



Shaping the future
of aged care

Older workforce retention

Nicky Baker & Janine Dizon

Team: Bec Bilton, Victoria Cornell, Tania Marin, Paul Ross

Aged Care Research &
Industry Innovation Australia



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care



Acknowledgement of Country

I acknowledge the Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of Country where we live, work and play. I pay my respects to Elders past and present. I acknowledge their ongoing connection to Land, Sea, Waterways, Sky and Culture and recognise how these ongoing connections are essential for physical and emotional health and wellbeing.





Overview

- **Definitions** for today
- **Value** of older workers
- **Factors** affecting older worker retention
- **Strategies/solutions** for older worker retention
- **Key take away** messages
- **ARIIA** Knowledge Implementation Hub





Definitions and context

1. Older workers defined as “**workers aged 50 years and older**”¹
2. Retention defined as “**longevity of a period of employment within the care workforce**”²
 - Retention rather than intention to stay, intention to leave, job satisfaction or turnover
3. Context - international evidence within the **aged care** sector
 - Academic and grey literature
 - Written in English

1. Chao et al., 2022
2. Morris et al., 2023



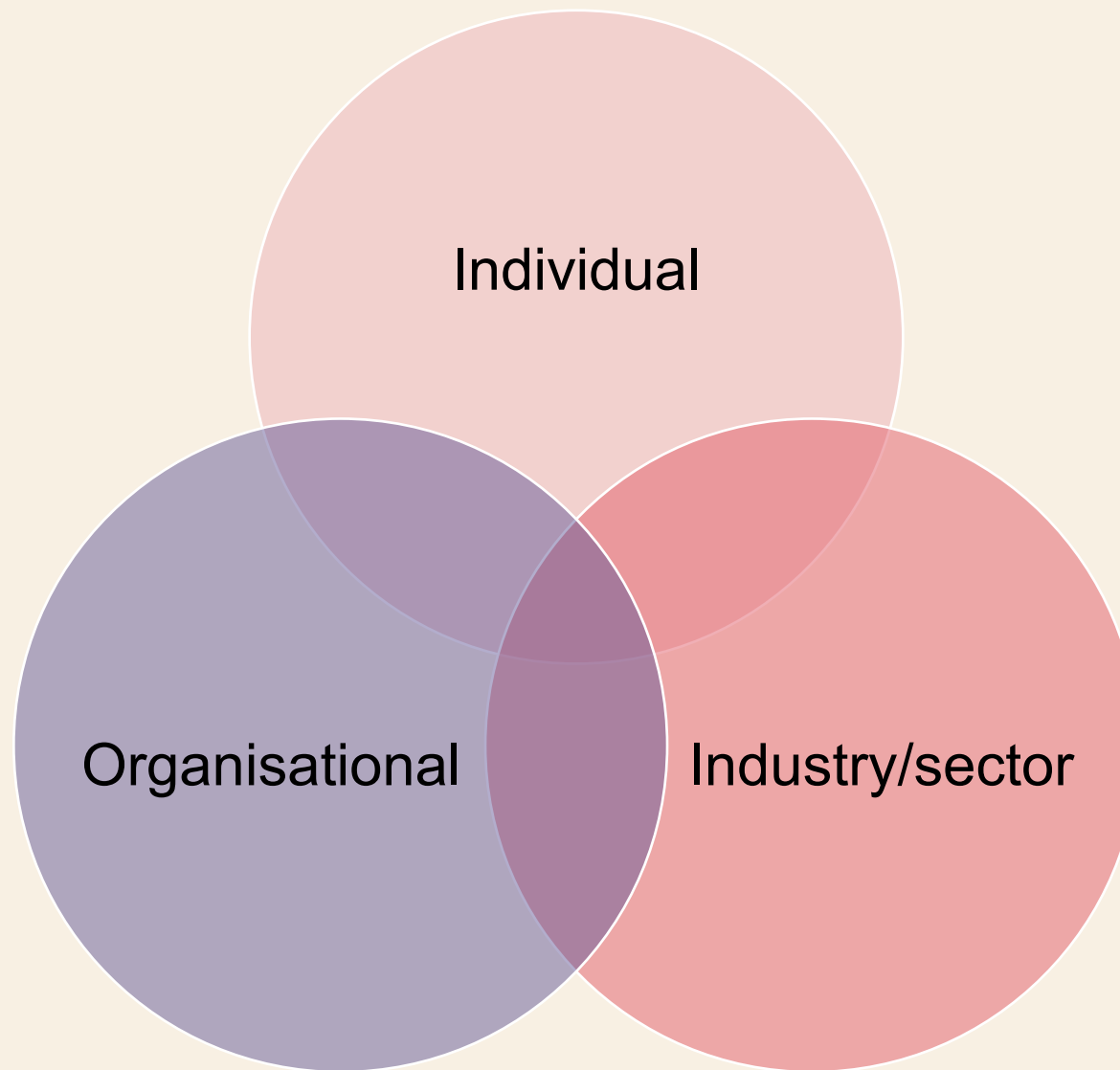
Value of Older Workers

- Accumulation of skills¹
- Level of experience¹
- Less sick leave²
 - Fewer injuries
- Higher retention³
- Corporate knowledge & loyalty⁴
- In aged care - reflect diversity of customer base

1. Australian Human Rights Commission 2021
2. ABS Work-related injuries 2018
3. ABS Job Mobility 2024
4. OECD Promoting an Age Inclusive Workforce 2021

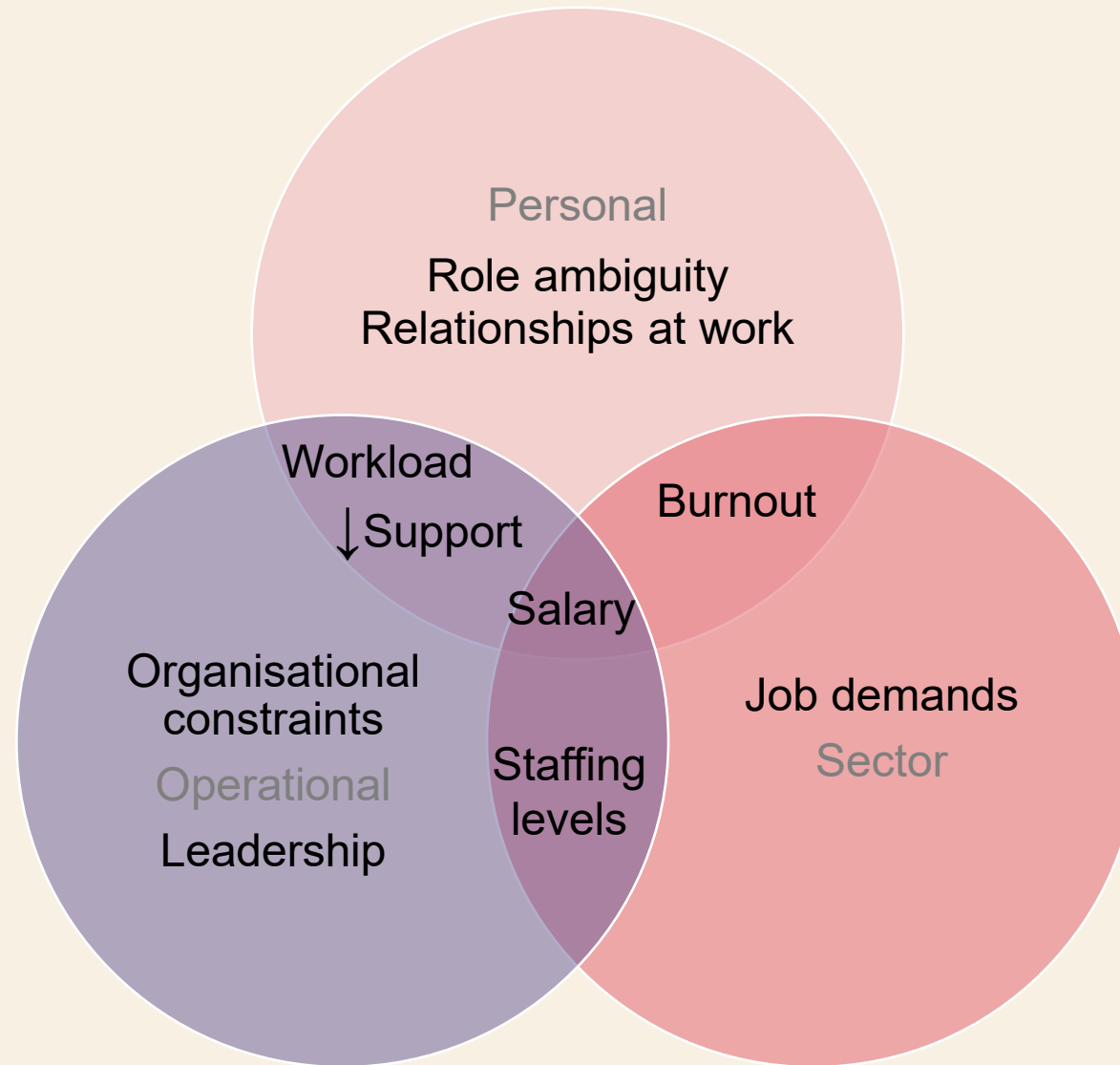


Factors affecting older workers



Thwaites et al., 2023.

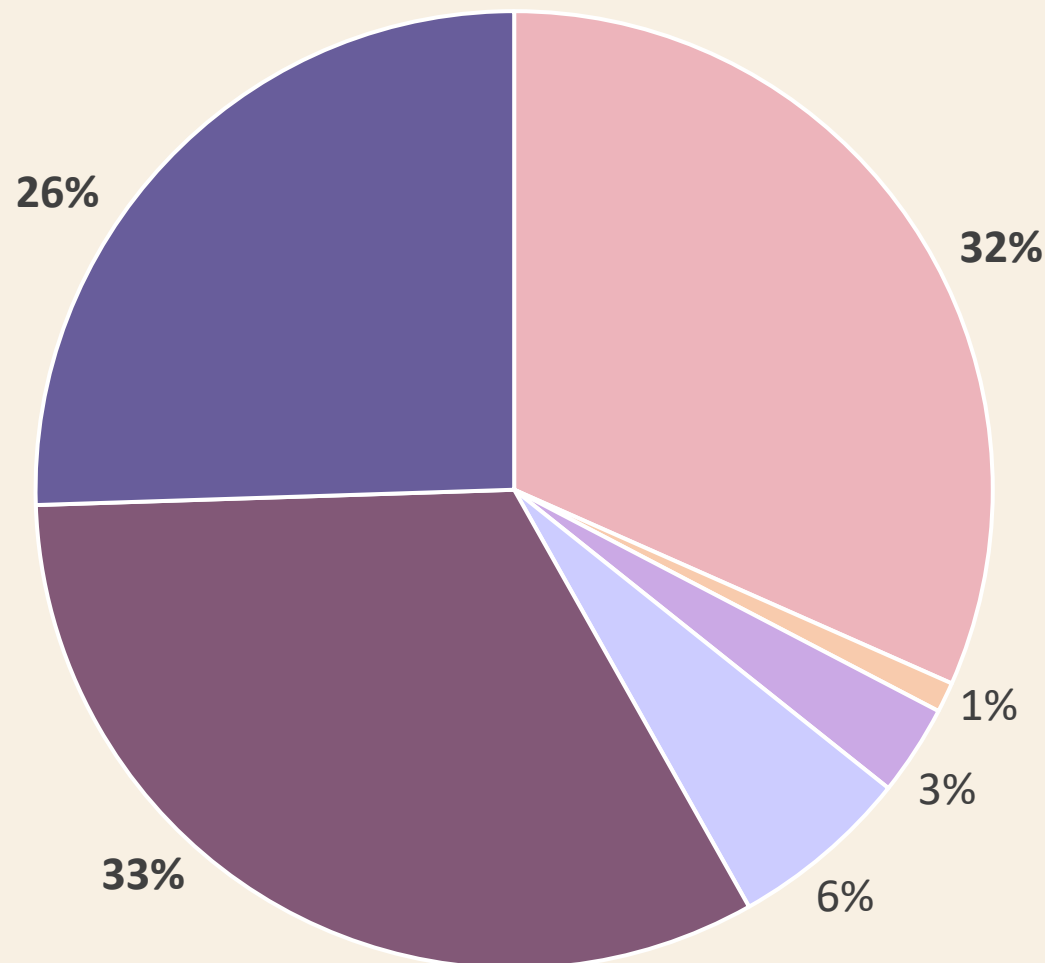
Sample Factors





Proportional influence

Individual, Organisational and Sector factors



individual ind + sector sector sector + org organisational org + individual

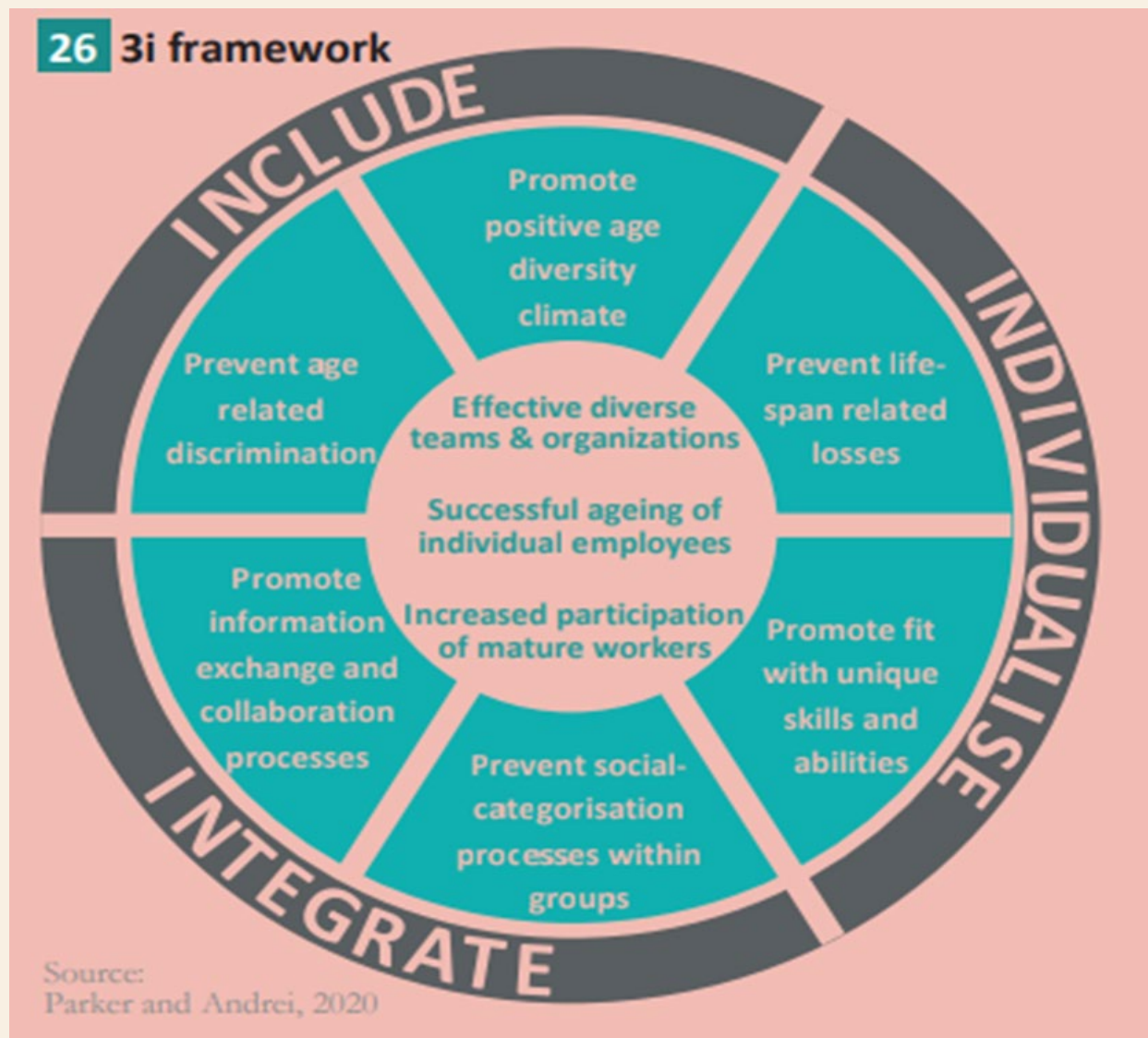


Strategies for older aged care workforce retention

- Very limited research evaluating the impact of strategies to improve retention among the older aged care workforce
- The majority of information comes from narrative reviews and reports



Overview of strategies



Centre of Excellence in
Population Ageing
Research (CEPAR) Report
2021



Strategies: key points

- **Include**
- **Individualise**
- **Integrate**

- Review internal policies and practices for impact on older workers and undertake age-related workforce planning initiatives
- Promote an inclusive culture; conduct diversity training to mitigate ageism and associated stereotypes

Individualise strategies

- Establish flexible work arrangements: phased retirement, telecommuting, flexible hours, part-time work, seasonal employment
- Offer cafeteria benefit plans to better meet the needs of a multi-generational work force
- Conduct skills training and development to avoid obsolescence
- Explore ergonomic refinements and work design modifications to support changes in physical capabilities

- Institute wellness programs to assist in maintaining physical well-being and conditioning
- Foster engagement at work
 - Leverage existing knowledge and experience for mentoring and developing knowledge transfer initiatives
 - Identify “autonomous” job experiences for retirees (e.g., consulting or independent contractor assignments)
 - Establish intergenerational, team-based task forces
 - Provide communication and recognition that demonstrates appreciation and respect for experience
 - Conduct employee research related to the differentiated needs and preferences of various segments of the workforce



Key take aways

- Experience is irreplaceable
- Understanding retention factors can inform tailored strategies
- Strategies need to consider inclusivity, individualisation and integration, to drive retention of older workforce



Knowledge Implementation Hub



Clinical
governance



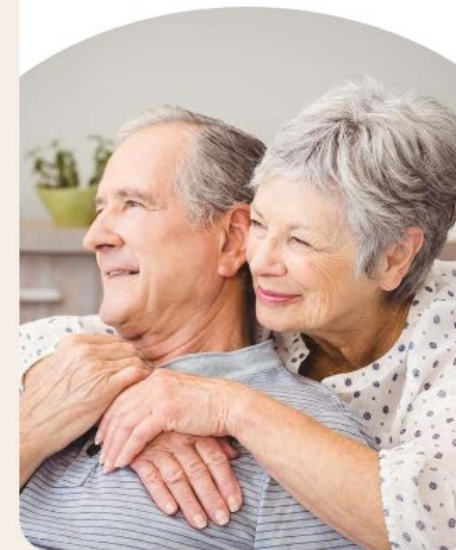
Technology in
aged care



Staff burnout



Dementia care



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