

SUSTAINING A CAREER: LESSONS FROM CAREER LEGENDS

Stewart Forsyth
FX Consultants

APS 16th IO Psychology Conference
31 October 2026

*Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere
whakamua.*

Care for the land, care for the people, go forward.

A LONG AND HAPPY CAREER: RAY GLOSTER, WHO HAS WORKED AT A J GLOSTER & SONS FOR 83 YEARS



(From left) Doug Gloster, Ray Gloster, Robert Gloster, Colleen Gloster (Robert's wife), Frankie Gloster and Cameron Gloster. (ABC News: Tamara Clark)

SUSTAINING A CAREER: LESSONS FROM CAREER LEGENDS

- Capable people, skill shortages, are we making the most of this opportunity?
 - Do the theories of career sustainability work for this population?
 - Some preliminary results
-
- Can you help? contact stewart@fxc.co.nz, 021 392 667

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT: LONGER WORKING LIFE

Figure 1: Labour force patterns vary by age and sex.

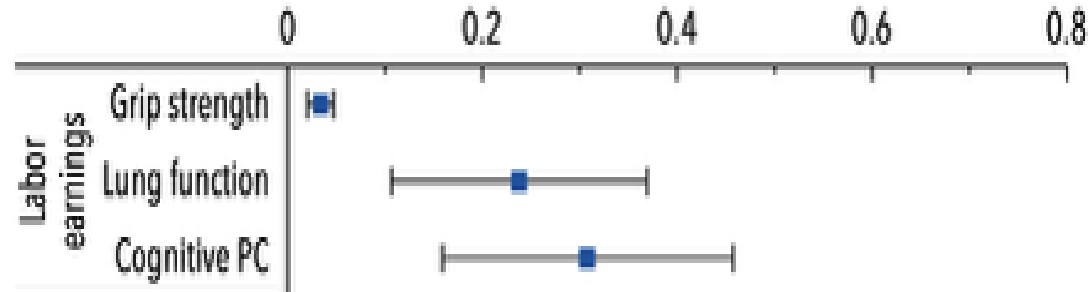
Labour force status of men and women by age, 2022



Source: June 2022, ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2022](#)

LONGER “HEALTH-SPAN”

(Regression coefficients)

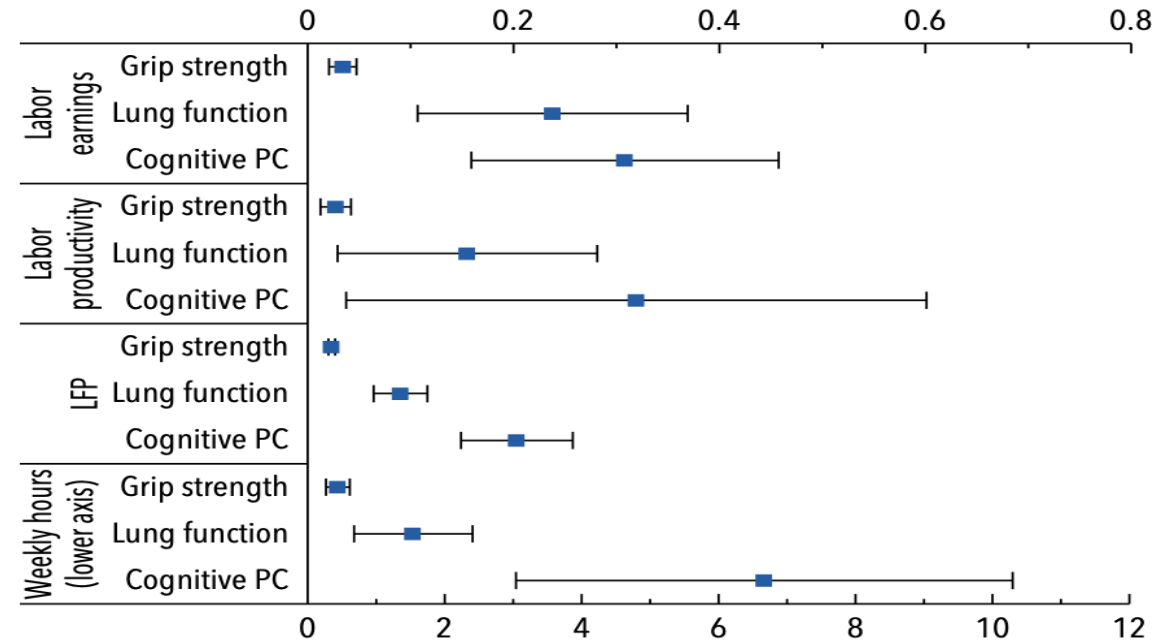


IMF (2025). World Economic Outlook: The Rise of the Silver Economy



Figure 2.8. Effect of Healthy Aging on Labor Market Outcomes

(Regression coefficients)



Sources: Gateway to Global Aging Data; national microdata sources; and IMF staff calculations.

Note: The figure shows estimates from two-stage least squares regressions of labor market outcomes of individuals ages 50 and older on health indicators (one at a time, instrumented by chronic diseases), with individuals’ age, gender, education, wealth, and country fixed effects controlled for. Squares represent point estimates, whereas surrounding bars represent 90 percent confidence intervals. The coefficients are rescaled to reflect the estimated impact of “healthy aging” (health trends) over 10 years. PC = principal components; LFP = labor force participation.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Skill gaps

- Health, eg, Aged Care Specialists
- Construction, eg, Trades
- Educations, eg, School Teachers and Early Childhood Educators
- IT and Engineering, eg, specialised problem-solving skills

Jobs and Skills Australia, [JSA Occupation Shortage List \(OSL\) and Insights](#)

Even after AI-driven “Job-ageddon”

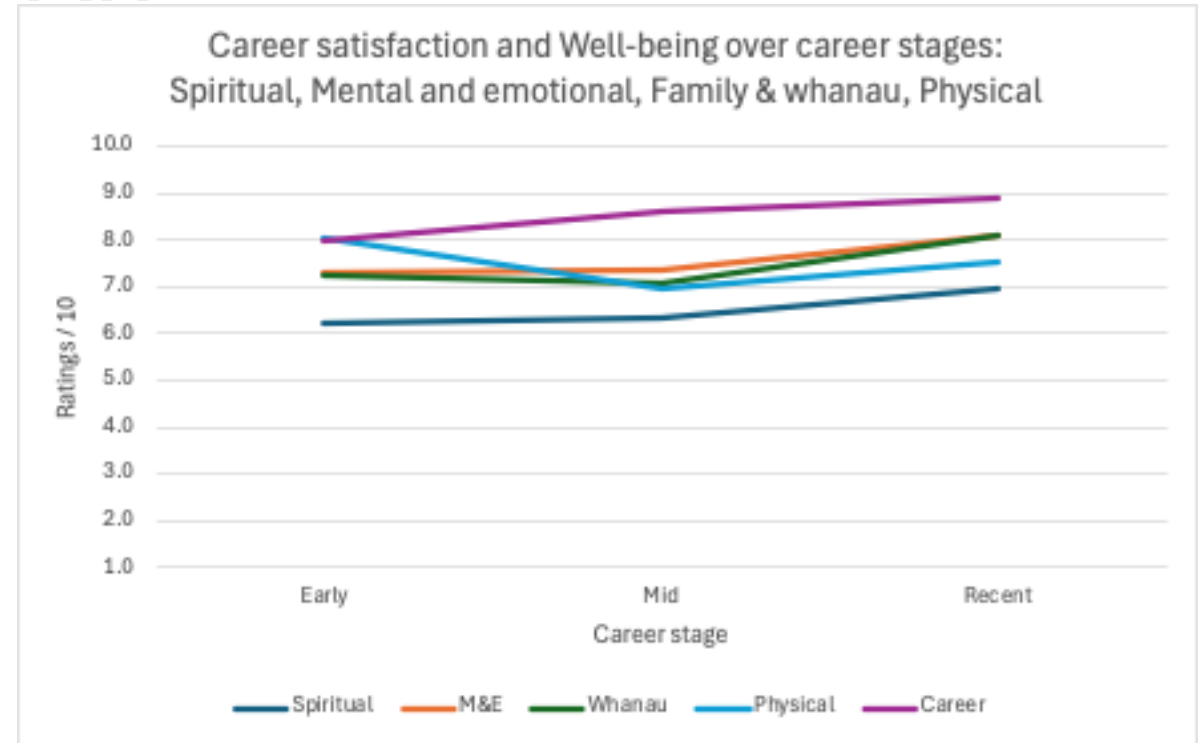
- Skilled trades, eg, Plumbers
- Health, eg, Clinical Psychologists
- Regulated roles, eg, Structural Engineers
- Specialised Community Roles, eg, Child Protection Practitioners
- Education and Early Childhood Care

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA); [AI and Employment in Australia](#)

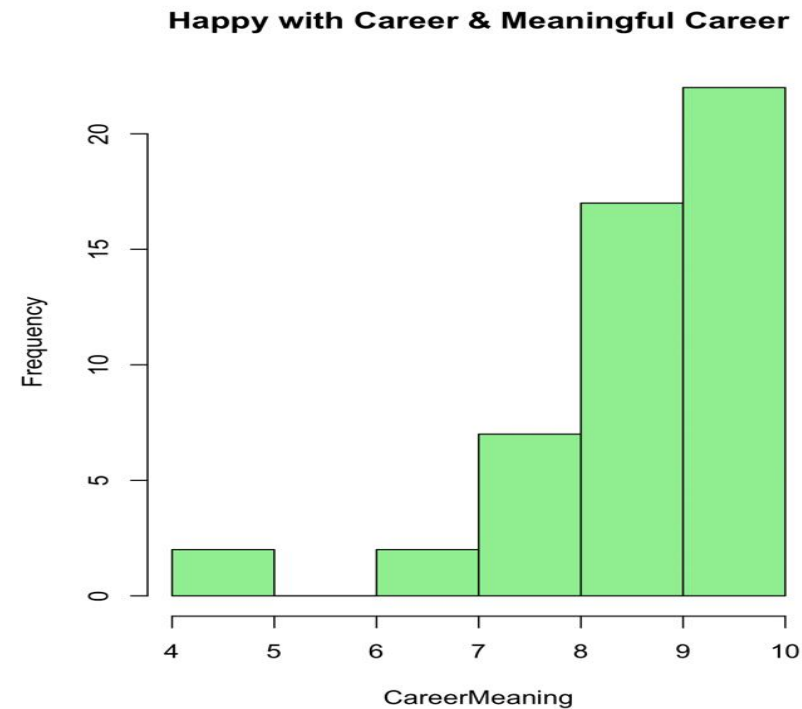
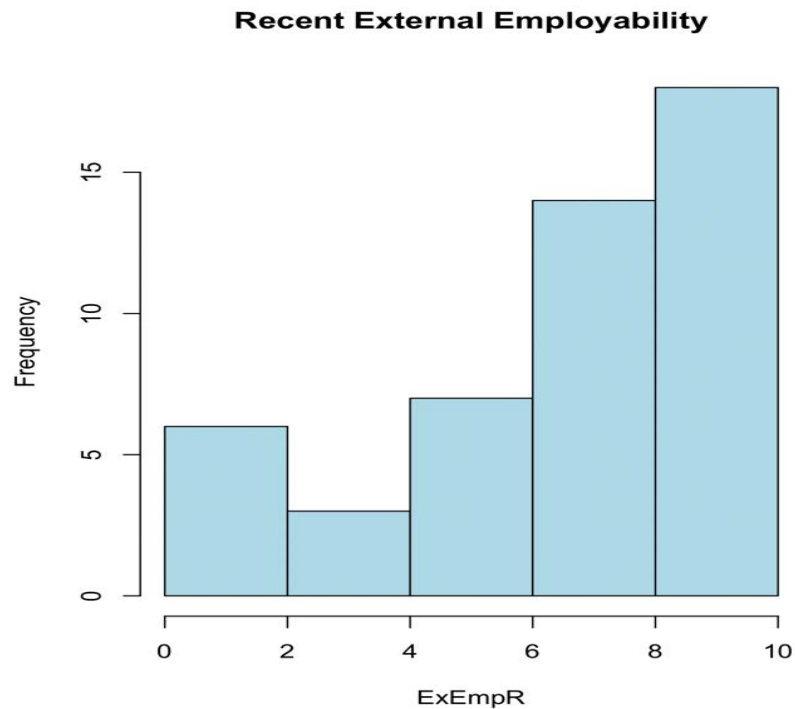
THE PARTICIPANTS SO FAR

- Age: 65-91
- 40% women
- 76% NZ European (88% of Kiwis had done their OE early in their career)
- 90% post-grad qualifications
- 38% engineers

Career satisfaction: Greenhaus, 1990; Wellbeing: Sir Mason Durie, 1984; Te Whare Tapa Whā



DEPENDENT VARIABLES: “EMPLOYABILITY” AND “MEANING+HAPPINESS”



External employability: Akkerman, 2023; Career meaning, Spreitzer, 1996 + Career happiness, Greenhaus, 1990



INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

From Eby, Butts & Lockwood, 2003: “How, Who & Why”:

1. **Networking** (Gratton, 2012)
2. **Proactivity** (Seibert et al., 1999, Savikas & Porfeti, 2012)

From Akkermans & Tims, 2017; “Career Management”:

3. **TalentPassion**
4. **ExploreProfile**

From Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, “Adaptability”:

5. **PrepInvest**
6. **DecideLearn**

7. **Health** (from Drury, 1984)

8. **CareerCapital** (Ferris, 2005; Epton, 2017; Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Eisenberger et al., 1997)

PREDICTING EMPLOYABILITY AND “MEANING+HAPPINESS”

Employability

0

Meaning+Happiness

Predicted by “Talent+Passion”

$F(4,41) = 5.901$ $p < .001$.

Beta = .48

*I am aware of my talents in my work
I can clearly see what my passions are*

WHAT ABOUT GENDER?

Employability

W = 269, p-value = 0.8943

Meaning+Happiness

W = 334, p-value = 0.5021

Talent+Passion

W = 364, p-value = 0.07762

F = 8.6 10-point scale

M = 8.0

WHAT ABOUT WORK HISTORY?

DID A CAREER OF “WORK WINNING”; SELF-EMPLOYMENT OR CONSULTING MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Employability	Meaning+Happiness	Talent+Passion
----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------

W = 235, p-value = 0.9399

W = 217, p-value = 0.3305

W = 188, p-value = 0.2591

SUGGESTED TAKEAWAYS

Individual

What is the intersection of your skills and what you are passionate about?

A career move – what skills will transfer?

Organisational

Help career legends find their space for meaningful work

Make work flexible

Train them as mentors and coaches – spread their tacit knowledge

Select staff for intelligence



THANK YOU

*E rere te huata, kapohia!
If the spear is thrown, grab it!*

Interested in talking?

stewart@fxc.co.nz

[linkedin.com/in/stewartforsyth](https://www.linkedin.com/in/stewartforsyth)

