

# National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre

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**Be  
heard**

# Productive Ageing Centre

- NSA – 200,000 members aged 50 years and over Australia-wide
- PAC jointly funded by NSA & DSS
- Consumer focused research - driven by the needs and interests of Australians aged 50 years and over
- Inform Government, business and the community on productive ageing across the life course
- PAC reports, annual forums, conferences, & NSPAC grants

# PAC research covers...



Health



Education



Aged care



Superannuation



Employment



Retirement  
Planning



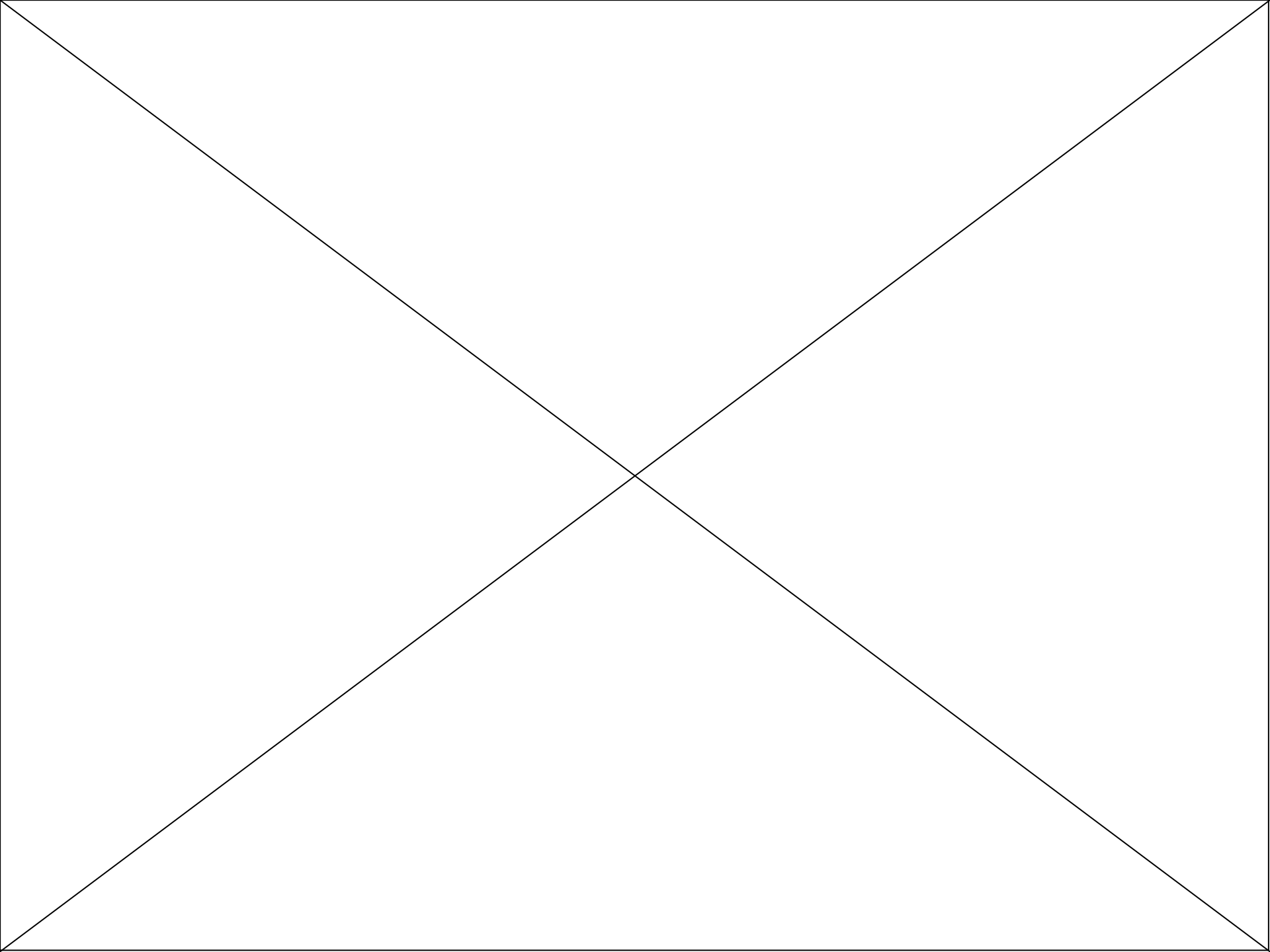
Lifestyle



Wellbeing



Finance



- Benefits of increased labour market involvement of mature age Australians:
  - enhancement of workplaces with additional skills, experiences and mentoring abilities
  - provides income support for individuals' standard of living and quality of life & tops up super balances
  - Government tax revenue & less social security burden
- BUT: barriers to mature age employment persist
- ISSUES: age discrimination, education & training, caring responsibilities

# Barriers to Employment Survey

- 2011-12 Barriers to Employment for Mature Age Australians Survey
- Survey commissioned by the Consultative Forum on Mature Age Participation
- Funded by DEEWR
- 3,007 respondents aged 45-74 years
- Sample was stratified based on place of residence
- Data weighted to Australian Estimated Resident Population
- Collected information on the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the barriers to employment

## Age discrimination

- Age discrimination in the workplace and during the job search process can lead to mature age unemployment and early retirement
- Can occur in direct and indirect forms such as:
  - being unable to fit into the current work team
  - being overqualified
  - lacking up-to-date skills<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> AHRC, 2013; CDAA, 2010

# Directly being told you are “too old” for a job

- Reported by 16% of people who have worked or looked for work in the past 5 years
- By whom?
  - Family member/ friend: 9%
  - Private recruitment agency: 9% of users
  - Potential employer: 7% of job seekers
  - Work colleague: 6% of workers

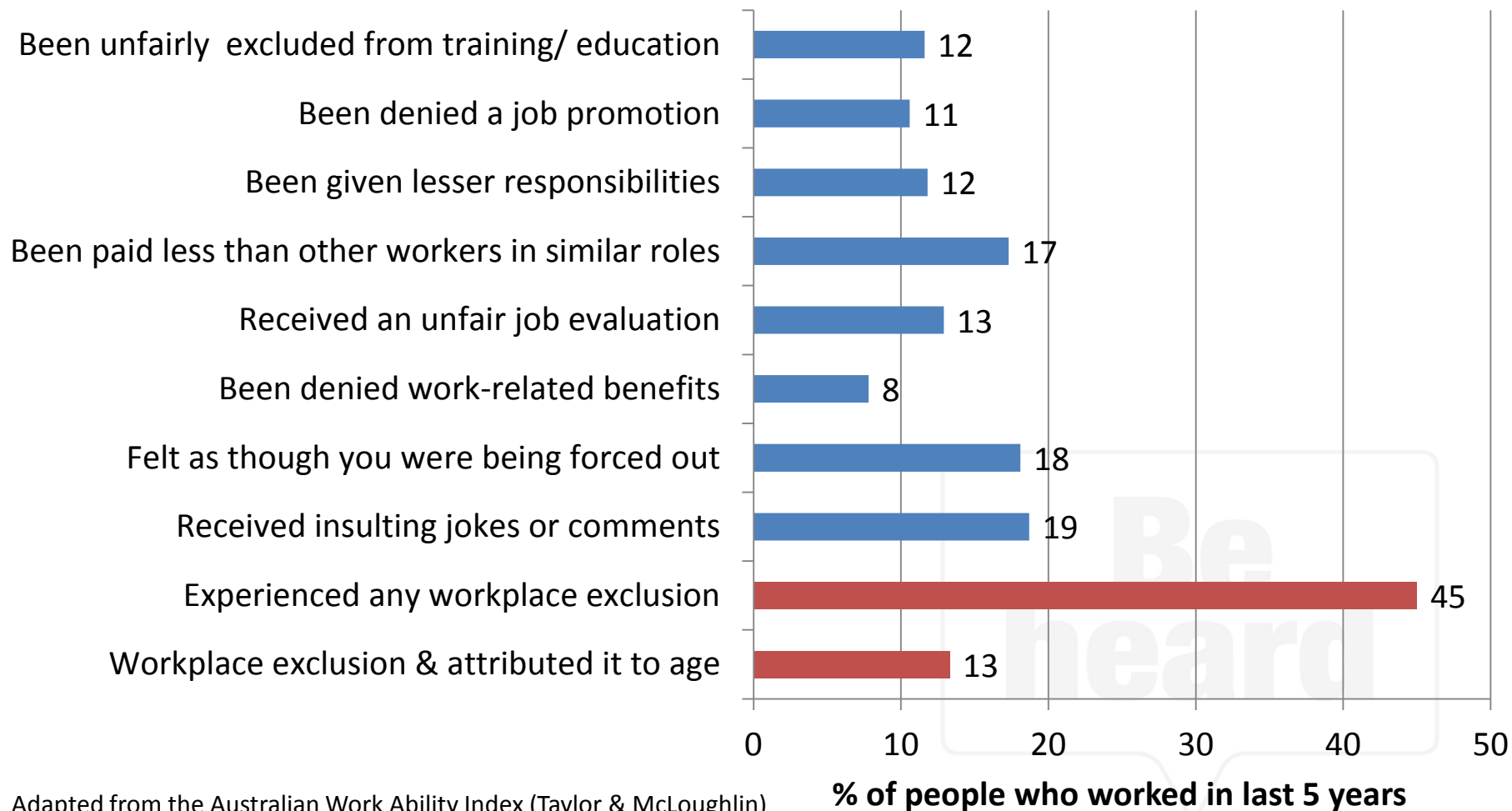


# Exclusion in the workplace

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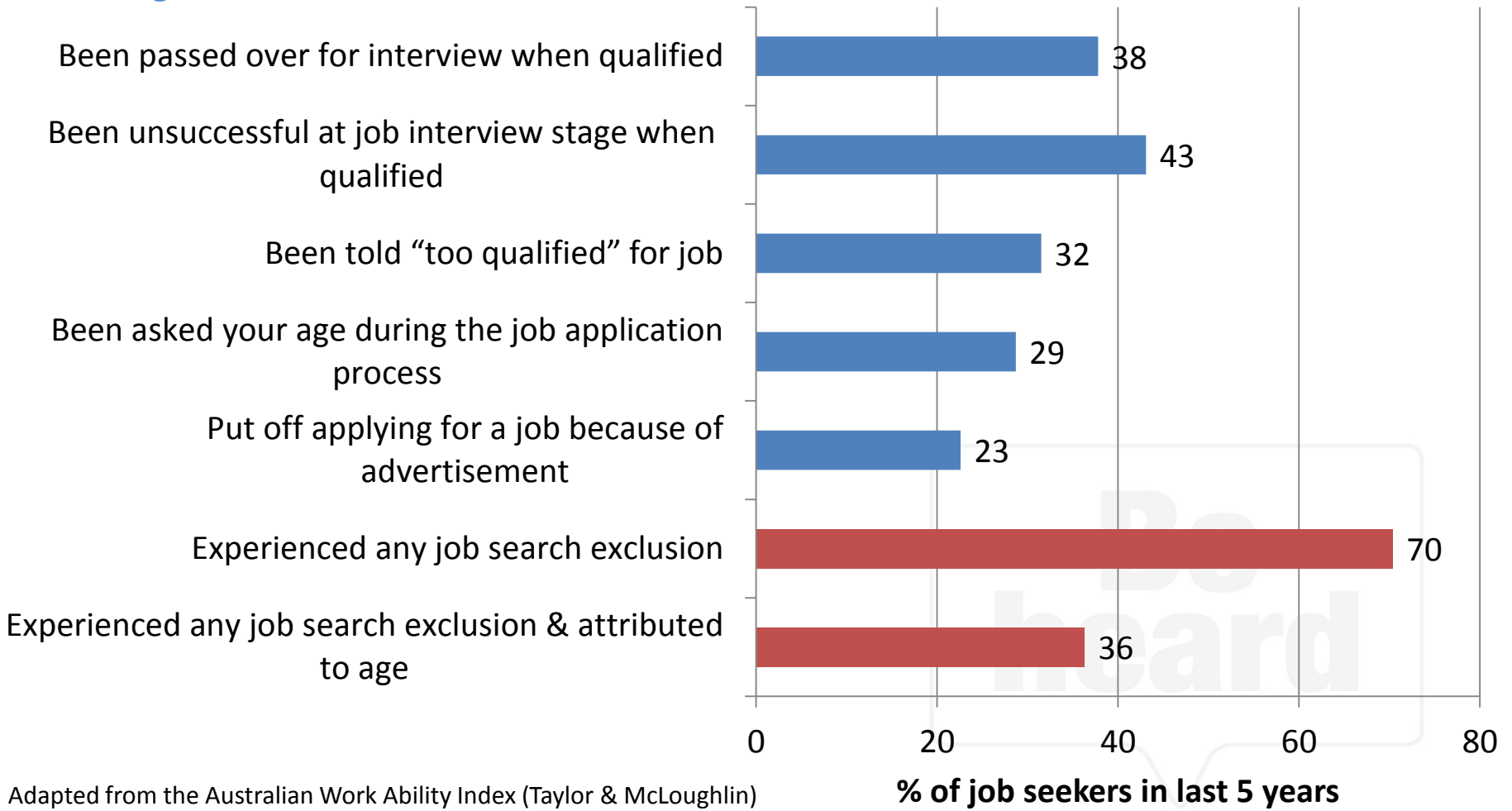


Adapted from the Australian Work Ability Index (Taylor & McLoughlin)

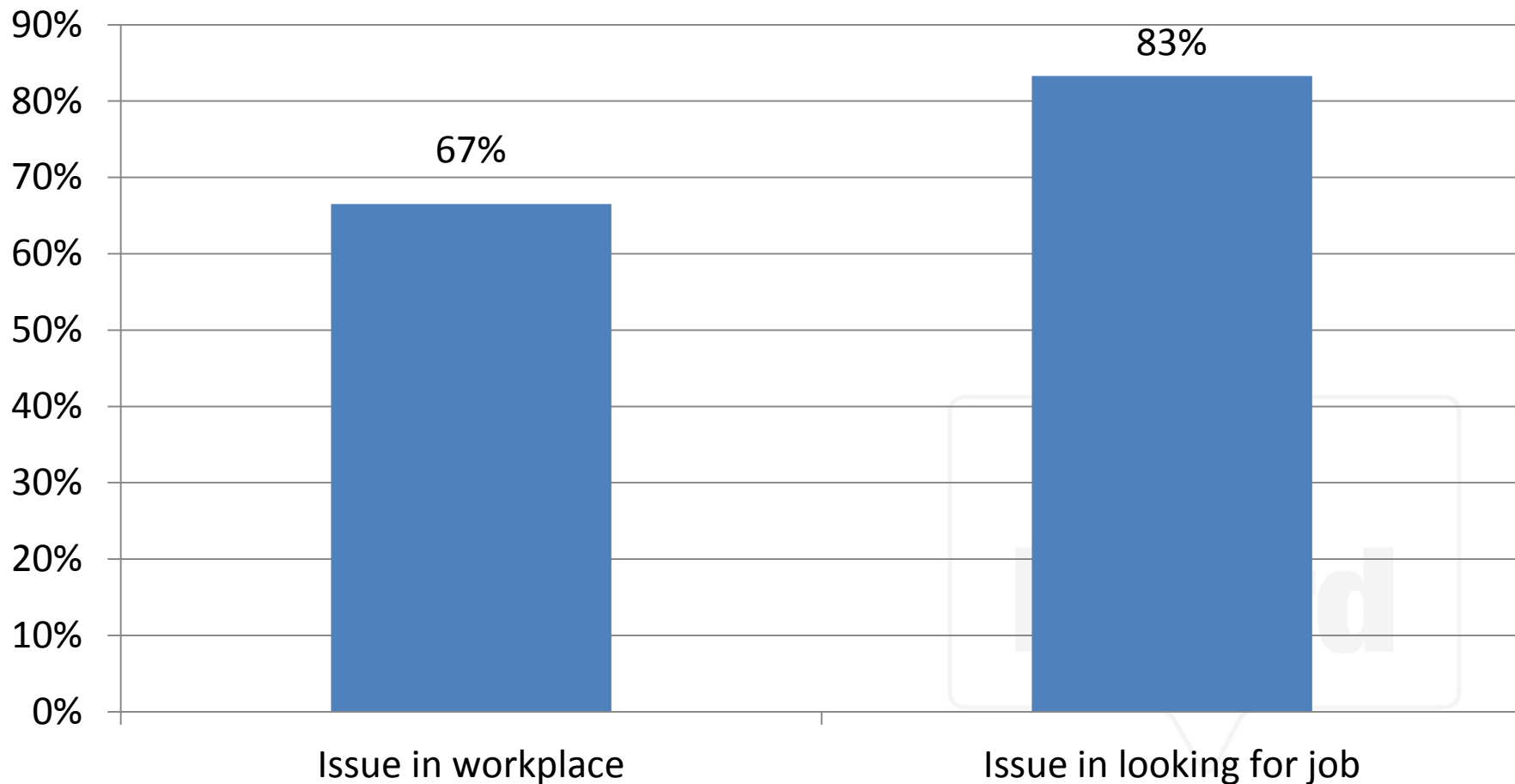
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# Exclusion during job search

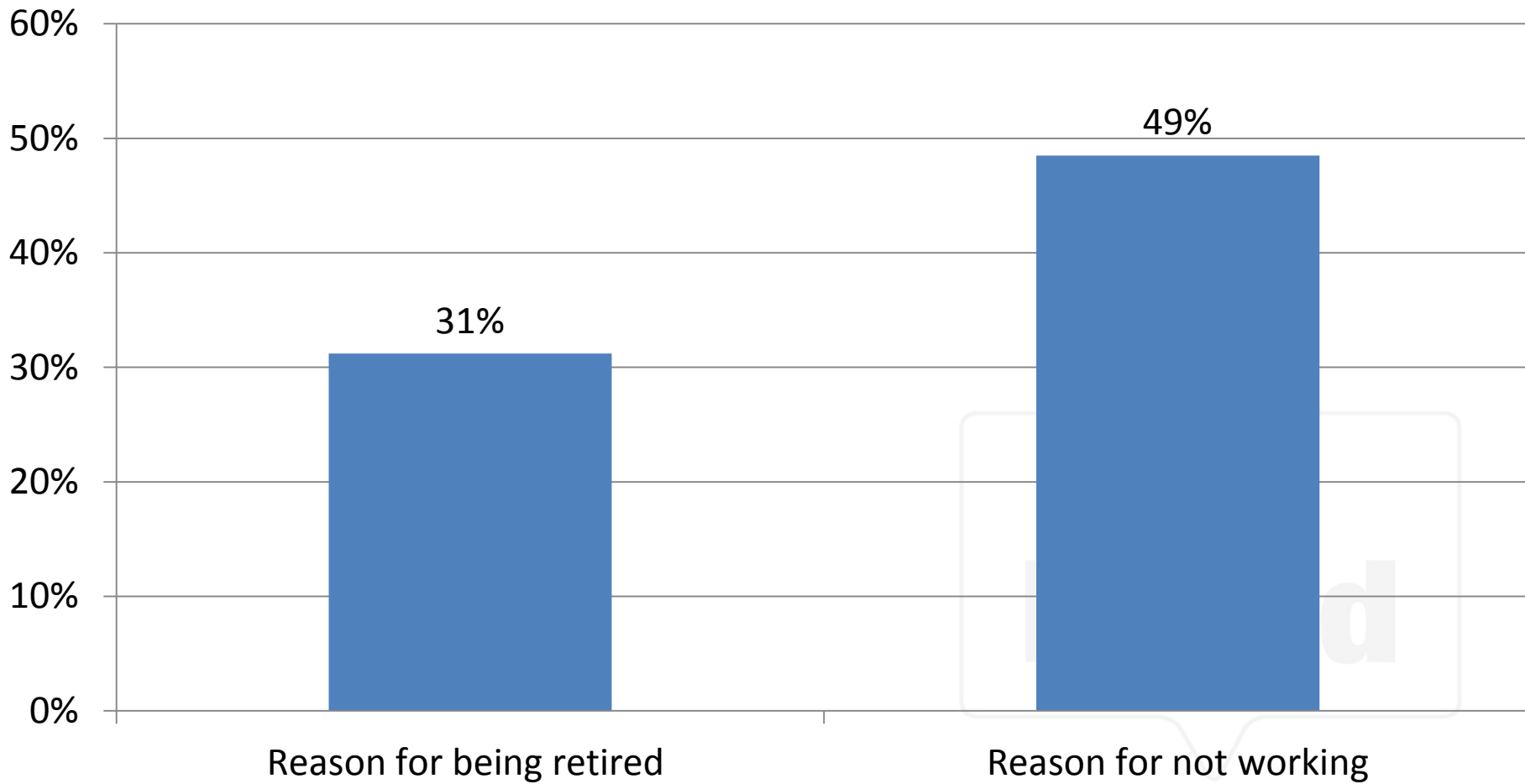


# Perceptions of age discrimination



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# Employers thinking you are too old...



# Employer's perspective

- 2010 DEEWR Survey of Employers (TNS Social Research 2010)
  - Most employers cite no challenges with employing mature age workers
  - Employers with a written mature age policy more likely to have strategies to retain mature age workers
  - Strategies to retain mature age workers: reducing or changing workload, changing work arrangements and offering training/mentoring roles
- Evidence from AHRC more damning

- Both direct and indirect forms of age discrimination found to be prevalent
- Significant proportions of people experiencing age discrimination state their desire to work is affected
- Perceptions of age discrimination are high – which also affects their desire to look for work
- Age discrimination interacts strongly with other barriers to mature age employment, such as health issues and care-giving issues

- Intergenerational Report 2010 - key policy priority in Aust. to support mature age employment participation through re-training programs<sup>4</sup>
- Lack of investment in training by employers - short future, difficult to train<sup>5</sup>, not aware of subsidies & difficulties identifying courses<sup>6</sup>
- Older workers defer training - unemployed for extended period, & seek work in non-preferred field<sup>7</sup>
- OECD - training declines (50+yrs) in Aus.-most countries

4 Commonwealth Government 2010

5 Encel & Studencki 2004, Hanley et al., 2007, ACS 2010, CDAA 2010

6 Spoehr et al. 2009, Taylor & Unwin 2001

7 Spoehr et al. 2009

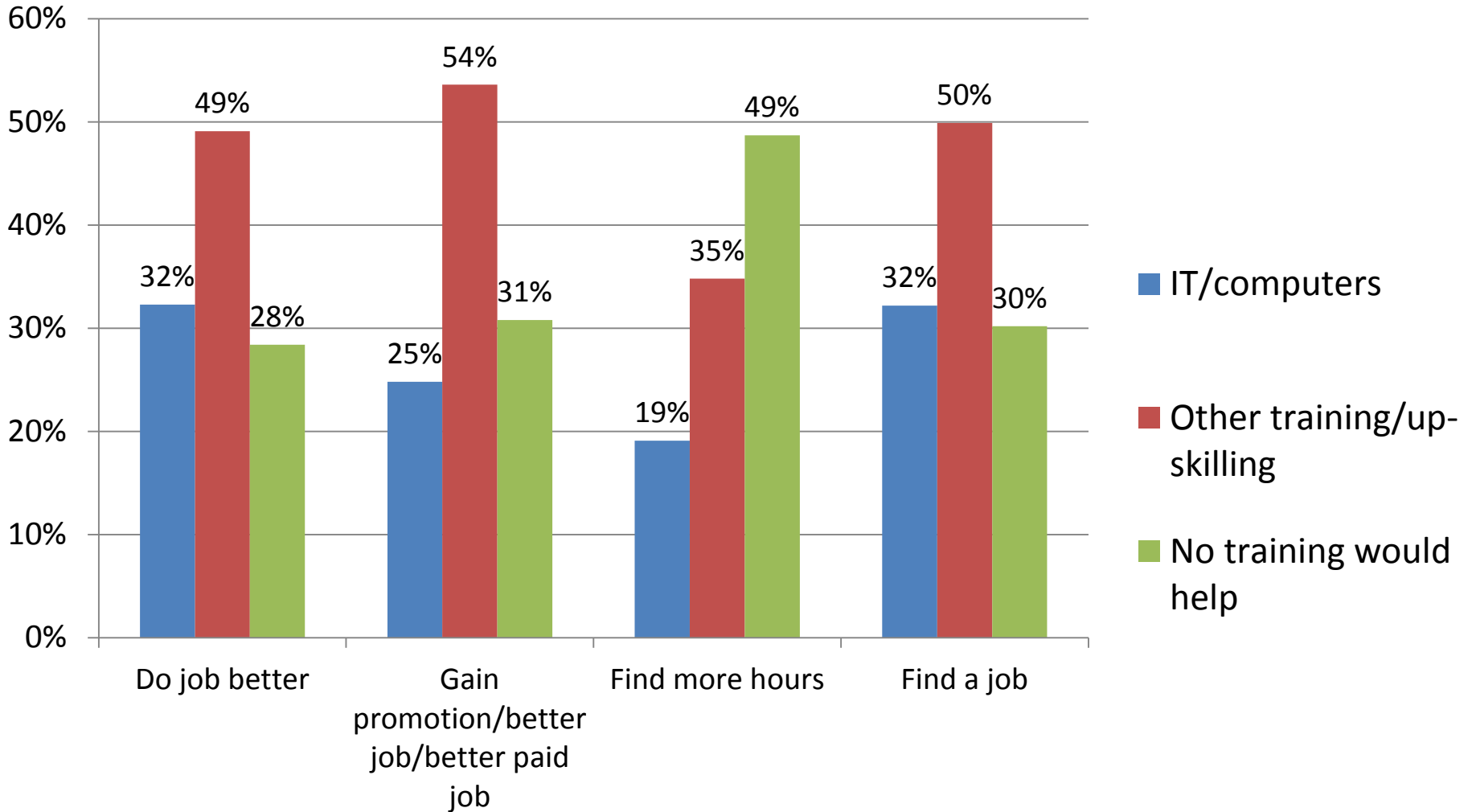
# Demand for training

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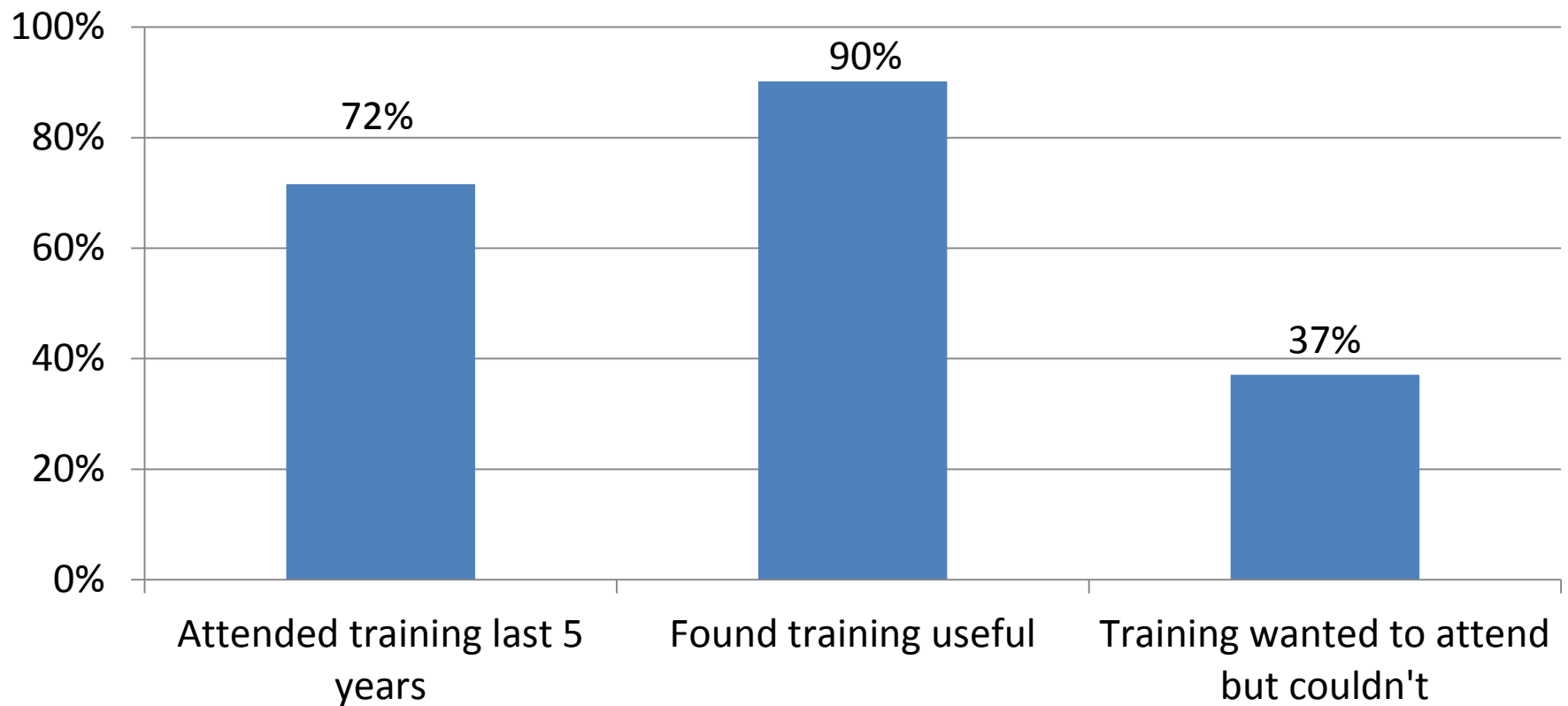
## Training or up-skilling options would help...



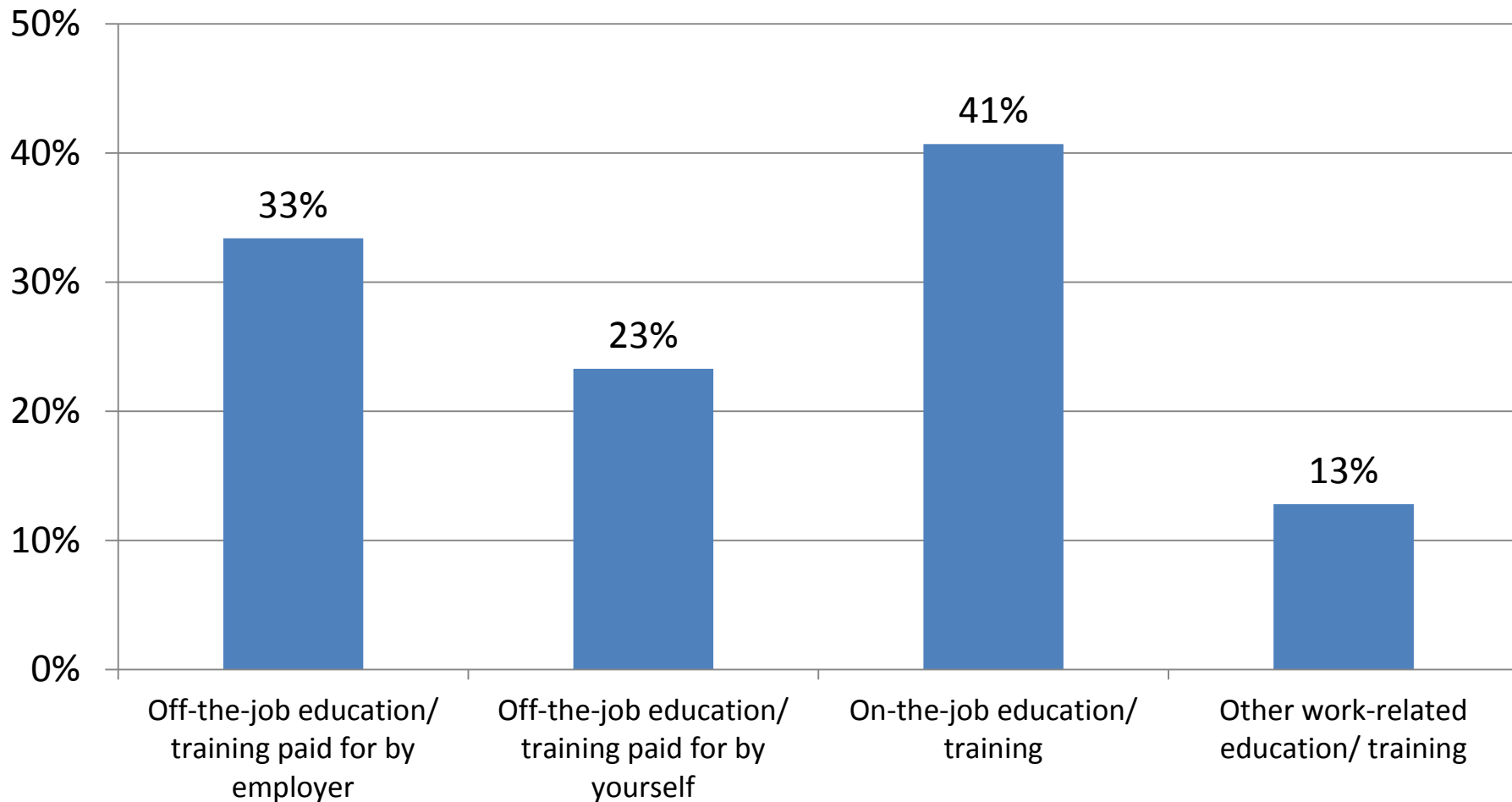


# Experiences with training

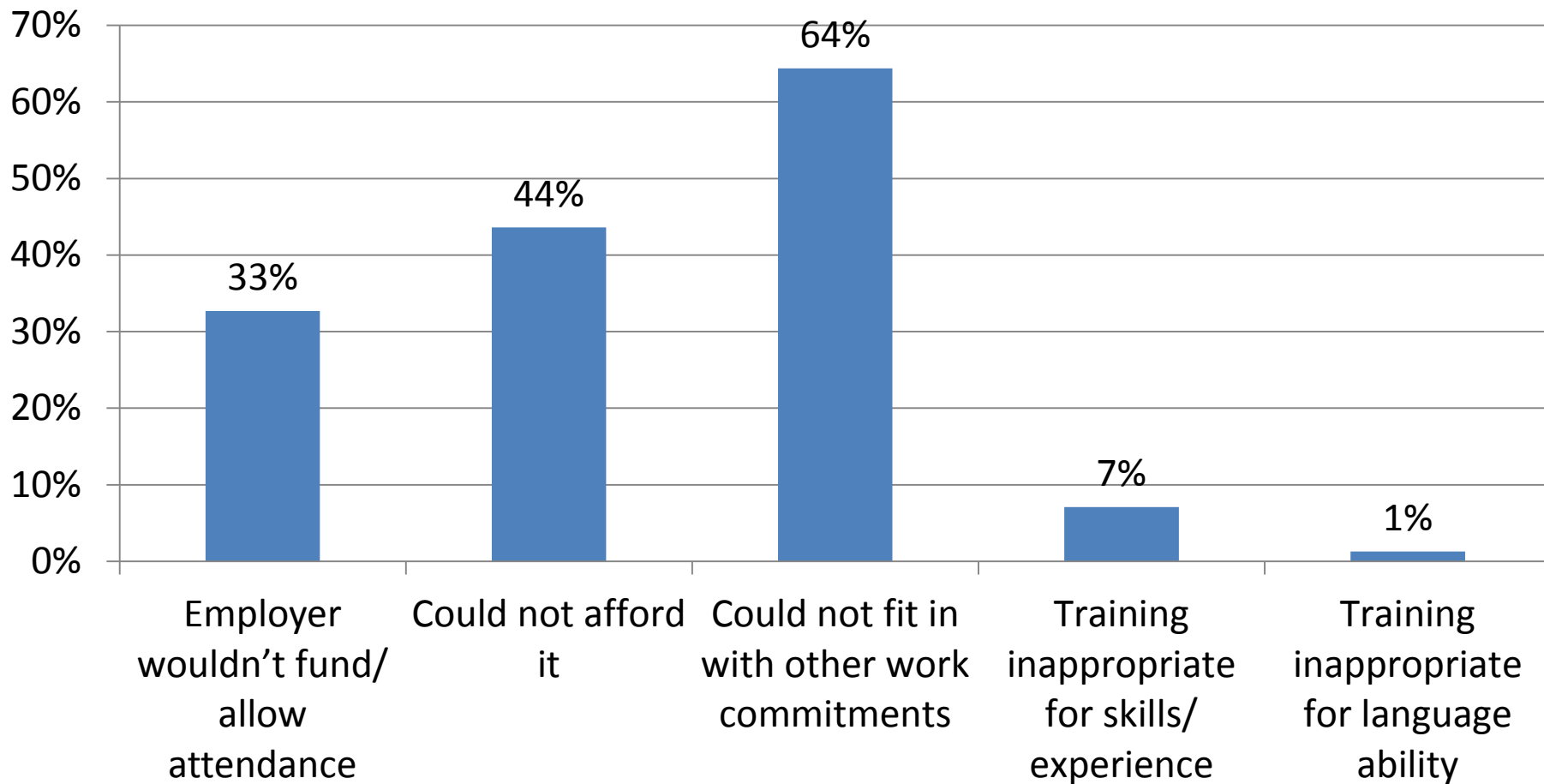
Attended work-related training in last 5 years, if found useful and wanted to attend training but couldn't (%)



# Types of training attended



# Why unable to attend training?



## Discussion

- Significant demand for training across 45-74 year age group – 70% said some training would help
- 90% stated attended training & found it useful
- Greater training attendance amongst females
  - this is encouraging because they have lower mature age workforce participation and superannuation balances on average than men
  - but also have greater unmet demand (37%)

# Discussion

- While those 55+ face more employer reluctance to attend training compared with people aged 45-54, they also have less demand to attend training:
  - concerns re; taking time off?
  - perceived value & length of stay?
  - unsupportive culture?
- Many will have 10+ years remaining & need to stay in workforce to improve retirement savings

- No. of mature age Australians balancing work & informal caring roles will increase
- The care of elderly people presents different challenges to that of child care
- Combining caring & work may lead to absences from work, difficulties developing skills, financial stress, & poor physical & mental health outcomes
- Recent legislative changes allowing older carers the right to request flexible work arrangements

# Caregiving

- Carers who have an illness themselves face exclusion in workplace & during job search
- Caring affected super (60%) & skill dev. (42%)
- 61% of carers would be able to work an average of 18 hpw, if flexible options were available. This would increase no. of employed ppl (45-74) by 4%
- 49% of carers employed part-time would be able to work more hours if flexible options were available (135,242 ppl)

- Caring prevents many older care-givers from working at all or working more hours
- Carers face: exclusion in the workforce, illness themselves, trouble accumulating super, & difficulties developing work-related skills
- Flexible work options are appealing to carers
- Population ageing means future care for the elderly could pose as a greater issue for both workers & employers than childcare



# Conclusion

- Strategies such as having workplaces that are more accommodating to people with health issues, would aid in addressing age discrimination
- Creating & maintaining education & training opportunities for all, & cultivating a culture of lifelong learning
- Having a comprehensive suite of flexible work options available & a culture where staff feel comfortable accessing those options

# Thank you



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