated with ageism. Respondents thought this could be achieved by promoting the benefits of a mature workforce, such as their wealth of work and life experience. It could also emphasise other qualities of maturity, such as consistency and reliability.

Suggestions for addressing personal and life situation issues that inhibit mature non-participants from working included showing mature people with disabilities and carer responsibilities enjoying a satisfying working life.

Creative approach and channels

Respondents imagined the key messages could be promoted effectively through a range of creative approaches and channels. These included:
- television and local radio stations, as these have wide coverage
- print media, especially community and local newspapers and in magazines that are widely read by this audience
- promotions that might gain the attention of mature non-participants if they are placed in the employment section of newspapers, Internet job sites and other media specific to employment
- other channels that might attract the attention of mature non-participants, including:
  - community notice boards in libraries, supermarkets, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and community and social organisations, such as clubs, sports groups, churches, and cultural groups
  - organisations that target mature New Zealanders, such as Grey Power.

5.4. Summary

The qualitative research indicates that mature non-participants who are motivated to enter/re-enter paid employment have a clear vision of the supporting services that government should provide to help this process. First and foremost, they envisage a dedicated service for their age group and situation, provided free by the Department of Labour or, possibly, by an agency affiliated to the Department. They expect that it would be a consultative service, as well as an informational one. Such a service has implications for staffing and resourcing.

The existence of this service would probably be of little interest to mature non-participants who are not motivated to enter/re-enter paid employment. They would probably not be even aware of its existence. Given the size of this group and the potential that lies within it, an information programme designed to modify their attitudes to the workforce might be justified. This would have the added benefit of reinforcing the interest of those who are more motivated.

5.5. Information gaps

The success of any dedicated CIAG service and associated information programme depends on employers' willingness to employ mature workers. Understanding the issues employers may have in employing mature workers is a key information gap identified through this research.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1. Overview

As noted in the introduction of this report, the research the DoL commissioned Research New Zealand to complete comprised three inter-related stages. The literature review (Stage 1) informed, in part, the design of the representative survey of mature non-participants (Stage 2), as well as providing important contextual information. The second stage identified a number of subgroups in the population of interest, and it was the intention of the third and more qualitative stage of the research to examine and investigate these subgroups in greater depth.

It is important to note that qualitative research focuses more on gaining an understanding, rather than on measurement. It is for this reason that the interviewing is typically undertaken on an unstructured basis, either as group discussions or individual interviews. The samples for most qualitative projects are also relatively small and this, again, reflects the emphasis placed on understanding. In fact, the number of respondents is of relatively less importance than how they have been selected to represent any subgroups of interest.

6.2. The sample

For Stage 3 of the research, individual face-to-face interviews were completed with a carefully selected sample of 24 mature non-participants. The sample was developed in consultation with the DoL to represent the subgroups of interest identified in the Stage 2 survey. These were:
  - people with non-injury related health and disability issues
  - people with carer responsibilities
  - māori and Pacific peoples
  - people from rural areas
  - women.

Mature non-participants who considered themselves retired at the time of the research were excluded.

6.3. Recruitment criteria

Reflecting the findings of the Stage 2 survey, the primary recruitment criterion for the sample was whether or not the respondent was or was not actively looking for paid employment. Those who were not actively looking were recruited on the basis that they might do so in the future:[3]
  - n=12 respondents actively looking for work.
  - n=12 respondents potentially looking (i.e. not actively looking at present).

Other criteria taken into consideration on a secondary basis:
  - Ethnicity:

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[3] The Stage 2 survey identified these two groups as the most likely and interested recipients of CIAG services. Those who identified themselves as having absolutely no interest in participating in paid employment were excluded from the research (i.e. those who are retired).

- o 8 Māori
- o 8 Pacific peoples, including New Zealand and Pacific-born people
- o 8 New Zealand Europeans and New Zealand residents from other ethnicities.
- Geographic location:
  - o 16 urban respondents - the urban sample was drawn from the greater Wellington area and included 4 Māori, 8 Pacific peoples and 4 New Zealand residents from other ethnicities.
  - o 8 rural/provincial respondents - the rural respondents included 4 Māori from rural Moerewa in Northland. This location was chosen because of the high density of Māori living in the area. The provincial respondents included 4 New Zealand Europeans and New Zealand residents from other ethnic backgrounds from Nelson. This location was included because the Department of Labour considered it important to include South Island representation in the sample.

In order to ensure that the final sample reflected the diversity of the population of mature non-participants and included those inhibited by non-injury related disability/health issues, respondents were also selected on the following basis:

- Age:
  - o 12 aged between 45–54 years
  - o 12 aged 55 years plus.
- Gender:
  - o 12 males
  - o 12 females.
- Main reason for not participating in paid employment:
  - o 8 respondents who identify their main reason for exiting the paid workforce as personal health reasons or a non-injury related disability.
  - o 8 respondents with carer responsibilities.

The sample from each geographic location and ethnic group included equal numbers of respondents from each of the two key age groups (4 respondents), equal numbers of males (4) and females (4), and between 2 and 3 respondents who said that their main reason for exiting the workforce was a non-injury related disability/health issue or carer responsibilities.

An overview of the sample is shown in the following table.

Table 1: Summary of sample structure

Ethnicity and location	Engagement with paid employment		
	Actively looking	Potentially looking	Total
Māori			
Rural (Northland)	n = 2	n = 2	**n = 4**
Urban (Wellington)	n = 2	n = 2	**n = 4**
	n = 4	**n = 4**	**n=8**
Pacific peoples			
Urban (Wellington)	n = 4	n = 4	**n = 8**
Rural[4]	-	-	**-**
	n = 4	**n = 4**	**n = 8**
NZ European/ Other			
Urban (Wellington)	n = 2	n = 2	**n = 4**
Provincial (Nelson)	n = 2	n = 2	**n = 4**
	n = 4	**n = 4**	**n = 8**
Total	**n = 12**	**n = 12**	**n = 24**

6.4. Recruitment

Respondents for this stage of the research were sourced from the respondent database for the Stage 2 survey and by using a network approach.

Half of the sample (12 respondents) was recruited by Research New Zealand's field team from a database of 100 respondents who had taken part in the Stage 2 survey and indicated that they would be interested in participating in further research.

The remaining 12 respondents were recruited using a network approach because of the limited numbers of these respondent types in the database. The network approach involved using known contacts within communities to identify appropriate respondents and to assist with recruitment. Respondents recruited by this means included the rural Māori sample from Northland, 6 respondents from the sample of Pacific peoples and 2 of the Nelson respondents.

6.5. The interviewing methodology

A qualitative research methodology was used to provide a depth and clarity of understanding, and supplement the breadth of information derived from the Stage 2 survey and the literature review (Stage 1).

Individual face-to-face interviews were used because of the diversity of the sample and because an individual approach is more appropriate when a greater depth of understanding is required. (Group discussions are better suited to homogenous groups of respondents).

The limitations of this stage of the research are inherent in the qualitative approach. That is, because of the small, albeit carefully selected, sample, it is not possible to determine the size or provide an accurate demographic profile of the

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[4] Given the small numbers of Pacific peoples living in any one rural location, the Pacific sample was drawn from an urban location only.

qualitative segments identified in this stage of the research, although the statistical information derived from the Stage 2 survey has been used to provide approximations.

The senior researchers responsible for this stage of the research conducted all the interviews. Mati Fryer (Te Atiawa, Ngati Raukawa and Cook Island) conducted all interviews with Māori and Pacific respondents. Jane Falloon interviewed all New Zealand Europeans and respondents of other ethnicities.

Interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and were conducted in Wellington (at Research New Zealand), Nelson (in respondents' homes) and Moerewa in Northland (in a community venue), between 6 and 21 June 2006.

6.6.   Cultural and ethical considerations

Research New Zealand abides by the Code of Practice of the Market Research Society of New Zealand that is, in turn, based on the Code of Practice of the European Society for Social, Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR). The guidelines inherent in the Code of Practice are principally to protect respondents' privacy and the confidentiality of the information they provide through the research process. They ensure that:

- the information obtained through the research process is not used for any purpose other than for the purposes of this research
- neither Research New Zealand nor respondents have any conflicts of interests in relation to the Department of Labour, or the research topic
- respondents understand the purpose of the research and are assured of their confidentiality under the Privacy Act
- all recordings (audio and video) and transcripts remain the property of Research New Zealand and are destroyed after a six-month period.

APPENDIX 1   QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Career information and guidance project – Stage 3 - PN#3328

INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSION GUIDE (# 3328)

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

Objectives

The revised objectives of Stage 3 are as follows:
- To provide greater clarity and depth of understanding of the drivers and inhibitors to labour force participation amongst different sub-groups.
  - To provide a better understanding of how specific barriers operate particularly ageist attitudes and disability issues.
- To identify the best forms and channels (i.e. information presentation and delivery) for providing career information advice and guidance that will likely have the greatest uptake, and why.
  - To identify accessible forms and channels.
  - To identify ways to optimise uptake among key subgroups.

Introduction (5 min)

- Introduce and explain Research New Zealand's role in the research (i.e. to help DOL understand what motivates and inhibits people 45 years plus from participating in the paid work force and to identify barriers that may be preventing them from entering or re-entering the paid workforce).
- Explain how respondents were selected to participate (viz. Research NZ survey database).
- Timing – approximately 90 min duration.
- Reassure confidentiality (i.e. our professional Code of Ethics), that their responses will be collectively reported, and confirm permission to tape (for analysis purposes, recorded information remains Research NZ's property and will only be used for the purposes of this research).

Background context (15 min)

Objective: To gather important contextual information in relation to the respondents' engagement with job seeking behaviour (e.g. interest in returning to work and confirmation of their current employment seeking status) and career services take-up/interest.

To start with, we would like to collect a little background information.

- Firstly, give me a brief overview of your work history.
  - When were you last in paid employment (for 3 weeks or more)?
  - What were you doing?
    - Role/Position?
    - Employer (Sector/Industry)?
    - Full time/part time?
  - Is this the type of work you were doing prior?
    - As relevant: How come you changed career?
  - How come you left?
    - Probe in particular the following:
      - Having a child/caring for dependents.
      - Dismissed/made redundant.
      - Health/disability issues.
    - Were you given any options?
      - If so, what information, services and/or assistance was offered (e.g. a different position in the organisation, retraining, etc.)?
  - What could have kept you working there?

- **Rating scale** - Rate your interest in returning to paid work as soon as possible (where 1 = no interest at all 10 = very keen).

- List the things that are stopping you from getting back to work (these will be discussed in detail later in the interview).

Probe in particular for the following reasons:
  - Caring for dependents.
  - Health/disability issues.
  - Shortage of jobs for my skills, in the local area.
  - Attitude of employers/others to employing older staff (ageism).
  - Training issues (access, cost, ability, etc.).
  - Skill-set out of date.
  - Don't know what's out there/what I could do.
  - Lack of confidence/out of practice.

- For each reason given probe for *perception vs. reality*: How come that is stopping you/making it difficult to find work (as relevant, have you personally experienced this, or do you just imagine this to be a problem)?
- What is the **main** reason for you not being in paid work?

Part A: Understanding the inhibitors and the benefits associated with participating in the paid workforce (45 min)

Objective: To understand the inhibitors and benefits important to participating in the paid workforce.

EXPECTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH RETURN TO WORK (25 min)

Returning to work (fantasy projection):

> *Imagine you are in the paid workforce. You have been working again for a week or two. The sort of job and workplace you're imaging is what you expect to find – not necessarily your ideal job or workplace. Take a moment to get a clear picture of how you would feel about your job, the workplace, your employer and your workmates. Imagine also how you and those close to you will feel about your return to work. (Give respondent time to get a clear picture in their minds eye)*

- Describe in detail what it is like.
    - Your work.
        - Type of work.
        - Your position.
    - Your employer.
    - Your workplace.
    - Your work mates.
- How would your life be different (i.e. working compared with your current situation of not working)?
    - (Motivations) What are all the things you **like/love** about being back at work?
        - What would you like/love the **most**?
    - (Barriers) What are all the things you **dislike/hate** about being back at work, including the things that make getting back into paid employment hard?
        - What do you dislike/hate the **most**?
- **Thought bubbles** – Ask R to fill in the thought and feelings bubbles about what they are thinking and feeling about being back at work.
- **Split screen picture** – Ask R to draw an image that sums up their feelings about working again versus how they feel in your current situation not working.
    - Discuss thought bubbles and drawing and identify the **strongest feelings and most dominant thoughts**.
- As appropriate – How would you being back at work impact others in your household?
    - How do you think they would they feel?
    - What would they think about your working?
- How would friends/family respond to your working?
- How could this become a reality? What would have changed to make this possible (probe re: response to previous section of barriers to working)?
    - Who/what would need to change/happen?
    - How would these things have changed?

o What/who would have been involved?

IDEAL WORK SCENARIO (15 min)

Ideal return to work (fantasy projection).

> *Now, as opposed to what you imagined returning to work would really be like, take some time to imagine your **ideal return to work scenario**. This time you are daydreaming that you have the ideal job, ideal workplace, etc. (Give respondent time to get a clear picture in their minds eye).*

Describe the ideal:

- Your work.
  - Type of work.
  - Your position.
    - o Your employer.
    - o Your workplace.
    - o Your work mates.
- How would your life be different:
  - o From now?
  - o Compared with your previous fantasy?
- Motivations vs. barriers:
  - o What are **all** the things you **like/love** about your ideal back at work scenario?
    - What do you like/love the **most**?
  - o What, if anything, are **all** the things you **dislike/hate** about your ideal back at work scenario?
    - What do you dislike/hate the **most**?
  - o How does this compare with what you expect returning to work to be like (i.e. your previous fantasy)?
- **Thought bubbles** – Ask R to fill in the thought and feelings bubbles about what they are thinking and feeling about being back at work in their ideal back to work fantasy?
- **Picture** - Draw a picture of how you would be feeling.
  - o Discuss thought bubbles and drawing and identify the **strongest feelings and most dominant thoughts**.
    - How does this compare with what you were thinking and feeling in your previous daydream?
- As appropriate – How would your return to work impact others in their household?
  - o What would they think about this? How would they feel?
  - o How does this compare with your previous fantasy?
- How could this daydream become a reality?
  - o Who/what would need to change/happen in your personal life? In the employment market?
    - What are the most important things?
  - o How would these things have changed?
  - o What/who would have been involved?

Summary (5 min)

- How does your ideal return to work scenario compare with what you expect returning to work to be like (i.e. previous fantasy) and your current situation?
  - What are the key differences?
  - What are the pros and cons of each situation?
- Summarise the key inhibitors and benefits associated with returning to work.
  - Recap all the things stopping you from returning to work?
    - What are the **key** things?
  - What are the attractions to returning to work?
    - What are the biggest hooks?

Part B: CIAG solutions (20 min)

Objective: To identify the best forms and channels (i.e. information presentation and delivery) for providing career information advice and guidance that will likely have the greatest uptake, and why.

In this part of the interview we want to focus on understanding how you could be encouraged /supported to return to the paid work force.

CIAG EXPERIENCE

- Are you **currently looking** for paid employment?
    - **If not**, do you anticipate a time in the future when you will look for work?
    - What, if any, **support, information and/or advice** have you sought/received (now, or in the past) to assist you to get back into paid work?
        - Describe this in detail.
    - When did you get this help?
    - How did you find out about it?
    - Who provided this (e.g. WINZ, Career Services, Career Advisor, Employment Consultant)?
    - How useful/valuable was it?
    - What worked/didn't work so well, and how come?

Service proposition

Imagine there was a service that could help make your return to work fantasy a reality.
- What would this service be like/offer:
    - What kind of advice, information and guidance would they offer (explain the form of the service in detail)?
        - How would this help you?
- What would be the **main benefit** of a service like this for you (i.e. the key value proposition)?
- What services are out there that offer this currently?

Delivery

- How would the service be delivered (describe)?
    - 0800, Internet, TV, face-face, print, etc.?
        - What makes this the ideal form for you?
            - Where would you be most comfortable going to gain this support (e.g. Library, Citizens Advice, dedicated place, etc.)?
        - Do you have access to a computer?
            - Do you require any assistance/support to use the Internet?
            - If this ideal service were available over the Internet, what support/assistance would you want/need (e.g. access to a computer, help to use it, help with the Internet, etc.)?

- Where would you feel comfortable going to get this support/assistance?

Form

- If ideal is personal contact, what type of people would deliver the service (as relevant)?
    - What qualities/skills would they need to have?
    - How come these qualities would be important?
- If ideal is print/electronic, what qualities would be important (e.g. simplicity, ease of use, friendly, etc.)?
    - How come these qualities would be important?

Channels

- How could they capture your attention to tell you this service is on offer?
    - What would be the most likely ways to target you (TV, DM, community notice boards, Internet, newspaper, magazines, friends/family, community/church groups, etc.)?
        - How come this would capture your attention/make it appear relevant to you?

Organisation

- Who would you approach to gain this service (which organisation)?
    - How come?
- Are there any other organisations that you think could provide this service?
    - *WINZ?*
    - *Career Services?*
    - *Employment Consultants?*
    - *Careers Advisors?*
- How would you feel about your ideal service being provided by any of these organisations?
    - How come for each (pros & cons)?

Other ideas

- What if any other ideas do you have in terms of making it easier for you to return to work?

Thanks and close.