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‘What Works’
in Employment Services & Supports for Mature-age Jobseekers with Disability

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Why mature-aged jobseekers?

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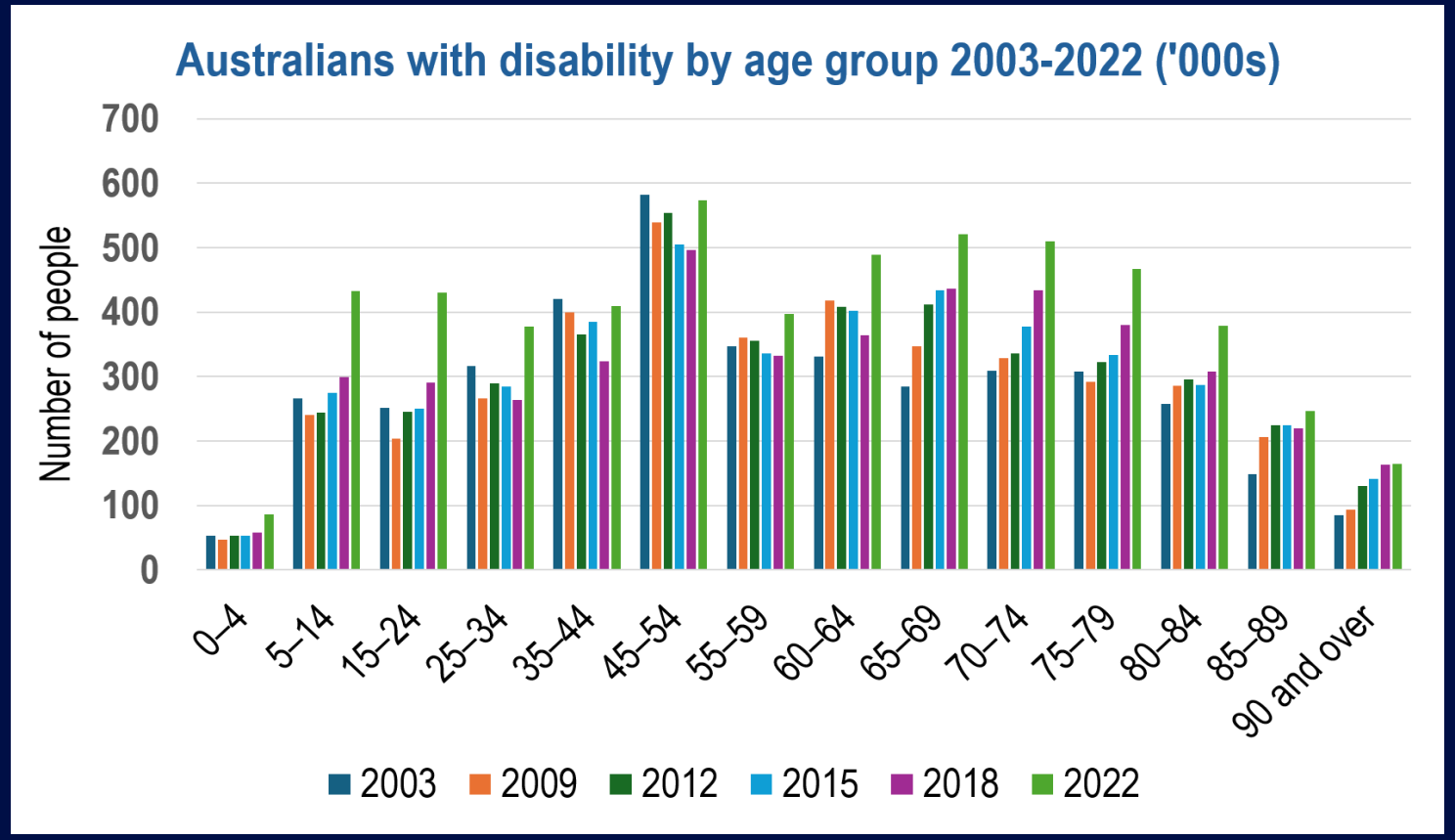
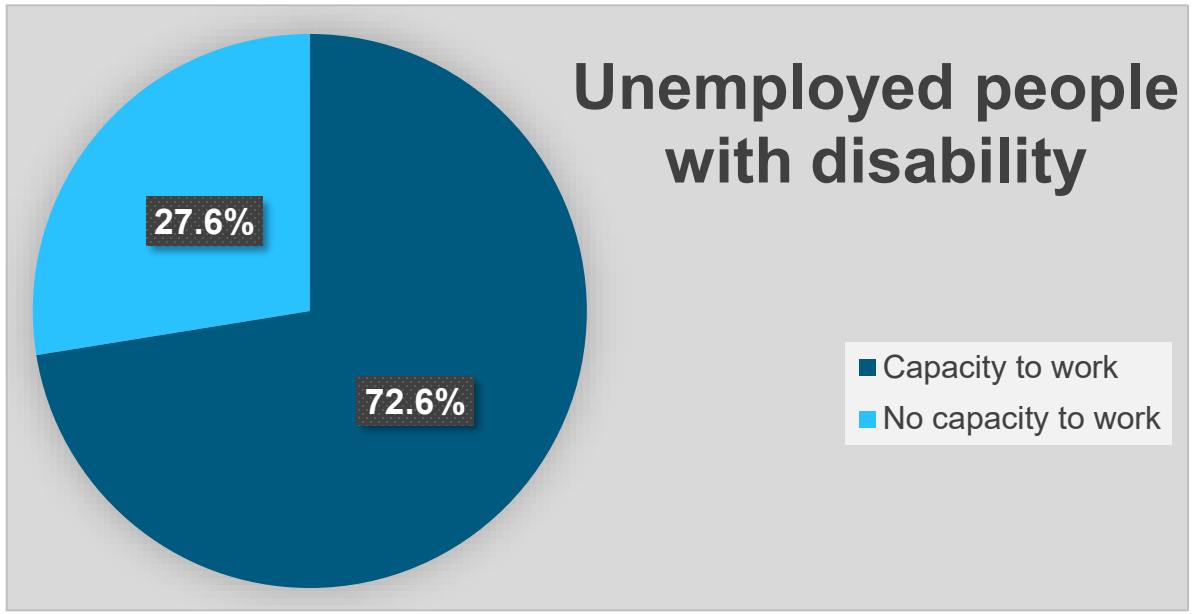


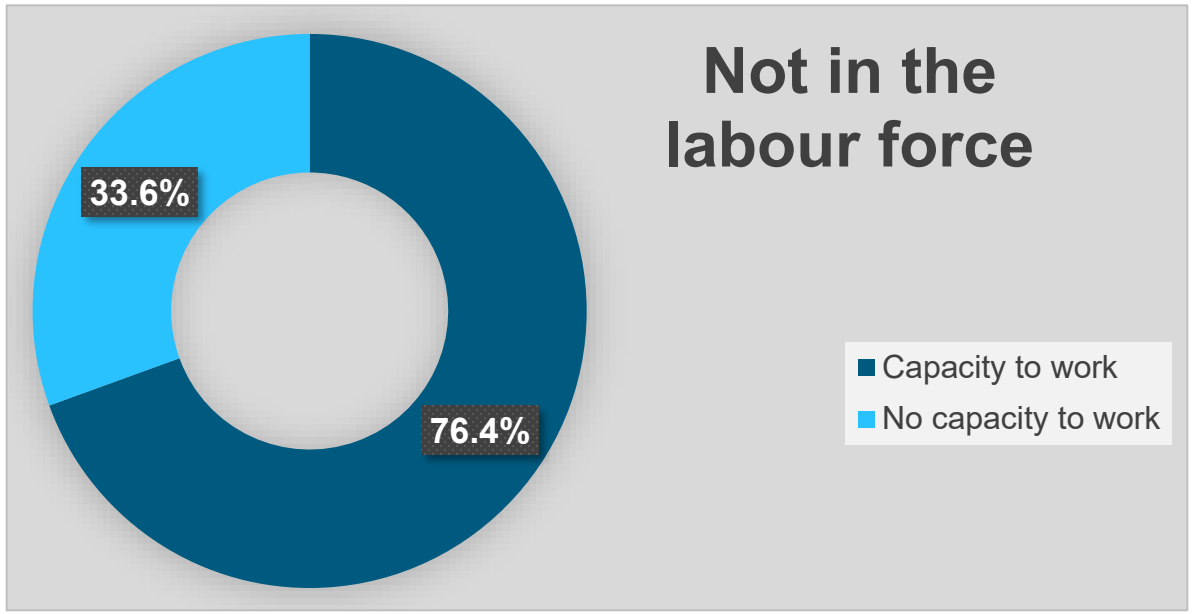
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, various years.

People who are potentially able to work

72.6% of unemployed people had capacity to work, but with restrictions



76.4% of people not in the labour force had capacity to work, but with restrictions



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, various years.

Mature-aged jobseekers with disability & health conditions

Inclusive Employment Australia

- More than half of the IEA caseload is aged over 45, and one third is aged 55 and over. Most of these jobseekers have restricted capacity to work, in terms of hours or the type of work they can do.
- Some people on the IEA caseload are not available to start work, and some are employed with post-placement support (PPS) and ongoing support (OS).

Workforce Australia

- Many more Australians aged 45-64 with acquired disability or health conditions are engaged in Workforce Australia.
- Some people on the WA caseload are not available to start work.

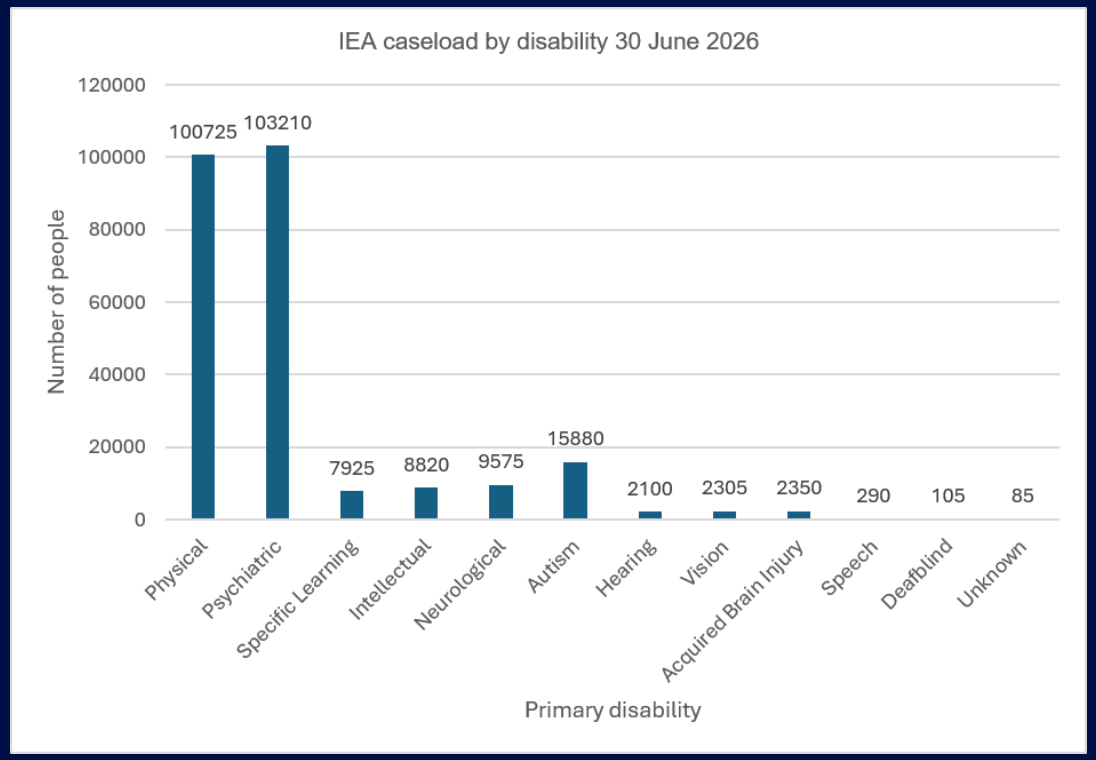
Retired under age 65

- In 2024-2025, more than 400,000 Australians aged 45-64 had permanently retired from the labour force due to sickness,injury or disability

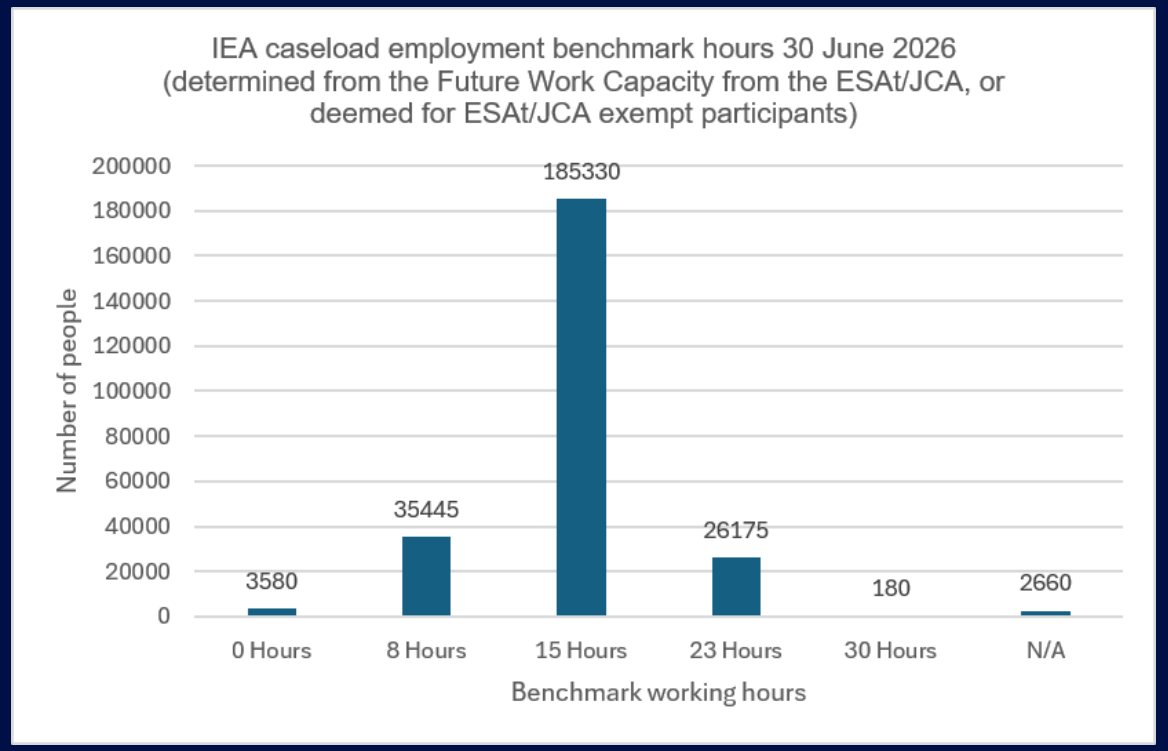
Not seeking work

- Other Australians aged 45-64 with health conditions affecting their capacity to work - who are not seeking work (self-funded or supported by family or partner), or who may work casually or episodically - are not engaged with employment services.

Why mature-aged jobseekers?



IEA caseload by reported primary disability



IEA caseload by assessed capacity to work

Source: IEA Monthly Profile - 30 June 2026

Intersectional factors



Factors outside providers' control







Social determinants of health

Labour market conditions

Household composition

Availability of housing

Availability of transport

Accessibility of the environment outside of work

Structure of the:

- welfare system
- health system
- disability services & support system

What key barriers do jobseekers face?



Conscious and unconscious bias in recruitment and employment



Issues in workplace culture, inclusion and safety



Unclear leadership and accountability in the workplace for employment policies and practice

How could providers bridge these barriers?



Conscious and unconscious bias in recruitment and employment

- ✓ Firmly position mature-age jobseekers with partial capacity to work as part of the labour supply in local labour markets
- ✓ Invest time with employers before and early in recruitment processes to build disability-confident workplaces, and create inclusive and flexible employment opportunities
- ✓ Shift the focus from medical diagnosis to the effect of disability on a person's capacity to work

How could providers bridge these barriers?



Issues in workplace culture, inclusion and safety

- ✓ Equip employers with tools to successfully recruit, hire and retain mature-aged workers with acquired disability and health conditions

- ✓ Provide jobseekers with tools to help them understand their rights and equip them to find and keep work suited to their strengths and personal circumstances

How could providers bridge these barriers?



Unclear leadership and accountability in the workplace for employment policies and practice

- ✓ Focus more on equipping potential employers to prepare and manage workplace (re)entry for mature-age new hires re-entering the workforce after a break and less on the individual jobseeker themselves

- ✓ Forge connections across service systems and sectors that support both employees' and employers' needs

Keep in touch

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Download our report:
centreforinclusiveemployment.au/resources/334168

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