

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **AGE IS NO BARRIER IN THE WORKPLACE FOR BABY BOOMERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, SAYS RESEARCH**

A new national study released today by Australian Seniors Insurance Agency (ASIA) reveals age discrimination in the workplace is rife, with close to half of Baby Boomer respondents claiming they've been turned down for a job past the age of 40 because of their age.

The study is part of *The Australian Seniors Series* and is the second instalment of an ongoing national survey to investigate the shifting attitudes and concerns affecting Australia's over 50 population.

However, bucking the national trend of age discrimination, it appears South Australia is more supportive of an older workforce with 73 percent of respondents feeling undeterred in applying for a job regardless of their chances of getting discriminated against due to age.

Age confidence seems to be another key success factor in applying for a job with 75 percent of South Australian Baby Boomers selling their value to employers based on the length of their experience.

General Manager of Marketing and ASIA spokesperson Simon Hovell said, "This in depth research not only revealed the challenges this generation must tackle within their place of work, but the problems our ageing population face in trying to make a career change or re-enter the workforce. In fact, three in five of those over 50 said that they faced substantial obstacles in their attempts."

"It is really great to see South Australia being a non-ageist state with Baby Boomers feeling quite confident when it comes to employment. Interestingly, the research for South Australia found that 77 percent said that they definitely did not experience age discrimination at work."

According to the national results, many Baby Boomers face considerable age-related barriers in the workplace, with more than two in five respondents admitting they have felt stuck in an employment rut because a career change, opportunities or promotions are unlikely due to their age.

Delving further into these challenges, close to half of Baby Boomers said it took longer than six months to find a new job when making a new career move or returning to work. A startling one in six said it took them five years or more to find a job.

In addition, almost 60 percent of Baby Boomers who are considering early retirement said this decision would be influenced by not enjoying work and feeling that it is not worth trying to reskill at this stage in life.

Whilst Baby Boomers nationally are thinking of early retirement, 26 percent of South Australians intend to work beyond the retirement age of 65. 72 percent of South Australians delay their retirement because they enjoy working and 50 percent like to keep social.

"Interestingly, amid organisations' anxieties on the cost implications for healthcare with an ageing workforce, Baby Boomers are in fact three times less likely than Gen Y to use up all their sick leave each year. In addition, Baby Boomers typically take three days sick leave on average per year, which doubles for Gen Y's at an average of six days.

The fiscal impact of this leave differentiation is significant, with Gen Y costing up to \$2.8 billion more than Baby Boomers a year to the Australian economy.

"Considering the Baby Boomer generation witnessed and participated in some of the largest social and political upheavals in Australian history during the 1960s and 1970s, including the Women's Movement and the Vietnam War, this myth seems even more dubious. Baby Boomers grew up not only seeing change, but driving it," said Mr Hovell.

Looking at comparative skill sets and values between Baby Boomers and Gen Y, the former proves stronger in almost all surveyed talents, while the latter felt more technically savvy by a moderate margin (10 percent compared to 27 percent, respectively).

"The findings point to what many organisations, academics and economists have known all along – Baby Boomers are a real asset to the workplace," said Mr Hovell.

Overall, Baby Boomers' skill sets make a strong business case, surpassing their Gen Y counterparts in terms of people skills (30 percent, compared to 24 percent), collaboration (26 percent, compared to 17 percent), and innovation and problem solving (23 percent, compared to 20 percent).

In light of the increasing costs of high staff turnover and a global skills shortage, which remain primary concerns for employers, Baby Boomers typically stay in a job for an average of 13.6 years, nearly three times as long as Gen Ys (at 4.4 years).

Baby Boomers are also half as likely as Gen Ys to leave their current job in the next year (24 percent compared to 47 per cent).

Furthermore, the research challenges the perceived 'Gen Y versus Baby Boomer' workplace conflict, with over nine in ten (93%) Gen Ys tending to agree that Gen Y's and Baby Boomers complement each other in the work setting.

"While exploring common misconceptions around the intergenerational workplace, we in fact found several key alignments in values," said Mr Hovell.

"Both generations identified work ethic as the most important contribution to the workforce (36 percent for Baby Boomers and 37 percent for Gen Ys), and loss of skills and knowledge amongst colleagues was the most commonly cited negative impact of retiring Baby Boomers (83 percent of Baby Boomers and 56 percent of Gen Ys)," he continued.

"One of the most significant points to derive from the national research results is that while some negative stereotypes and attitudes towards older workers prevail, there is strong evidence of the Baby Boomer generation's agility, progressiveness and skills-based value-add to employers that we should continue to acknowledge and address. It is great to see the non-ageist state results for South Australia which recognises the importance of this generation and the experience that they bring to the workplace," concluded Mr Hovell.

The full report and supporting data is available on the Australian Seniors Insurance Agency website:

<http://www.seniors.com.au/news-insights/ageism-in-the-aussie-workplace-are-we-missing-out>

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### **About Australian Seniors Insurance Agency**

Australian Seniors Insurance Agency was established in 1998 to provide cost effective insurance solutions for the mature Australian Market, a market too often ignored. With product offerings in car, home, travel, funeral, pet and accident insurance, Australian Seniors Insurance Agency recognises the better risk nature of Australians over 50.

### **About the 'Australian Seniors Series'**

In order to explore the attitudes to technology, changing family structures and living arrangements of senior Australians, CoreData surveyed online 1200 typical Australians across the nation in early March 2016. The sample collection employed soft quotas to monitor representativeness of the Australian senior adult population. While the bulk of the sample (n=1000) are over 50yrs old, a control sample of 200 Australians under 20-34yrs old was used for some key comparisons.

Hard quotas by state were also employed to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples in the research - (NSW = 200, VIC = 200, QLD = 200, WA = 200, Remaining states/territories = 200).