



# WASTED POTENTIAL

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF AN EXPERIENCED  
PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE IN FACING  
OUR KEY ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

2015 PROFESSIONALS AUSTRALIA  
MATURE-AGE WORKERS  
SURVEY REPORT



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## ABOUT PROFESSIONALS AUSTRALIA

Professionals Australia (formerly the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia) represents over 23,000 professional engineers, scientists, managers, veterinarians, surveyors, architects, pharmacists, information technology professionals, interpreters and translators and transport professionals throughout Australia.

Professionals Australia members are employed across all sectors of the Australian economy. This includes all tiers of government and in a diverse range of industries throughout the private sector including Roads, Rail, Water, Electricity, Information Technology, Telecommunications, Consulting Services, Laboratories, Research, Surveying, Architecture, Retail Pharmacy, Mining, Oil, Collieries, and Manufacturing.

We have three main objectives:

- to provide a strong voice for professionals. This includes considering the kind of support, policies and practices at the enterprise and structural levels that will be necessary to create a sustainable professional workforce capable of realising optimal levels of innovation, productivity and competitiveness;
- to play a leading role in encouraging dialogue between industry, government and the full range of sectors employing or engaging professionals. This means advocating for investment and structural reforms, building the platforms for cooperation and change and initiating and leading projects to foster collaboration; and
- to promote public understanding of the key role professionals play in ensuring Australia's future. This involves influencing public policy and resource allocation decisions and promoting the value of the professional workforce to decision-makers and the wider community. We seek to highlight the critical role professionals play in enabling productivity and innovation, promoting economic prosperity, protecting the environment, improving human welfare and quality of life and protecting national security. In doing so, we raise the status of the professions and the professionals who work in them.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

In September 2015 Professionals Australia conducted a survey of members over the age of 45 years asking questions about their experiences in the workforce. The 78-question survey was sent out electronically to around 9,000 members. The survey remained open until the end of September 2015, during which time 1,671 members responded, for a total response rate of just over 18 per cent. For the majority of questions participants could choose whether or not to provide answers so all subsequent analyses are conducted only for those who provided a response to the item of interest. The survey utilised qualitative as well as quantitative methods to draw out detail and variation as well as patterns and convergences in responses.

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Professionals Australia (2015). Wasted potential: the critical role of an experienced professional workforce in facing our key economic challenges.

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# FOREWORD

This research confirms that there is an opportunity to promote greater engagement of mature-age professionals and that, if this opportunity is utilised, the impact will be not only a productivity dividend at the enterprise level but a significantly improved national bottom line.

Chris Walton

