

Expert Insight:

# Australian Talent Trends

With Zain Wadee, Executive General Manager  
– Operations Harrier Talent Solutions

## What challenges does the future of work present for Australian employers?

The future of work is here. In Australia, significant developments in technology and automation across our largest industries are already creating new demands for talent and a re-think of internal talent development and mobility. As a talent partner, we are doing much more than sourcing external talent for our customers, we're taking a holistic approach to talent acquisition and employer branding by ensuring that our customers are focused on internal skills development and alignment to future needs.

It is critically important that we are creating new opportunities for those people whose roles are at risk of redundancy due to technology and automation. Retrenching employees and hiring in new talent is not a sustainable strategy from a talent attraction or brand perspective and has obvious moral implications.

## What benefits does increased focus on internal talent management and mobility have?

In Australia, we have relatively low unemployment and strict legislation governing how businesses hire talent from overseas that often fails to keep up with talent requirements. Even without the complexities of the future of work, it's imperative that we upskill the talent we have internally and that we support innovative job and team design to facilitate this – this may require incentives and investment in communications strategies to help employees understand the benefits of learning new skills or in retraining.

From an employer brand and culture perspective, nothing hurts a company more than a reputation for not looking after its people. If we can help minimize redundancies by providing employees with opportunities to train and upskill,



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then we are delivering positive employee experiences, building a supportive culture and protecting our customers' brands. Where a redundancy is unavoidable, then robust outplacement strategies need to be in place to help employees find suitable new employment.

It is also about doing the right thing. As technology automates or makes some roles obsolete, it is right that companies should work with their existing employees to help them find new roles. The future of work is not a surprise to anyone, we've had time to plan, and in many cases those with jobs

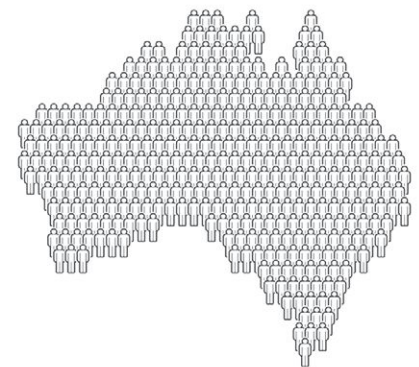
on the line have helped to create the new world of work – it's only right that we help them to retain their place in it.

## How might organisations unlock the potential within their existing workforce?

Like most advanced economies, we have a rapidly ageing population. Mature-aged workers are highly experienced people that often want to stay in meaningful employment, but we often see them forced to retire or take lower-level roles as their skills become less in demand. We need to challenge this, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because this group represents a motivated and knowledgeable pool of talent that can be retrained. The same applies to emerging talent - as graduates in certain industries decline, we need to source and hire for soft skills and develop training programs to teach core capability.

From a diversity perspective, offering ongoing training and support is even more critical to broadening our internal talent pools. We know that gender, disability, cultural and socio-economic background often impact education and employment outcomes. By re-focusing our attention on individual strengths and abilities and by taking the time to assess their future potential, we can identify suitable training paths, create the necessary internal support structures, and unlock talent that we were otherwise blind to.

The future of work demands a more agile, more holistic approach to talent acquisition and management. Only those organisations with a keen eye on their internal talent development will flourish.



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