

NSW Carers Action Plan 2007-2012

Mature Age Carers in the Workforce Project

'Carers are supported to combine caring and work'



NSW Department of
Commerce

Office of
Industrial Relations

The *NSW Carers Action Plan 2007-2012* is a whole of government strategy outlining the NSW Government's commitment to carers over five years.

The OIR's Mature Age Carers in the Workforce Project is part of the plan.

Its priority is that *'Carers are supported to combine caring and work'*.

An older workforce will be in demand...

Australia faces a shortfall of 195,000 workers by 2010, mostly in NSW.

During the 1980s and 90s our workforce grew by 170,000 each year.

Predictions indicate that the workforce will grow by only 125,000 for the entire 2020 decade.

Publications:

- focus group **report**, called *Bringing out the Best*
- **DVD**, called *Caring Works*
- mature age carers **webpage** on the OIR website
- **online discussion board** on the OIR website
- **fact sheet** titled '*Caring Works: Why older workers are in demand*', and
- **fact sheet** titled '*Caring Works: Mature aged workers with caring responsibilities*'.

The Project

- four focus group discussions – two in Sydney and two in Lismore
- the women involved were aged 45 years or over
- female participants were chosen because they make up around 70 per cent of primary carers of working age in NSW

Six considerations in combining caring and work emerged from the study:

- a prospective job would need appropriate flexibilities
- carers wanting work need to seek out opportunities that fit within their own needs
- some felt it best to be honest and up-front with prospective employers
- others wanted to get a job first and discuss flexibilities afterwards
- carers wanting work should present a solution that makes an employer want to hire them, and
- a prospective employer needs to be fair

Some options may be....

- gradual retirement or down-shifting;
- part time work or job sharing
- long service leave
- flexible schedules
- seasonal work
- working from home
- unpaid leave
- purchased leave
- working during peak periods
- working on special projects
- training

Office of Industrial Relations

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