



Options for older workers

OLDER workers have many options available to them if they want to remain in the workforce, according to Queensland Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations John Mickel.

“Older workers considering retirement can find out about their alternatives in a new booklet released under the State Government’s Experience Pays Awareness Strategy,” he said.

“It gives people options to consider like flexible work arrangements, mentoring, job redesign and retraining and includes inspiring testimonials from older workers who have chosen to remain in the workforce.”

Mr Mickel said older workers represented the fastest-growing segment of the workforce.

“The economic and social changes brought about by the ageing workforce have changed traditional views on retirement, and older workers who are ready, willing and able to remain in, or return to the workforce, should be given the options to do so,” he said.

“Employers who talk with their mature-age employees about strategies to keep them in the workforce, like flexible work arrangements or redesigning jobs to better suit any changing physical capabilities, benefit from retaining staff at a time of skills and labour-supply shortages, with the bonus of holding on to valuable skills, knowledge and experience.”

Dirk Wagenveld, 65, who features in the handbook, has worked for J.J. Richards for more than 30 years.

He works a compressed four-day week at the company’s engineering plant and for one of those days he mentors trainees from Woodridge State High School.

Mr Wagenveld said he would rather be at work than retired at home. “It’s better than taking up a hobby, which usually costs money,” he said.

“I like working with my hands, I find it satisfying and I can come to work and get paid for it.”

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) campaign Mature Workers Mean Business is

also aimed at busting the myths and stereotypes about mature-age workers.

Federal Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick said many older participants in her national Listening Tour raised age discrimination as a barrier to full and equal participation in the workplace.

“Some people told me that ageist assumptions and attitudes heavily impacted on their ability to find meaningful work, including misconceptions about being able to adapt to change or wanting work at senior levels,” she said.

“As we live and work for longer, it is crucial that older Australians of all ages are able to fully participate in society.

“There is also a strong business imperative for employers to attract and retain mature-age workers.” For more information on the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy or to get a free copy of the employee handbook go to www.experiencepays.qld.gov.au or call 1800 630 647.

To find out about HREOC’s campaign visit www.humanrights.gov.au/matureworkers/



Dirk Wagenveld isn’t ready to give up work
On the cover: Dirk with school-based trainee Lelan Harrington

