"Fading @ 50?"

A Study of Career Management for Older Academics in Australia

By

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Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Education) (BA) (MU)

Master of Applied Psychology (MAPs) (MU)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Macquarie Graduate School of Management

Macquarie University

Sydney, Australia

June, 2016

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family with all my gratitude and love.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *"Fading @ 50?" A Study of Career Management for Older Academics in Australia* has not been previously submitted for a degree to any other university or institutions other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University's Ethics Review Committee, reference number HE27FEB2009-D06348 (see Appendix 1) on 18 March 2009.

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Date: June, 2016

Acknowledgements

It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop. Confucius

I have been extremely fortunate to have so many people who supported and assisted me in one way or another during this challenging PhD journey. I am indebted to them and owe them a great deal of thanks, too many to mention by name, for helping me to cross the finishing line.

I particularly wish to acknowledge and express my heartfelt appreciation to:

My supervisors, Associate Professor Ruth Neumann and Dr Paul Nesbit - for their incredible commitment, invaluable scholarly advice, and endless patience.

My editor, Dr Alison Basden - for her professional editorial assistance.

The 52 participants - for their openness and generosity of time. It was a great privilege that they shared with me their academic career stories.

Most importantly, I am truly blessed with an amazing family and eternally grateful for their unconditional love, extraordinary encouragement and unwavering belief in me. They have been an absolute constant for me through all the trials and tribulations of this PhD journey – especially, my remarkable mother, Vivienne, beloved grand-mother, Alice, and strong supporters - Tony, Karen, Nathaniel, and Craig. Last, but by no means least, to my wonderful children, Chantelle, Damian and Gabrielle, who have watched this PhD consume much of my time and for many years - I hope I have inspired them to set their goals high and to know that hard work, persistence, and perseverance will eventually pay off.

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List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
A/P	Associate Professor
ATN	Australian Technology Network
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CAE	College of Advanced Education
DEEWRS	Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
FD	Deans of Faculties
Go8	Group of Eight
HA	Hard-Applied discipline group
HoD	Heads of Departments
HoS	Heads of Schools
HP	Hard-Pure discipline group
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
IRU	Innovative Research University
NPM	New Public Management
NTEU	National Tertiary Education Union
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
RBV	The Resource-Based View of the Firm
RUN	Regional Universities Network
SA	Soft-Applied discipline group
SP	Soft-Pure discipline group
S/L	Senior Lecturer
UNS	Unified National System
VC	Vice-Chancellor

Abstract

Within Australian universities 42% of academics are aged 50 and over, which suggests that universities face an unprecedented human resource challenge with the potential retirement of large numbers of their academic workforce. For sustainability reasons, it is imperative to understand how the future career plans of this age cohort are incorporated into university HRM strategies, policies and programs. This study explored the perceptions of career management for Australian academics aged in their 50s from both organisational and individual perspectives, and contributes to the much-needed research on universities' responses to their ageing academic workforce.

This qualitative two-phase study purposely incorporated different university types and academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities. Phase 1 analysed publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities and Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audit reports for the period 2006–2009 for 21 Australian universities. The findings of Phase 1 informed Phase 2, which consisted of semi-structured interviews (n=52) with academics aged in their 50s, with academics holding university management positions, and with administrative staff in senior university HR positions. Data analysis drew on several theoretical frameworks: Miles and Snow's strategy typology, the Resource-Based View of the Firm and the psychological contract.

Contrary to the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb", this study found that the majority of academics had no intentions of retiring. Some of these academics were categorised as "Fifty and Flourishing", meaning that they wished to continue working as they are highly motivated, strongly committed and passionate about their academic pursuits. Others, also not planning to retire, categorised as "Fifty and Financially Focussed", were seeking to accumulate more superannuation in order to have enough money to retire. Those academics who planned to or were strongly considering retirement were categorised into three groups: "Fifty and Flexible" – academics who had the financial incentives of superannuation and pursuit of leisure activities influencing their intentions; "Fifty and Fit" – academics whose plans to continue working or retire depended on their health; and "Fifty and

Frustrated" – academics whose intentions were influenced by their perceptions of the unsatisfactory state of their working environment.

This study also found that older academics' perceptions about promotion and performance management were predominantly negative, and many felt constrained by non-supportive university management and leadership. Specific concerns about promotion were related to perceptions of limited opportunities, flawed promotion processes, and lack of career development support. Among the academic participants there were overwhelming feelings of dissatisfaction, coupled with cynicism and anger towards the purpose, process and role of university management in performance management systems. Many older academics felt that they were invisible to university management.

Both the document analysis and the interview findings indicated that academics aged in their 50s were "not on the radar" of university management. Universities' actions to date on career management for their older academics failed to recognise the different facets of academic careers and instead were reactive, designed to respond to short-term needs, and lacked an organisational strategic focus on either workforce planning or the career needs of older academics. Notably, senior management academics interviewed did not perceive older academics to be a valuable resource and, consequently, largely ignored them in their planning processes. These negative perceptions of older academics also suggested ageist and discriminatory attitudes, including a misconception of age and productivity, and a narrow and stereotypical view about age and career stage. In contrast, middle-level management expressed their desire to be proactive in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce, but a perceived lack of budgetary flexibility and control impeded their capacity to do so.

Overall, this study highlighted that the university's role in career management for older academics was limited and ineffective. The central recommendation from this study is for universities to re-think a "one size fits all" approach to career management, and recognise the competitive advantage they would achieve by proactively leveraging the highly specialised advanced knowledge and experience of their older academic workforce.

Publications Based on this Research

The dissemination of this research has followed a strategy that was designed to reach the international and national academic community to gain their feedback to help shape the ongoing enquiry. Twelve publications are based on this research: four articles in refereed journals and eight refereed conference proceedings.

Refereed Journal Publications:

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2012). Playing the performance management game? Perceptions of Australian older academics. *Irish Journal of Management, 32*(2), 47-69. ISSN:1649-248X (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2012). Ageing academics: Workforce priorities for universities. *International Journal of Employment Relations*, *20*(1), 3-24. ISSN:1039-6993 (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2009). Older academics and career management: An interdisciplinary discussion. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 18*(3), 29-39. ISSN:1038-4162 (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2009). University career management practices for academic staff: A reality check? *New Zealand Journal of Human Resource Management, 9*(2), 120-130. ISSN:1175-5407 (print).

Refereed Conference Publications:

Larkin, J., Neumann, R., & Nesbit, P. (2012). Older academics' views on promotion. *Proceedings of the 26th Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM)* Conference, Perth, Australia, 5–7 December. ISBN:978-0-9874158-0-6 (print).

Larkin, J., Neumann, R., & Nesbit, P. (2011). Australian university management perceptions of academics aged in their 50s: A Resource-Based View. *Proceedings of the 25th Annual British Academy of Management (BAM) Conference*, Birmingham, England, 13–15 September. ISBN: 978-0-95496083-4 (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2011). Perceptions of Australian academics aged in their 50s: Performance management and psychological contract challenges. *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Irish Academy of Management (IAM) Conference.* Dublin, Ireland, 31 August–2 September. This conference publication was awarded Best Paper in the Organisational Behaviour Track.

Neumann, R., & Larkin, J. (2011). Universities and the ageing academic workforce: Where is the leadership? *Proceedings of the European Applied Business Research (EABR) Conference*, Barcelona, Spain, 6–9 June, 2011. ISSN:1539-8757 (print). 2157-9660 (online).

Larkin, J., Neumann, R., & Nesbit, P. (2010). Fading at fifty? Exploring the future career plans of academics in their 50s. *Proceedings of the 24th Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Conference*, Adelaide, Australia, 7–10 December. ISBN:1-877040-81-9 (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2009). Reactive or proactive? Universities in action on their ageing academic workforce. *Proceedings of the 23rd Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Conference*, Melbourne, Australia, 1–4 December. ISBN:1-86038-157-7 (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2008). University career management practices for academic staff: A reality check? *Proceedings of the 22nd Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Conference*, Auckland, New Zealand, 3–5 December. ISBN:1-86038-149-6 (print).

Larkin, J., & Neumann, R. (2007). Older academics: Challenges for universities. *Proceedings of the 21st Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Conference*, Sydney, Australia, 4–7 December. ISBN:1-860308-141-0 (print).

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

People in their 50s today are better educated and trained, are healthier and enjoy significantly improved living conditions than in previous generations. In Australia, people are living longer and continue to have one of the longest life expectancies in the world (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015), with an average life expectancy of 80.3 years for men and 84.4 years for women (ABS, 2016). Based on these figures, it would be reasonable for an individual aged 50 today to expect to have potentially twenty or more years of working life ahead, followed by approximately ten years in retirement in which to reap the benefits of lifelong working.

With the population ageing in Australia, an ageing workforce raises social, economic and policy implications (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013a, 2015). In addition, an ageing workforce creates human resources management (HRM) challenges, such as the retention of older workers, and dealing with the many differences among older workers including individual characteristics (e.g., how important work is to a person), demographic characteristics, (e.g., gender, educational level) and occupational/organisation/job characteristics (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Connell, Nankervis & Burgess, 2015; Griffin & Beddie, 2011; Templer, Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Waterhouse & Burgess, 2010).

The issue of retirement is of increasing interest due to its potential to impact Australia's social and economic future (Griffin & Beddie, 2011). This is acknowledged in the Intergenerational Report 2015 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015): "over the next 40 years, Australia will need to embrace the potential of this talented older population group, particularly by valuing their increased and ongoing engagement in the workplace and community" (p. 96). However, according to the Productivity Commission Report on ageing in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013a), "the real problem is that some policies distort people's choices and attitudes – both as employers and employees – about participating in the labour market and have wider fiscal and other impacts on the

wellbeing of Australians. In the main, these policies encourage the premature exit of people from the workforce" (p. 174). Hence, having appropriate HRM strategies, policies and programs tailored to the differences among older workers is increasingly necessary in order to retain and motivate older workers to continue working, and maintain organisational sustainability (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Guest & Shacklock, 2005; Mountford, 2011, Patrickson & Ranzijn, 2005; Templer et al., 2010).

It is important to clarify the terms of older academic and career management for this thesis. There is no universal agreement in the HRM or career literature on the meaning of an older worker. Authors tend to refer to disparate age categories for older workers (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013b), such as 40 plus, 45 plus, 50 plus and 55 plus (Encel, 2003; OECD, 2006). For the purposes of this study, the term "older academic" is used to refer to academics in the 50–59 years age bracket. Although the definition of older academic in this thesis is based on a chronological age, it does not imply a particular life and/or career stage, as these can be quite separate entities (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3).

A variety of definitions of the term "career management" are evident within the HRM and career literature. In the context of this thesis, career management refers to the organisational career management programs that form part of a comprehensive portfolio of HRM policies and programs and are specifically designed to help individuals to assess, plan and manage their career direction and development. Organisations can offer a wide variety of possible career management programs that focus on matching individual and organisational career needs, such as career workshops, formal mentoring, career counselling, succession planning, pre-retirement programs, and performance appraisal (Baruch, 2003, 2004a; Gutteridge & Otte, 1983; Portwood & Granrose, 1986; Stumpf, 1988).

The academic workforce is amongst the oldest and arguably has the most highly qualified professionals within Australia. In fact, academics aged 50 and over represent 42% of Australia's academic workforce (DEEWRS, 2015). While there is no compulsory retirement age in Australia, and national anti-discrimination legislation makes it unlawful for an employee to be dismissed on the grounds of

age, the high proportion of academics aged over 50 years, suggests that the next two decades for Australian universities presents a time of critical staffing vulnerability. A key issue relates to sustainability, by way of the potential loss of a substantial part of the academic workforce through retirement that will deplete the universities' skill and experience levels. The issue of sustainability is compounded with the evidence that Australian academics are experiencing high levels of job dissatisfaction, low morale, stress, attitudes of distrust, and perceived ineffectiveness of leadership (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; Harman, 2000, 2005; McInnis, 2000; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua & Hapuararchchi, 2002; Winter, 2009). Hence, the changing age demographic signals the need for a systematic investigation to provide insights into how universities, their leaders and HRM strategies, policies, and programs are responding to this unprecedented human resource challenge.

Universities contribute significantly to Australia's economic growth, with international education ranking as Australia's third-largest export industry and largest services export, generating revenues of $18 billion in 2014–2015 (Universities of Australia, 2015). Notably, universities have a fundamental role in driving Australia's productivity, research, innovation, global engagement and future economic prosperity (Chief Scientist, 2014; Universities of Australia, 2015). Therefore, the consequences of the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) could have a ripple effect on Australia's economy. For this reason, the demographic reality is one of the critical factors in sustaining universities, but it requires an examination and possibly a radical review of current university HRM strategies, policies, and programs to ensure that they continue to motivate older academics, and capitalise on their research, teaching, and service contributions.

The trend of ageing within the academic workforce has been noted by researchers for decades (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981; Dunkin, 1991; Over, 1985; Sheehan, Dobson & Smith, 1997); however, in practice, policy makers at both the system and the institutional levels have largely neglected staffing matters (Kogan, Moses & El-Khawas, 1994). The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), which represents the single largest collective lobby for academic staff in Australia, has expressed concern that universities are taking a reactive response to the ageing academic

workforce with short-sighted policies and strategies aimed at minimising staffing costs, which, in turn, could possibly threaten the future sustainability of a quality higher education sector (NTEU, 2007). Furthermore, Hugo and Morriss (2010) have argued that further empirical research is required to meet universities' future educational and research needs, as the various workforce planning and development studies to date, do not adequately provide a basis to ensure sufficient suitable academics in the future to train the next generation of professionals.

None of the studies reviewed so far has explored older academics' perceptions of career management, their career needs and expectations. Given that 42% of Australian academics are aged 50 and over, it is imperative to understand how the future career plans of this age cohort are incorporated into university HRM strategies, policies and programs. This elicits important questions in regards to career planning, retirement plans, and how retirement decisions are to be managed at the organisational level. This study addresses this gap in the literature and, therefore, its primary purpose is to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics in Australia from both organisational and individual perspectives.

Section 1.2 outlines the research question and contributions; Section 1.3 provides an overview of the research approach, including the design, research participants, method and analysis; Section 1.4 explains the structure of the thesis and Section 1.5 presents the chapter summary.

1.2   Research Question and Contributions

The focus of this research is to explore the perceptions of career management for academics aged in their 50s in Australian universities from both organisational and individual perspectives. The organisational perspective examines the institutional role in HRM policy-making for older academics and university management perceptions of career management for older academics, while the individual perspective examines the career trajectories of older academics and older academics' perceptions of career management.

The question embedded in the title of this thesis, "Fading @ 50?", holds two implications. The first implication relates to whether academics aged in their 50s are fading from the radar of university management and HRM policy-makers. The second implication relates to whether the motivation of academics aged in their 50s is fading in the latter stage of their career. Beyond simply determining whether academics are fading at 50 represents the perceived reality, it is also important to determine the extent of these implications. Hence, the primary research question examined in this thesis is:

"How effective is the university's role in career management for

older academics?"

In order to address this primary research question, this research has the following four research objectives (RO):

RO1.   Identify what universities do to support the careers of older academics.

RO2.   Explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics.

RO3.   Explore older academics' perceptions of career management.

RO4.   Identify whether these perceptions of career management for older academics differ based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage.

This research contributes to knowledge in a number of ways. First, this study is a response to the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) and the need to explore how universities are responding to their ageing academic workforce. The findings contribute to an understanding of the limited role that universities currently play in the career management for older academics. The organisational perspective explores the institutional role in HRM policy-making for older academics and university management perceptions of career management for older academics, while the individual perspective explores the career trajectories of older academics and older academics' perceptions of career management. The linking of this understanding to the mounting challenges facing

universities today constitutes a fundamental source of information for universities striving for continued productivity and organisational effectiveness.

Second, this study represents the first empirical investigation of Australian academics aged in their 50s, and it purposely incorporated different university types and academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities, in order to give a broad perspective of the issues. There are a number of reasons to investigate Australian academics aged in their 50s. First, these academics represent almost a third of Australia's total academic workforce. Second, this age cohort occupies a significant proportion of senior academic and senior management positions in universities. Third, older academics have at least 15 years or more of working life ahead, based on society's conventional retirement age of 65 years. Fourth, they are a pool of highly educated professionals with advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience and, therefore, they are an important resource that should be nurtured and encouraged to maximise their contributions to their respective universities. The findings of this study contribute to the scarce research on the careers of older academics.

Third, this study contributes empirical findings to illustrate the diverse career trajectories of older academics by providing insights on their career perceptions, needs and expectations, thus strengthening the understanding of the complexities of an academic career. This study identifies the different facets of academic careers and its findings contribute to the much-needed research on universities' responses to their ageing academic workforce.

Fourth, this study provides insights from the individual perspective, particularly academics aged in their 50s, on performance management in universities and academic promotion. These insights constitute an important source of information for universities and their HRM policy-makers who are involved in developing and implementing these HRM policies and programs.

Fifth, the findings of this study are likely to be of value to universities and their HRM policy-makers. The identification of key factors and variables that underpin the career needs of academics aged in their 50s could assist university management and their HRM policy-makers in targeting career management

policies and programs that account for varied career needs and expectations of older academics.

Sixth, although the focus of this research is on the career management for older academics, the findings of this study have potential transferability to the career management for other types of older professionals in a variety of knowledge-intensive organisations. As with the academic profession, professional occupations require considerable time to gain the relevant qualifications and training and, therefore, it is important to determine the extent to which other knowledge-intensive organisations are responding to their ageing professional workforce.

1.3   Research Approach

Given the nature of the research objectives that explore participants' perceptions of career management for older academics by means of "how" and "why" questions, this study is located within the theoretical perspective of interpretivism-hermeneutics (see Section 3.3), the research design is qualitative, and utilises both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources (see Section 3.4). The research design purposely incorporates different university types and academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities. Four formal and self-selected university groupings are included: Group of Eight (Go8) is a coalition of eight of Australia's oldest and leading universities that are internationally recognised for scholarship and research excellence (Go8, 2009); Australian Technology Network (ATN) is a coalition of five Australian universities that share a common focus on the practical application of tertiary studies and research (ATN, 2009); Innovative Research Universities (IRU) comprises seven Australian universities recognised for their distinctive and innovative approaches to research, teaching and learning (IRU, 2009); and Regional Universities Network (RUN), formed in 2011, comprises six universities that reside either as outer-metropolitan institutions or in large regional locations outside capital cities (RUN, 2011).

Disciplines represent knowledge forms and are the core of universities. Academic discipline groups are based on the knowledge forms reflecting both epistemological approaches and the social aspects of knowledge (Neumann, 2009). Furthermore, academic discipline groups encompass the myriad of differing organisational structures of knowledge domains manifested within universities, described as "academic tribes, each with their own set of intellectual values and their own patch of cognitive territory" (Becher, 1994, p. 153).

Four academic discipline groups are included in the research design: Hard-Pure (HP) represent the knowledge domain for pure sciences such as physics and biology; Hard-Applied (HA) represent the knowledge domain for applied science-based professions such as engineering and agriculture; Soft-Pure (SP) represent the knowledge domain for humanities and pure social sciences such as history, philosophy, sociology and psychology; and Soft-Applied (SA) represent the knowledge domain for applied social science professions such as management, business, law and education (Becher, 1984, 1987, 1994; Becher & Trowler, 2001). The four academic discipline groups are distinguished by a range of characteristics, such as the entry requirements to an academic position, the research enquiry process, the nature of knowledge growth, the relationship between the researcher and knowledge, and the way the researcher moves among positions within the field (Becher, 1984, 1987, 1994; Becher & Trowler, 2001).

This exploratory study has two phases, with primary data sources utilised in Phase 1 and then these findings used to inform Phase 2. Phase 1 involves the analysis of documents that were publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities and Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audit reports for the period 2006–2009 for 21 Australian universities. Phase 2 involves semi-structured interviews with 52 participants, drawn from three different universities and from the four distinct academic discipline groups. The sample of 52 participants included academics aged in their 50s, academics holding university management positions, and administrative staff in senior university HR positions. For the purpose of this thesis, university management participants refer to senior management and middle-level management. Senior management included Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) and university HR Directors, both of

whom have institutional responsibility for academic staffing matters. Middle-level management included Deans of Faculties (FD), Heads of Schools (HoS) and Heads of Departments (HoD). All senior level managers are typically externally appointed, as are most of the FD positions. The HoS and HoD are generally appointed by FDs in consultation with departmental academic staff. Middle-level management roles are responsible for operational managerial activities at the department level. For example, the HoS are typically academics who accept additional managerial responsibilities for a specified and temporary period, such as directing others' work and evaluating their performance, and who then return to regular academic work responsibilities.

The sample of participants was chosen using purposive sampling, where "the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The sampling process involved the use of publicly available information on selected university websites and these were combined with the snowball sampling technique on a needs basis (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Participants were approached via email with an open invitation to participate in this study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions, so that different dimensions from the participant's responses could be pursued by the interviewer (Kvale, 1996). The interviews followed the same format for each participant, allowing responses to semi-structured questions as well as providing the opportunity to elaborate on their responses and offer further comments. The interviews with university management explored their perceptions of career management for older academics and also their role in formulating strategy and implementing HRM strategies, policies and programs that support the careers of older academics. The interview questions asked of older academics explored their career trajectories to date, their career plans for the next ten years and their perceptions of career management programs such as performance management.

1.4   Limitations of the Research Design

There are several limitations in this research. The first limitation relates to the data sources used for this study. In Phase 1, some university HRM policy documents were incomplete as they contained confidential information that was protected and, therefore, not made available to the public. In Phase 2, not all participants were equally articulate and perceptive in their interview responses. For some participants there was limited time to participate in the interview and this possibly may have had an impact on the scope and depth of interview responses. The second limitation relates to the sample in relation to size and representativeness. The sample was purposely restricted to academics aged in their 50s, totalled 50 academic participants drawn from the four distinct academic discipline groups and from three identified formal university groupings. The third limitation is the role of the researcher. The researcher is a student as well as an academic, and this raises the possible limitation of interviewer bias.

1.5   Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in six chapters that include two findings chapters: one chapter for the organisational perspective on career management for older academics and one chapter for the individual perspective on career management for older academics.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) provides an introduction to the research background, research question and contributions, research approach, and the structure of this thesis.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) presents a review of the literature as it relates to the career management for older academics. Given the nature of this research and the complexities of careers, a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach is adopted to review the literature in three key fields: HRM, higher education and career. This chapter provides the evidence from the literature review that justifies the need for this research.

Chapter 3 (Methodology) explains the research design and methodology, including the details for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research, the ethical considerations and the limitations of the research design.

Chapter 4 (Findings – Organisational Perspective on Career Management for Older Academics) seeks to answer two research objectives: RO1: Identify what universities do to support the careers of older academics, and RO2: Explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics. This chapter presents the findings and the analysis of the organisational perspective on career management for older academics from two data sources: documents and semi-structured interviews. The documents were publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities and AUQA audit reports for the period 2006–2009 for 21 Australian universities. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants: 18 were academics holding university management positions and two were administrative staff in senior university HR positions.

Chapter 5 (Findings – Individual Perspective on Career Management for Older Academics) seeks to answer two research objectives: RO3: Explore older academics' perceptions of career management, and RO4: Identify whether these perceptions of career management differ based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage. This chapter presents the findings and the analysis of the interviews with 50 academics aged in their 50s (30 were men and 20 were women).

Chapter 6 (Conclusions and Implications) presents a summary of the major findings for each of the four research objectives. It draws together the findings to address the primary research question, details the research contributions, discusses the implications for policy resulting from this research, outlines the limitations of the research design, and offers possible directions for future research. The chapter concludes with comments in relation to the question embedded in the title of this thesis.

1.6   Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the foundations for this thesis. The context for this research is the ageing academic workforce and, with 42% of Australian academics aged 50 and over, universities face an unprecedented human resource challenge with the potential retirement of large numbers of their academic workforce. As universities contribute significantly to Australia's economic growth, this raises sustainability issues and presents potential organisational risks and opportunities for universities. For these reasons, there is a need for further empirical research to provide insights into how universities are responding to an ageing academic workforce, and this provides justification for this study.

The primary research question and the four research objectives of this study were presented. The primary research question is to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics. The research approach was introduced as a qualitative two-phase study, utilising both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources. The structure of this thesis was outlined chapter by chapter to demonstrate the logical and coherent flow of the six chapters.

The contributions of this research were outlined. This study is a response to the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) and represents the first empirical investigation of Australian academics aged in their 50s. Participants were purposely selected from three different university types, across four different academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities. The findings of this study contribute to the scarce research on how universities are responding to an ageing academic workforce, and draw attention to the complexities of an academic career. This study provides insights from the individual perspective, particularly for academics aged in their 50s, on performance management in universities and academic promotion. These insights constitute an important source of information to universities and their HRM policy-makers involved in developing and implementing these policies and programs. The findings of this study identify key factors and variables that underpin the career needs of academics aged in their 50s, which could assist

university management and their HRM policy-makers in targeting career management policies and programs that account for varied needs and expectations of older academics. The findings may also have potential transferability to the career management for other types of older professionals in a variety of knowledge-intensive organisations.

The next chapter reviews the literature in three key fields: HRM, higher education and career. In doing so, the chapter draws out a number of critical themes relevant for this thesis and highlights gaps in the literature in relation to the career management for older academics that form the basis of this research.

Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research is to explore how effective is the university's role in career management for older academics. This chapter reviews the literature relating to career management for older academics to provide a foundation and justification for this research. Given the nature of this research and the complexity of careers, a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach was adopted to bring together the various contributions from three fields in the literature: HRM, higher education and career. This chapter discusses a number of critical themes relevant to this research.

Section 2.2 reviews the trend of Australia's ageing academic workforce, in particular, retirement in the Australian academic context. Section 2.3 provides an overview of the contextual factors influencing academic careers, specifically, the university as an organisation, the impact of managerialism, the changing higher education environment, the complexities of the academic profession, and the nature and role of disciplines. Section 2.4 examines the changing nature of academic careers, in terms of academic career mobility, the academic psychological contract, academic career success, and academic career development and management. Section 2.5 is the chapter summary.

2.2   The Trend of Australia's Ageing Academic Workforce

Australian universities today are constantly striving to advance their reputation in a dynamic environment that has been increasingly competitive for research funding, high-quality students, and high-performing staff (Bradley, 2008; Hugo, 2005a, 2008; Universities of Australia, 2015; Willekens, 2008). Since the 1990s, the corporatisation of university governance and reduced levels of public investment have created tensions between financial viability and traditional academic values, with academics increasingly being managed in ways that

challenge academic freedom and collegiality. These tensions have led to an ongoing trend in declining academic motivation, a perceived reduction in career opportunities and security, and a perception that university management are ineffective (Anderson, Johnson & Saha, 2002; Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winter, 2009).

Against this backdrop, Australian universities have an added and unprecedented human resource challenge of an ageing academic workforce. Over the past two decades, the percentage of academics aged over 50 of the total Australian academic workforce has been steadily increasing. As shown in Table 2.1, 27% of the total academic workforce was aged 50 years and over in 1992, rising to 39% in 2004, then remaining stable at 40% from 2006 to 2014, and further increasing to 42% in 2015.

Within the next two decades, Australian universities can potentially lose between a fifth and a third of their academic staff to retirement (Hugo 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2008; Hugo & Morriss, 2010). Drawing on demographic, occupational and industry data, Hugo (2005b, 2008) identified several trends associated with this projection. One trend is that the age structure is dominated by the older age groups. For example, from 1991 to 2006, the academic workforce aged over 50 increased by more than 80%, while the number aged under 50 had decreased by 4%. A second trend showed patterns for institutions and specific discipline groups: education and nursing for example, established subject areas in Australian universities, had more than half of their academic staff aged 50 or older in 2006. A third trend identified international migration of academics: in 2006, for example, 40.5% of academic staff in Australian universities were overseas-born but there is a high turnover rate, as there is an increasing dominance of long-term rather than permanent movement among immigrant academics, resulting in a "brain drain" dilemma – the competitiveness and "quality" of the in-and-out migration of academics. The significance of these trends has highlighted the need for universities to proactively manage the potential loss of accumulated specialised knowledge, experience, and high performance in research and teaching when their older academic staff exit the workforce and retire. In fact, Vincent-Lancrin (2008)

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has argued that the ongoing ageing demographic trend is creating unparalleled workforce/HRM concern for universities that warrants further investigation.

Table 2.1: **Number of Full-time and Fractional Full-time Academic Staff by Gender by Age >50 years, 1992–2015**

(DEST, 1992–1996; DEEWRS, 1997–2015)

Year	Males >50	Females >50	Total No. >50	Total no. Academics	%
1992	6,806	1,673	8,479	31,345	27%
1993	7,155	1,832	8,987	32,215	28%
1994	7,453	2,037	9,490	32,297	29%
1995	7,678	2,274	9,952	32,396	31%
1996	7,852	2,430	10,282	33,313	31%
1997	8,108	2,657	10,765	33,229	32%
1998	8,102	2,788	10,890	32,663	33%
1999	8,262	3,085	11,347	32,404	35%
2000	8,644	3,368	12,012	33,114	36%
2001	8,869	3,701	12,570	33,448	38%
2002	9,172	4,042	13,214	34,600	38%
2003	9,442	4,359	13,801	35,863	38%
2004	9,732	4,719	14,451	37,387	39%
2005	10,051	5,517	15,208	38,952	39%
2006	10,379	5,659	16,038	40,216	40%
2007	10,801	6,140	16,941	42,224	40%
2008	11,091	6,469	17,560	43,561	40%
2009	11,083	6,657	17,740	45,632	39%
2010	11,474	7,166	18,460	46,969	39%
2011	11,868	7,588	19,456	48,325	40%
2012	12,272	8,047	20,319	50,349	40%
2013	12,341	8,409	20,750	51,414	40%
2014	12,538	8,758	21,296	52,603	40%
2015	12,937	9,304	22,241	52,974	42%

Given that the trend of ageing academics is likely to continue, Willekens (2008) has argued that universities should respond by adopting a life-course paradigm in

workforce planning, with the emphasis on matching competencies with job requirements. Factoring in such a paradigm could provide the potential for universities to review and revise existing HRM policies and programs that would capitalise on older academics' advanced levels of highly specialised knowledge and experience. However, a review of the higher education literature has revealed a patchwork of research on the ageing academic workforce to date, with policy makers largely neglecting staffing matters (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981; Dunkin, 1991; Hugo & Morriss, 2010; Kogan et al., 1994; Over, 1985; Sheehan et al., 1997). For this reason, to what extent universities have re-oriented their HRM policies and programs to fit the demographic reality of an ageing academic workforce was explored as part of this research.

In Australia, research on the ageing academic workforce has been varied and limited. One of the most comprehensive investigations in this area was the Hugo and Morriss study (2010) commissioned by Professions Australia (the peak body for the professions in Australia) and Universities Australia (the peak body for higher education in Australia). The purpose of this study was to determine whether research on an ageing academic workforce had addressed whether there will be sufficient academics to train future professionals. Various workforce planning and development studies were examined, ranging from government studies such as the Bradley Report (2008) and Skills Australia (2009) to reports from industry and professional associations such as Access Economics (2009) and Engineers Australia (2008). Hugo and Morriss's analysis revealed that there has been a piecemeal approach, with no detailed understanding of how universities are responding to an ageing academic workforce nor how academics themselves are thinking about retirement. Hugo and Morriss recommended further research, particularly as previous studies examined professions such as medical practitioners, nurses, teachers and engineers. This thesis contributes to a better understanding of the university's role in career management for older academics. In particular, this research has focussed on how universities are responding to their ageing academic workforce.

Further justification for investigating how universities are responding to the ageing academic workforce has been provided by the research of Bexley, Arkoudis

and James (2013). These authors argued that the anticipated retirements, career changes, and possible overseas departures, have highlighted a potential major shortfall in the academic workforce if sufficient new staff are not employed. They concluded that the present structure of the academic profession is nearing or has reached its limits and will require fundamental changes to address the challenges of reconfiguring, replenishing and retaining Australia's academic workforce. In light of this, it is fair to say that the issues identified by Bexley et al. (2013) strengthen the argument that universities must urgently develop strategies aimed at maintaining and replenishing the academic workforce in order to remain sustainable and competitive.

The focus of this thesis on the academic workforce of universities is consistent with a central HRM theory, the Resource-Based View of the Firm (RBV) framework. The RBV framework argues that organisations that possess valuable resources whereby others cannot easily duplicate or substitute, will outperform competitors lacking such resources. More specifically, the RBV framework asserts that an organisation's HR (knowledge, skills and abilities of people) in contrast to physical resources and organisational resources – are strategically more important to achieving and generating a sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1997).   Indeed, strategic HRM researchers have long recognised that employees play central roles in developing and maintaining an organisation's competitive edge over rivals (Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001).

Several researchers have applied the RBV framework to knowledge-intensive organisations such as universities, arguing that intellectual capital is the most critical asset, as it represents the organisational processes and human know-how that support and create wealth for the organisation (Herremans & Issac, 2004; Lynch & Baines, 2004; Yazdani, 2008). This perspective reinforces that universities' most vital asset is their academic workforce. In effect, academics are considered to be the "heart and soul" of higher education and research (Enders, 2007). As echoed by Lynch and Baines (2004, p. 181), "if a university fails to invest in developing its staff, particularly in capacity building in research teams, it will not succeed in developing knowledge to which it can claim unique ownership through copyright or patents".

One of the main features of the RBV framework is the role of HRM policies and programs. HRM policies and programs are essentially the levers by which an organisation's HR can be recognised and exploited as a source of sustained competitive advantage, and they are fundamental to maintaining a talented and committed workforce (Barney & Wright, 1997; Boxall, 1996; Wright et al, 2001; Wright, McMahan & McWilliams, 1994). Applying the RBV as a basis for describing the contribution of older workers – by introducing HRM policies and programs that fully utilise the skills, abilities and knowledge of older workers – is seen as one way for organisations to increase their competitive advantage (Mountford & Murray, 2011). In the case of academics aged in their 50s, this raises the question of whether their advanced levels of highly specialised knowledge and experience are being harnessed by universities in order to create distinctive capabilities that set one university apart from another. This question was explored as part of this study.

Another key feature of the RBV framework is the role of managers. Penrose's (1959) view is that the knowledge and experience of management will affect the valuable contributions of all its resources. Furthermore, Barney (1991) has argued that the task of management is to manage the identified valuable HR in such a way that competitors are discouraged from trying to eliminate or duplicate the advantage that they provide. Applying the RBV framework in this way within the university context means that university management would have a concern for the university's future, a sense of where opportunities lie and, as a result, develop HRM policies and programs that capitalise on their academic workforce in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. To what extent university HRM policies and programs capitalise on their older academic workforce to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage was explored as part of this study. This study also determined whether university management consider academics aged in their 50s to be a valuable resource.

Thus, the combination of an ageing academic workforce and the potential workforce sustainability challenges signal that universities cannot afford to adopt a "trial and error" approach to retaining or replenishing their academic workforce. Of particular interest in this study is what universities are doing to support the

careers of academics aged in their 50s. Given the significant proportion of Australian academics aged 50 years and over, Dorfman (1992, 2002) has argued that research on the transition to retirement is needed to illuminate the process of retirement and provide valuable information for universities and their HRM policy-makers. Since this thesis focuses on the career management for older academics, the next section reviews retirement in the Australian academic context.

2.2.1 Retirement in the Australian Academic Context

The context within which employees retire has changed significantly in the past 20 years (Wang & Shultz, 2010). The process of retirement can be gradual, phased or partial, reflecting a transitional process of retirement (Beehr, 1986; Borland, 2004; Kim & Feldman, 2000; Weckerle & Shultz, 1999). For example, retirement can involve a period of bridge employment, which refers to the period between career work and the complete withdrawal from the workforce. Instead of retirement being regarded as a career exit, it is deemed to be a career development stage, as this viewpoint recognises the continued potential for career development in an individual's retirement life (Wang & Shultz, 2010).

Given that the focus of this thesis is on career management for older academics, retirement is theoretically conceptualised as a career development stage and associated with HRM policies, rather than as an end stage of full-time working life. Furthermore, this view of retirement is in keeping with the multi-disciplinary conceptual approach for this research.

In the international academic context, the majority of studies have examined the experiences of already retired academics (eg., Dorfman, 1992, 2002). Fewer studies have been conducted on the retirement intentions of academics (Davis & Jenkins, 2013). Within the Australian academic context, there is a paucity of research on retirement - indeed, very little is known about the retirement plans of ageing employees in the Australian higher education sector and their general attitudes towards the concept of retirement (deVries, 2009). Despite the acknowledged trend of an ageing academic workforce and the projections that

Australian universities are potentially facing a shortage of academics (Hugo, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2008; Hugo & Morriss, 2010), it is surprising that so little empirical research has actually addressed this topic. A recent assertion is that old academics don't retire, they just go into research (Moodie, 2010), but this opinion raises the question of the empirical evidence to support this view. This study sheds some light in this area by exploring the retirement plans of older academics.

Retirement is influenced by a number of factors. Australia, like the UK, USA and Canada, has abolished mandatory retirement ages, shifted responsibility for retirement away from the government and welfare systems onto the individual and there is an upwards shift in age at which superannuation can be drawn (OECD, 2015). In practice, retirement ages differ across occupations and generally the higher skilled occupations tend to have later retirement ages (Australian Centre for Financial Studies, 2014). Superannuation defined benefit schemes, such as those offered by large corporations and the Australian Government, also influence the decision to retire and, in some cases, it can be lucrative financially to retire by age 60. The retirement benefit for an individual under these schemes is typically based on a mathematical formula utilising a combination of employment factors, such as an employee's average salary leading up to retirement, length of employment and age, all of which are used to calculate a set monthly pension amount[1] (e.g., www.unisuper.com.au, www.pss.gov.au). Consequently, more years of employment lead to higher accrued benefits.

The factors that influence the decision to retire can be categorised in several ways. One approach drawn from the retirement literature is to highlight "push" and "pull" factors (Hanisch, 1994; Shultz, Morton & Weckerle, 1994; Taylor & Shore, 1995). "Push" factors are typically regarded as negative, since poor health and job dissatisfaction from work politics can induce older workers to retire. "Pull" factors, such as the pursuit of leisure and travel activities that can attract older workers to retire, are typically positive. Another approach is that retirement can be "objectively" determined by age and long-term career and "subjectively" determined by the individual, based on one's future career plans and/or by their

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[1] Australia's situation is mirrored in other countries such as the USA, UK and Canada, but such schemes tend to be more generous in Australia

level of psychological commitment to work (Feldman, 1994; Feldman & Beehr, 2011). The range of factors impacting the retirement decision is further differentiated by gender, as women tend to reach career stages at different ages to men, since their career choices and workforce participation are often moderated by family responsibilities and, consequently, they may delay retirement for financial reasons (Loretto & White, 2006; Patrickson & Hartmann, 1996; Shacklock, Brunetto & Nelson, 2009).

Health and finance are two common factors that can influence an individual's decision to retire. The 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation (SEARS) (ABS, 2009) found that, of the 1.9 million retirees who had worked at some time in the last 20 years, health factors were the most common reason to retire (men 38% and women 25%), followed by financial reasons for men (20%) and caring responsibilities for women (15%). However, financial security (men 44% and women 37%) featured as the most common issue influencing the retirement intentions for people aged 45 or over (ABS, 2009). Similar factors were identified in previous studies of professional and skilled occupations (e.g., Dorfman, 1992, 2002; Rosenman & McDonald, 1995; Shacklock & Brunetto, 2005; Shacklock et al., 2009); in spite of this, those studies found two other significant factors impacting the retirement decision: the level of motivation to work, in terms of job satisfaction and intellectual stimulation, and the extent to which organisational policies and programs were flexible and responsive to achieve a work/life balance in later life. Thus, the most commonly cited factors that can influence an individual's decision to retire are personal financial position, health situation, and HRM policies and programs. This research has explored academics' perceptions of retirement and the factors that influence their retirement intentions.

Given that the perspective of this research is that retirement is akin to a career development stage, the next section explores the contextual factors – the university as a work environment, the complexities of the academic profession, and the nature and role of disciplines – that play an important role in influencing and shaping academic careers.

2.3. Contextual Factors Influencing Academic Careers

2.3.1 The University as an Organisation

The nature of the organisation and its working environment is an important contextual factor in understanding the concept of careers. In the case of academic careers, the organisation is defined by the nature of a university. Universities are knowledge-intensive organisations that rely on the intellectual capital of their expert workforce (Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough & Swan, 2002). The Australian Government's perspective is that the core objectives of universities are to identify, extract and capture the knowledge assets of the organisation, so that they can be fully utilised and fully protected as a source of competitive advantage (Bradley, 2008; Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). On this basis, it can be argued that academics are the university's prime knowledge assets and effectively managing and supporting the careers of academics would translate to effectively managing knowledge.

Universities differ from other types of organisations, most importantly in their management structure (Besse, 1973). Within the higher education literature, managing an organisation is referred to as the governance of an organisation. Governance is broadly defined as encompassing the internal relationships (such as the academic and non-academic workforce), the external relationships (such as government), and the intersection of these relationships (Marginson & Considine, 2000).

The governance of an organisation is central to understanding how people, resources and systems are structured, managed and operate. In typical profit-making organisations, employees' work is managed and governed by formal structures, as there is a sense of shared purpose to achieve the dominant organisational goal of making profit. By contrast, within a university, governance is more complex, and the formal structures and rules are limited by the nature of academic activities (Musselin, 2007a). According to Marginson and Considine (2000, p. 7):

> Governance is concerned with the determination of values inside universities, their systems of decision-making and resource allocation, their mission and purposes, the patterns of authority and hierarchy, and the relationship of universities as institutions to the different academic worlds within and the worlds of government, business and community without.

Governments exercise considerable control and influence over broad policy matters in universities to help meet economic and social needs through funding for research and teaching students. However, universities have autonomy and greater control to determine their own internal policies and priorities in areas such as employment conditions and academic programs (OECD, 2008).

Formal structures in universities describe neither actual power nor responsibilities, and the structures are often fragmented due to the university's multiple goals of teaching, research and service to society (Enders, de Boer & Weyer, 2013; Musselin, 2007b). Within the university, no one position has absolute authority, unlike the Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director in a typical public sector organisation or private company. Situated at the top of the university structure is the Vice-chancellor (VC). Other senior university management positions encompass DVC and Pro Vice-chancellor (PVC), and university HR directors, who are determined by the VC and Academic Council/Senate. These senior academic university management positions have institutional accountability for academic staffing matters and responsibilities for academic programs, and resource allocation. The next layer in the university structure is middle-level management, comprising FD and HoS. These middle-level university management positions have considerable control over the budget and resources, and for the day-to-day management responsibilities. Senior university management, including the university HR departments, maintain relatively close control through planning and monitoring processes, while academics have the freedom to pursue their own scholarly interests and to determine the content of their teaching (Meek & Wood, 1997).

Over the past few decades, different models of higher education governance have emerged that reflect the changes that have taken place within the external

environment. For most of the twentieth century, universities operated in a stable and predictable work environment and were peripheral to the economy, business and government (Finkelstein, 2006). Universities adopted the collegial model of governance that emphasised university autonomy and academic freedom to pursue teaching, research and knowledge. To a large extent, the internal life of the academic profession had been protected by its traditions and by a certain self-imposed inertia (Marginson, 2000).

While the management and marketing models of governance remain prominent in today's universities, Kogan et al. (1994) have argued that it is crucial for universities to preserve the positive features of the traditional collegial model. The management model represents academic performance systems and employment programs that emphasise accountability and performance evaluation in the management of academics, resulting in limiting an individual academic's freedom to undertake teaching and research pursuits. The market model highlights greater competition among universities for government funding, status, students and academics and, as a consequence, academic careers are less secure, with fewer tenured positions and more fixed-term and casual positions. However, the traditional collegial model emphasises an individual academic's freedom to determine the content of teaching, and individual research program to the values and demands of their discipline - a time known as "the golden age", when universities were self-governing and where both resources and demands were conducive to non-directive forms of management (Finkelstein, 2006).

Within Australia, corporate structures and management systems in universities have replaced traditional collegial forms of governance. The creation of the Unified National System (UNS) of higher education in 1990 marked the government's formal recognition that Australia had moved from an elite to a mass system of higher education. Australia's higher education was transformed from a binary system consisting of 19 public universities and 46 public Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) to form a UNS of higher education comprising 38 universities (DEET, 1993). The primary model of governance for Australian universities is the enterprise university (Marginson & Considine, 2000). The enterprise model introduced a hierarchical structure of management layers that led to the

emergence of a new kind of leadership and management within universities. It is underpinned by trends of governance, ranging from executive leaders having greater control and decision-making to senior university management required to take on both HRM and legislative responsibilities, and management-controlled tools such as performance targets and budgets (e.g., Parker, 2011, 2013). Marginson and Considine (2000) have argued that the enterprise university is associated with an undermining of academic identity, a narrowing capacity for organisational innovation, and a weaker capacity for education innovation – a situation that has led to a lack of shared purpose and a lack of collaboration between academics and the university. From this point onwards, the term "corporate model of governance" is used to depict the enterprise university, the market model and management model.

Despite the corporate model of governance having operated within Australian universities for more than 20 years, the dissatisfaction and disillusionment expressed by academics with this model remain strong. Many studies have highlighted principal concerns raised by academics, such as criticism of the corporatist style of university management, the reduction in collegial decision-making and the lack of shared purpose between the university and its academic staff (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; Ryan, Guthrie & Neumann, 2008; NTEU, 2015; Winter, 2009). The continued frustration and dissatisfaction felt by academics, particularly with university management and leadership, reinforces the argument by Marginson and Considine (2000) for a more collaborative relationship between academics and the university. Given the continued concerns and criticisms of university management, as part of exploring the university's role in career management for older academics, this study also explored whether a collaborative relationship exists between older academics and the university. The next section discusses another major aspect of this context for universities and academic work, namely, the rise of managerialism.

2.3.2 The Impact of Managerialism in Universities

There is growing evidence within the higher education literature that managerialism is increasingly entrenched in a university context (Davis, Jansen van Rensburg & Venter, 2014) and, for this reason, managerialism can influence academic careers. Managerialism denotes a values shift in both the purpose and the governance of universities (Trow, 1994). The term "management" is broadly used to include the ordered organisation and co-ordination of people, resources and systems, while the term "managerialism" can be viewed as an ideology that prioritises organisational programs and values that are used to bring about radical shifts in the organisation finances and cultures of public services (Deem, 2004; Trow, 1994).

Trow (1994) has described managerialism within universities as the relationship of trust between government and universities with two distinct forms: a soft concept and a hard concept. The soft concept of managerialism perceives universities as autonomous institutions, governed by the norms and traditions of the academic profession. In contrast, the hard concept of managerialism has no trust in the wisdom of the academic community and thus elevates university and system management accountability to a dominant position in higher education, such as funding formulas and departmental cost centres; however, universities remain autonomous. Of these two views, the hard concept of managerialism has dominated the university landscape over the past two decades and has given rise to management systems requiring universities to operate as more akin to commercial businesses (Trow, 1994). Consequently, mission and vision statements, strategies, and quality and performance measures are commonplace in universities, and the shift from traditional academic values of university autonomy and academic freedom has inevitably created tensions between university management and academics (e.g., Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; Winter, 2009).

These hard and soft views of managerialism are similar to two perspectives well known within the HRM literature on managing people: the hard HRM model and soft HRM model (Legge, 2001; Storey, 2007). The hard HRM model views people as

costs and emphasises rational, quantitative, and control-based strategies for managing people, such as performance management systems. The hard HRM model view is similar to the hard view of managerialism within universities. In contrast, the soft HRM model advocates treating people as valued assets, with the focus on developing employees, and the benefits of mutuality and reciprocal dependence. The soft HRM model view is similar to the soft view of managerialism within universities.

The soft and hard HRM models of managing people have different implications within organisations (Legge, 2001; Storey, 2007). For instance, in relation to the employment relationship, the soft HRM model is the notion that employees respond better when an organisation recognises their individual needs and addresses them, as well as focusing on the overall business objectives. In contrast, the hard HRM model views people as HR, and therefore employees are a resource in the same way as any other business resource; for that reason, employees are to be obtained as cheaply as possible, used sparingly, developed, and exploited as much as possible. The potential conflict and tensions between employee commitment to the organisation (hard HRM) on the one hand, and the importance of the individual (soft HRM) on the other, can be counterbalanced if the organisation is able to achieve a cohesive workforce through a shared set of values (Legge, 1991). Given the nature of the research questions in this thesis, these HRM views were appropriate for understanding the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics. Specifically, whether organisational career management policies and programs for older academics reflect the hard HRM view or soft HRM view was explored as part of this research.

The concept of managerialism derives from the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy. In essence, the NPM philosophy concentrates on greater accountabilities, efficiencies, compliance and quality assurance, and includes linking rewards to measured performance results and management programs that emphasise cost-cutting and doing-more-with-less approach (Hood, 1991, 1995). Under NPM, universities have shifted from being seen as a public to a private good and this has manifested into HRM policies and programs that are designed to control academic work and accelerate demands on academic staff within a

performance-driven environment (e.g., Guthrie & Neumann, 2007; Musselin, 2008; Neumann & Guthrie, 2002; Parker, 2012). Since the invasion of traditional university governance by managerialism, universities are operating like corporations and academics are perceived as commodities that need to be managed in accordance to the market economy. As echoed by Thornton (2008, p. 5), "knowledge has replaced sheep and wool as a source of wealth but, according to the corporatised university, academics, like sheep, require careful management to get the best out of them".

The effect of the NPM philosophy on universities can be examined using a multi-level perspective (Enders, de Boer & Leisyte, 2009), consisting of three mutually interdependent levels. The first level is the systems level, where NPM reflects the generic narrative of strategic change, such as the introduction of market-based mechanisms to enhance competition and the strengthening of executive leadership. The second level is the level of the organisation, where NPM is the distinctive organisational forms, structural arrangements and practices that provide the administrative mechanisms and organisational processes that support the generic narrative of strategic change. The third level is the operational level, where NPM is regarded as a practical control technology through which strategic policies are transformed into HRM programs such as performance management. This thesis focuses on the second and third levels. In terms of the second level, this study explored the organisational perspective on career management for older academics. Specifically, it examined how the university formulates and evaluates its HRM strategies, policies and programs relating to career management for older academics, and also university management's perceptions of career management policies and programs for older academics (see Chapter 4). In regards to the third level, this study explored the individual perspective on career management for older academics and the career trajectories of older academics (see Chapter 5).

In the Australian context, the effect of NPM on academic work and academic careers has attracted much research (e.g., Anderson et al., 2002; Bexley et al., 2013; Marginson & Considine, 2000). Indeed, studies have found that managerialism has led to a deterioration in the motivation and morale of academics, with the majority of academics reported to feel frustrated, dissatisfied, de-motivated and highly

stressed (e.g., DETYA, 1999; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winefield et al., 2002).

The corporatisation of universities has created tensions between financial viability and traditional academic values. As a consequence, these tensions have resulted in a perceived reduction in career opportunities and security for academics, who view university management as ineffective (e.g., Anderson et al., 2002; Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winter, 2009). Moreover, the attractiveness of an academic career is in doubt (Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure & Meek, 2010). According to the NTEU (2007), the NPM philosophy has created a hierarchical as opposed to a collegial system. For example, middle level management, such as FD and HoS, have had to assume HRM responsibilities, despite a perceived unwillingness to do so (Meek & Wood, 1997). Many of the functional boundaries between academics and specialist administrative roles have dissolved, creating uneasy and ambivalent relationships between the two groups (McInnis, 1998). The shift from a collegial to corporate model of higher education governance has fundamentally changed the roles of both universities and academics, and the performance expectations of academics have become more complex.

Performance management within universities is a specific example of managerialism. The career and HRM literature contain numerous definitions of performance appraisal and performance management. These two terms are often used interchangeably (Lansbury, 1988; Lonsdale, 1998), but each term has a different meaning and focus. Performance appraisal, in its traditional form, is a process of reviewing and evaluating how well employees are performing against a set of job criteria, and it usually forms part of performance management (Hort, 1996; McCarthy, 1986). Performance management is broader than performance appraisal, as it aligns the organisation's strategy with the management of people and typically is a key component of an overall HRM system. In line with the majority of research to date, this study adopted Lansbury's (1988, p. 46) definition of the concept of performance management:

The process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of employees in the organisation, so that organisational goals and objectives are more effectively achieved, while at the same time benefiting employees in terms of recognition, receiving feedback, catering for work needs and offering career guidance.

Performance management systems endeavour to align academics' activities more closely with the goals and interests of their organisation and can shape the framework of the psychological contract (Lansbury, 1988; Lonsdale, 1998). Harley, Muller-Camen and Collin (2004) have argued that universities are engaging in HRM strategies designed to enhance institutional rankings, rather than providing opportunities to all academics who need to increase their knowledge and skills and, hence, reputation upon which their careers are based. These changes have created an insecurity of employment, career blockages, increased competition between colleagues (for rewards, resource and advancement) and strained the collegial relationship.

During the 1980s and 1990s, performance management in Australian universities attracted much attention and resulted in several reviews (James, 1995; Lonsdale, Dennis, Openshaw & Mullins, 1988; Paget, Baldwin, Hore & Kermond, 1992). The predominant focus of these studies was to ascertain whether the introduction of performance appraisal into Australian universities had increased the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of academics (McCarthy, 1986; Lonsdale et al., 1988). Although these studies were conducted over 20 years ago, the findings remain pertinent, particularly since there has been limited further attention paid to the performance management of Australian academics.

Several authors have emphasised that the success of performance management in universities is contingent upon incorporating the characteristics of academic work and the university environment into the performance management system (Hort, 1996; McCarthy, 1986). This view is in keeping with Lonsdale's (1998) argument that performance appraisals and performance management in universities had developed through successive generations, with the fourth generation being performance management of the twenty-first century. Over a decade into the

twenty-first century, performance management in Australian universities continues to remain out of date. Morris, Stanton and Mustard (2011) attribute dissatisfaction with performance management in universities to a controlling rather than a developmental mechanism. In light of this, perceptions of performance management in universities were explored as part of this study (see Chapter 5).

It is important to gain an understanding of the influence of NPM on the governance of the university system, as it has profoundly changed what it means to be an academic. A key implication of the changing models of governance in universities is that there is a need to understand the relationship between academics and the university. Academics are increasingly being managed by HRM policies and programs that challenge academic freedom and collegiality. Moreover, the tensions between university management and academics have resulted in the deterioration in the motivation and morale of academics. The enduring lack of confidence in university management support, as evidenced in the literature, shows a continued breach of trust and poor relationships between academics and university management. This study explored to what extent this is the case.

Up to this point, the distinguishing features of the university as an organisation and how managerialism in universities has impacted the operation of universities have been discussed as two important contextual factors influencing academic careers. The changes to the higher education work environment warrants discussion in the context of academic careers.

2.3.3 Changes to the Higher Education Work Environment

Over the last few decades, the higher education sector has undergone significant growth and government funding changes. As a result, the work environment has become increasingly competitive and uncertain. The political, economic, structural and technological changes in higher education and their impact on academic work and careers have been well documented (e.g., Anderson et al., 2002; Clark, 1983, 1987; Enders & Musselin, 2008; Henkel, 2000; Marginson & Considine, 2000;

Musselin, 2013). Higher education has become more instrumental in the institutional aims and purposes, with the emphasis on accountability and efficiency cascading down to the individual level. Higher education is now seen by government as a key factor to contributing to national economic growth, and academic work has become more about perceived market value rather than an intellectual pursuit for its own sake.

The changing external government policy and funding context for universities have led to subsequent changes to the internal environment of universities. More specifically, the organisational priorities, processes and structures in universities have had to change in response. The traditional academic ethos that was considered reflective, scholarly and long term in its goals, has now been replaced with a business model and demand for knowledge application driven by the needs of business, labour markets and government – to the extent that the "ongoing transformation of the academic profession … is considered less as an occupation and more as a job" (Enders & Musselin, 2008, p. 139). The traditional tenured academic career has been substantially replaced by a rapid expansion of short-term, part-time and casual academic positions. Academic careers have become less secure and this is an increasing trend, as universities strive for greater flexibility in resource allocation in a competitive environment (e.g., Altbach & Finkelstein, 1997; May, Gale & Campbell, 2008; NTEU, 2015; Ryan, Burgess, Connell & Groen, 2013). These changed academic appointments are likened to metaphors that characterise different career patterns such as "gypsy academics", "displaced academics" and "freeway scholars" (Clark, 1987).

In the Australian context, the higher education sector has experienced immense structural changes, largely as a result of federal government policy and funding influences. The major structural change since 1990 was the formation of the UNS that replaced the binary system of universities and CAEs (discussed in Section 2.3.1). Another significant trend following the formation of the UNS is the changing composition of the academic workforce. While academic careers are diverse, predominantly due to discipline affiliations, traditionally the academic demography was largely white, male and Protestant (Altbach, 1996; Finkelstein, 2006). However, in the last two decades, the academic workforce has become

more diverse, due to the steady growth of women pursuing academic careers. For example, the total number of female academics in Australia more than doubled from 1985 to 1991 (DEET, 1993) and 45% of Australia's total academic workforce in 2015 were female (DEEWRS, 2015).

The growth in Australian universities since 1990 has extensively impacted the nature of academic careers. Prior to the formation of the UNS, academic careers were secure, with tenured appointments, and the work environment was described as collegial. Academic work was traditionally characterised by high levels of professional autonomy, academic freedom, self-management and control over teaching and research pursuits. Following the introduction of the UNS, a significant change to universities has been the industrial relations system that introduced enterprise collective bargaining, whereby universities would negotiate with their academic staff and the NTEU to secure appropriate employment conditions that were linked to performance and productivity gains. These fundamental industrial relations changes have shaped universities into "industries" and academics into employees (Anderson et al., 2002). The employment terms and conditions of academics were no longer uniform across the country and were determined by collective enterprise bargaining agreements within each university. Thus, academic work has become regulated and controlled within each university and senior university management has direct responsibility in negotiating working conditions with its academic staff.

A further major change following the UNS was the erosion of academic tenure and the weakening of university autonomy. The security of employment that was provided by academic tenured appointments has been replaced with ongoing (or "continuing" or "permanent") positions and limited term ("fixed-term") or casual employment contracts. In fact, the trend towards casualisation in academic employment has doubled from 11% in 1990 to 22% in 2013 (DEEWRS, 2013), and new research using the superannuation records of university staff indicates that 61% of the academic workforce are employed on a casual basis (NTEU, 2013). While casual academic employment offers universities workforce flexibility, these high levels of casualisation of the academic workforce and the increasing number of academics employed on limited-term contracts are likely to create difficulties

such as forms of exclusion and marginalisation for individuals seeking to build an academic career (Ryan et al., 2013). Also, the extent of casual academic employment has had substantial implications for training and developmental support and promotional opportunities, as there is the pressure to perform with the uncertainty of continued employment. The NTEU have been prominent in advocacy about the growth and injustice of casual academic issues and have argued that the predominance of insecure forms of employment in higher education not only has serious implications for an individual's career but raises questions about the sustainability of teaching and the quality of the student experience (May et al., 2008). The complexities of the academic profession is discussed next, to provide additional context for exploring the changing nature of academic careers that is reviewed in Section 2.4.

2.3.4   The Complexities of the Academic Profession

The academic profession is complex and diverse. The academic profession should be studied as an entity on its own, as it is quite distinct from the broader perspective of a profession. Indeed, most academics would not consider themselves being part of a single profession (Light, 1974): "the academic profession comes to resemble a caucus of sub-professions ... arranged differently in different countries by the interaction of the national, institutional and disciplinary settings" (Clark, 1987, p. 397). Each discipline has its own history, intellectual style and career lines (discussed in the next section).

The master matrix of organisations can help understand the nature of the academic profession. The master matrix encapsulates the dynamic relationship between disciplines and the university:

> Academics are caught up in various matrices, with multiple memberships that shape their work, call upon their loyalties, and apportion their authority. Central among the matrices is the most common fact of academic work: the academic belongs simultaneously to a discipline, a field of study, and an enterprise, a specific university or college (Clark, 1984, p. 114).

Contributing to the complexities of the academic profession are the various hierarchical systems (Clark, 1987). There is the hierarchy of different types of universities, ranging from research universities, which have the greatest prestige, to community colleges, with the least prestige. Another hierarchy exists among disciplines, with the "hard" fields like physics at the top and "soft" fields like education at the bottom. There is also a hierarchy inherent within university faculties, such as the academic classification in Australia, with full professors at the top level and lecturers at the beginning level. A further hierarchy relates to academic work, with research being regarded as more prestigious than teaching, and a small number of hours teaching is more prestigious than many teaching hours. These various hierarchical systems highlight the complexities of the academic profession, that is, there are different types of universities with different university cultures and structures – and this can also differ across countries (e.g., Altbach, 1991) – there are different disciplines, different areas of academic work, and there are also individual academic differences. Thus, the academic profession can be studied as a web of interacting and varied contextual factors, which justifies the research design for this study to incorporate different university types.

2.3.5 The Nature and Role of Disciplines

Disciplines play a powerful role in shaping an academic career. For this reason, any discussion of academic careers must take into account disciplinary contexts (Austin, 1990; Becher, 1984, 1987, 1994; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Biglan, 1973; Clark, 1987). Disciplines are based on knowledge forms reflecting both epistemological approaches and the social aspects of knowledge (Neumann, 2009) which influence and are reflected in the myriad differing organisational structures of knowledge domains manifested within universities. As knowledge defines academic work, academics' primary communities are knowledge communities described as disciplines or subject communities (Henkel, 2000).

Disciplines have been described as "academic tribes, each with their own set of intellectual values and their own patch of cognitive territory" (Becher, 1994, p. 153). Moreover, each discipline uniquely defines and legitimates research

questions, research methods, the relationship between teaching and research, and work relationships between scholars. Specifically, "there is no one single method of inquiry, no single verification procedure, no single set of values or purposes, which characterises any one discipline" (Becher, 1984, p. 186). Thus, the production of knowledge is an open-ended task with no one systematic path of discovery and refinement for each knowledge specialty, and this has implications for academic careers, such as entry to academia, academic mobility, and academic career success (discussed in the next section).

Knowledge is structured into disciplines, creating autonomous and disparate specialties which are administratively organised into departments (Biglan, 1973). Biglan's (1973) landmark study identified three common dimensions that characterise academic subject areas: the degree to which a paradigm exists, the application to practical problems and the subject areas' concern with living or organic objects of study. Based on these three dimensions, short-hand labels were derived from plotting the subject areas into pairs: hard-soft (distinguishes hard sciences, engineering and agriculture from social sciences, education and humanities); pure-applied (refers to the application to practical problems) and life system-non-life (distinguishes biological and social areas from inanimate objects). More importantly, Biglan's study has provided a crucial foundation for understanding the range of disciplines that exist in various academic subject areas.

Becher (1984, 1987, 1994) further developed Biglan's (1973) framework on academic subject and established four distinct academic disciplinary groupings: "Hard-Pure" (HP), "Hard-Applied" (HA) ,"Soft-Pure" (SP) and "Soft-Applied" (SA). Hard disciplines such as physics, biology and engineering are characterised by tight knowledge structures and gregarious social organisation, compared with those in soft fields such as history and politics. Applied disciplines are concerned with the application of knowledge to practical problems, and thus comprise professional areas such as agriculture, engineering, law, accountancy, education and management. The four discipline groups are distinguished by a range of characteristics, such as the entry requirements to an academic position or appointment, the research enquiry process, the nature of knowledge growth, the relationship between the researcher and knowledge, and the way the researcher

moves among positions within the field (Becher, 1984, 1987, 1994; Becher &

Trowler, 2001). Table 2.2 summarises the four academic disciplinary groupings

and the different knowledge domains.

Table 2.2:   Academic Disciplinary Groupings and Knowledge Domains
          (Becher &Trowler, 2001, p. 36)

Disciplinary groupings *	Nature of knowledge
Pure sciences (e.g., physics): "Hard-Pure" (HP)	Cumulative; atomistic (crystalline/tree-like): concerned with universals, quantities, simplification; impersonal, value-free; clear criteria for knowledge verification and obsolescence; consensus over significant questions to address, now and in the future; results in discovery/explanation.
Humanities (eg., history) and Pure social sciences (eg., anthropology): "Soft-Pure" (SP)	Reiterative; holistic (organic/river-like); concerned with particulars, qualities, complication; personal value-laden; dispute over criteria for knowledge verification and obsolescence; lack of consensus over significant questions to address; results in understanding/interpretation.
Technologies (eg., mechanical engineering, clinical medicine): "Hard-Applied" (HA)	Purposive; pragmatic (know-how via hard knowledge); concerned with mastery of physical environment; applies heuristic approaches; uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches; criteria for judgement are purposive, functional; results in products/techniques.
Applied social science (eg., education, law, social administration): "Soft-Applied" (SA)	Functional; utilitarian (know-how via soft knowledge); concerned with enhancement of [semi] professional practice; uses case studies and case law to a large extent; results in protocols/procedures.

* these academic discipline groupings were purposely incorporated in the research design
of this study

Disciplinary differences are evident at the start of an academic career (Becher &

Trowler, 2001). Indeed, there are multiple entry requirements to an academic

career and requirements tend to vary across the different disciplines (Clark, 1987).

For example, in the HP science fields such as chemistry, physics and biology, a doctorate and post-doctoral experience tend to be the foundation of an academic career. Yet this is not necessarily the case for entry into an academic career in the SA fields such as education, law and management, where professional industry experience may be preferred. In addition, the age at which an individual commences an academic career can vary depending upon the discipline. In HP science fields, one typically commences their academic career in their mid to late 20s, whereas in the SA fields one may commence their academic career in their late 30s to early 40s (Clark, 1987).

Given that entry to an academic career can differ based on disciplines, it is inevitable that career development will also vary. For example, the significance of research at the start of an academic career and for career development is an expectation for HP science fields, while the emphasis tends to be given to teaching for SP fields (Henkel, 2000). As Henkel's (2000) extensive study on academic identities revealed, "academic working lives continued to be centred in their discipline, whether they saw themselves primarily as researchers, teachers, managers or a combination of more than one of those" (p. 256). Furthermore, "the lines of academic development may vary substantially from one knowledge area to another; there is no such thing as a standard career pattern which spans the range of intellectual activity" (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 136).

The nature and role of disciplines is fundamental in understanding the complexities of the academic profession and academic career. Hence, the academic discipline groupings proposed by Becher and Trowler (2001) (see Table 2.2) illustrate the variances among disciplines and can help to build a picture of the disciplinary shaping of academic careers, which also justifies using these four distinct discipline groups as a key characteristic in the research design for this study.

Thus far, this chapter has provided a broad context about the unique features of the university as an organisation and how the higher education system has been changing. It has also drawn attention to the complexities of the academic profession, and the nature and role of disciplines that shape an academic career.

The inclusion of these contextual factors in the multi-disciplinary approach to the career management for older academics greatly assists in gaining an understanding of the complexities of academic careers. There is now the need to examine the literature as it relates to the changing nature of academic careers.

2.4   Changing Nature of Academic Careers

Similar to the trends evident in the higher education literature, discussed in the previous section, the career literature for the past few decades has also been dominated by significant changes, such as the dramatic transformation in career paths due to the changing economic situation shaping the way of work. Before reviewing the relevant literature on the changing nature of academic careers, it is useful to examine the concept of career and its implications for the notion of academic careers.

2.4.1   The Concept of a Career and an Academic Career

Since the 1990s, the concept of careers has radically changed from a relatively simple and straightforward traditional career to a more complex and diverse contemporary career (Sullivan, 1999). The traditional career, also referred to as an organisational career, typically evolved within a single organisation, and progression and development were linear and hierarchical (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Stable and predictable work environments supported the traditional career and organisations characteristically resembled bureaucracies, with formal and rigid structures, hierarchical relationships, clearly defined rules, regulations and job descriptions, and centralised decision-making authority. Organisational careers are effectively achieved when the individual competencies and organisational needs are consistently matched (Baruch, 2003; Miles & Snow, 1996).

Academic careers can resemble the traditional career pathway. As shown in Figure 2.1, an individual can be employed as an Associate Lecturer whilst completing a

PhD and, on completing their PhD, they can be promoted sequentially over a period of time within a single university to lecturer, senior lecturer (S/L), associate professor (A/P) and professor.

Figure 2.1:   An Academic Career Resembling the Traditional Career Concept
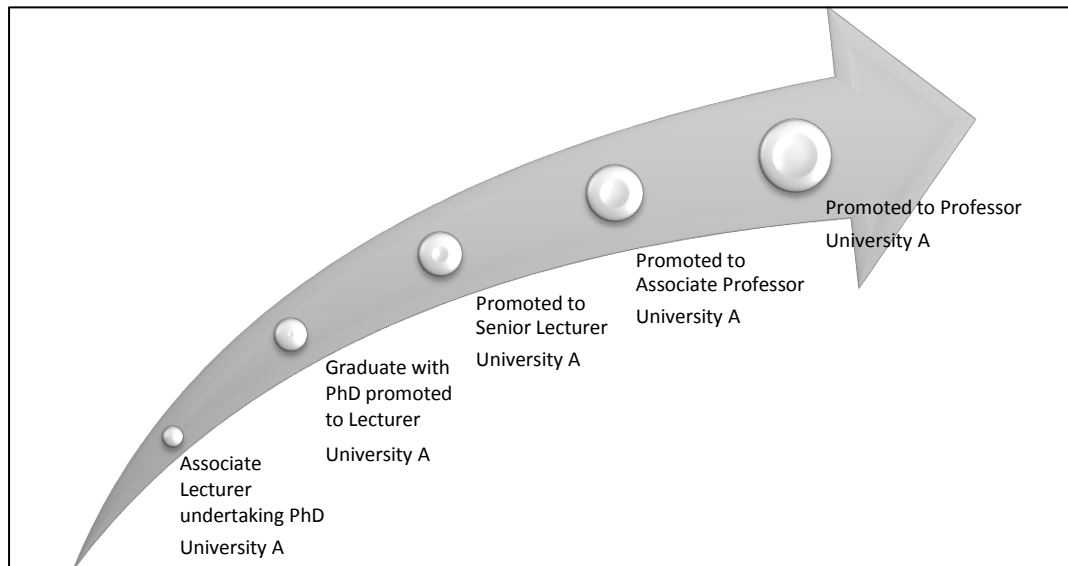
In this example, like the traditional career, the academic career pathway is linear and vertical, develops within the one university, and is termed the classic "slippery pole" model (Strike, 2010, p. 85). It is argued (Anderson et al., 2002; Baruch, 2004b; Baruch & Hall, 2004) that the traditional career model as a possible academic career path would over-simplify the diversity and complexity of an academic career. Nevertheless, the traditional conceptualisation of the academic career is only one of many possible academic career trajectories.

There is no agreement within the career literature on a common definition of the contemporary career. For the purposes of this thesis, this study adopted Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk's (2000) definition, that a career is the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life. This definition encapsulates a broad description of a career, with work-related experiences including objective events or situations, such as job positions and work-related decisions, and subjective interpretations of work-related experiences, such as the work aspirations, expectations and feelings about particular work experiences (Greenhaus et al., 2000; Werner & DeSimone, 2006). Furthermore, this definition

of a career is consistent with the notion that careers develop over time and reflect a multiplicity of work-related paths and experiences.

The concept of a career is not the domain of any one theoretical or disciplinary view but rather is informed by multiple discipline perspectives (Arthur, 2008; Khapova & Arthur, 2011; Ornstein & Isabella, 1993; Sullivan, 1999). Among them is a psychological perspective that examines careers in terms of personal and social forces, such as personality traits and their implications for occupational choice (e.g., Holland, 1985), and the importance of person-environment fit for occupational stability (e.g., Super, 1957, 1990). A particularly influential career stage development model by Super (1957, 1990) has the career developing throughout an individual's adult life and also incorporates the complex interactions that exist between the individual and their environment. By comparison, a sociological perspective analyses how human behaviour, society and organisations influence careers (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977). Economic perspectives on careers focus on the accumulation of human capital and organisational investments associated with developing employee skills and knowledge work (e.g., Becker, 1975). A socio-psychological perspective explores the impact of relationships on careers (e.g., Allport, 1985), while an HRM view of careers as resources that are to be managed to achieve a competitive advantage for the organisation (e.g., Casio, 1995). Although these perspectives have been criticised as being partial and fragmented (Collin, 1998), they emphasise different features of a career and provide insight to the complexities and implications of careers. These different perspectives can potentially influence the notion of academic careers and as this thesis focuses on career management for older academics, a review of these different perspectives of an academic career is presented next.

Academic careers have also been examined from different disciplinary perspectives. The study of academic careers over the past 50 years can be categorised into three distinctive and self-contained eras (Finkelstein, 2006). The first era occurred during the early 1950s to early 1970s and was known as "the golden era" (discussed in Section 2.3.1). During this era, academic careers were studied from a sociological perspective with a focus on identifying the influences on entry and advancement into academia, including the prestige of disciplines and

of the employing university. The second era, spanning the early 1970s to the early 1990s, represented research from an economic-psychological perspective and the focus was on the nature of academic career decisions, academic labour markets, the developmental and career stages of an academic career, and social factors impacting academic careers such as age and gender. The third era covers the early 1990s to the present (discussed earlier in Section 2.3.2). Academic careers in this era have been studied to examine the impact of marketisation and managerialism, particularly in regards to the changing demographics of the academic workforce, the recruitment and retention of academics, and the morale and motivation of academics. These combined different disciplinary perspectives provide a fuller picture of how the concept of an academic career has evolved over time.

Another way to gain insight to the complexities of careers is through metaphors. Metaphors not only denote literal and figurative meanings, but provide a broader understanding of career phenomena such as how an individual constructs their own career with context-specific meanings (Inkson, 2004, 2006, 2007). For example, a popular phrase, "you can't put a square peg in a round hole" raises person-environment fit issues (Inkson, 2004). Broad categories of career metaphors include the commonly used journey metaphors that frame the direction and movement of a career as either "upwards", "downwards", "forwards", "backwards", "sideways" or "idiosyncratic" (Inkson & Amundson, 2002), and competition metaphors that refer to careers as "uphill struggles", "playing the game" or "rat races" (El-Sawad, 2005). Thus, metaphors are able to provide different lenses on the complexities of careers in terms of how an individual perceives their own career. Therefore, the concept of careers is multi-faceted and provides the basis for examining the complexities of an academic career (discussed in the next section) in order to draw out the critical themes that are relevant for this thesis.

2.4.2 Complexities of Academic Careers

An academic career is about knowledge, specifically acquiring, producing, re-shaping, and disseminating knowledge, where the primary communities are

knowledge communities described as disciplines or subject communities (Henkel, 2000). However, the nature of academic careers has changed since the introduction of corporate style management practices and systems following the formation of the UNS in Australia in 1990 (discussed in Section 2.3.1). The key characteristics between academic careers pre-1990s and post-1990s are shown in Table 2.3. The subsequent discussion then examines each characteristic in order to highlight how academic careers and the employer-employee relationship between academics and universities have been influenced since the UNS.

Table 2.3:   Comparison of the Academic Career Pre-1990s and Post-1990s

	Academic Career Pre-1990s	Academic Career Post-1990s
Higher Education Work Environment	Secure and collegial Tenure Homogenous academic workforce	Less secure and competitive Tenure under threat Diverse academic workforce
Institutional/University Governance model	Collegial model	Collegial model under threat by corporate model
Academic Career Mobility	High degree of mobility, with discipline & contextual variations	Conditions are still the case but the focus and emphasis has shifted
Academic Psychological Contract	Relational	Transactional
Academic Career Success	Intrinsically motivated Passion for scholarship Reputation in academic community & discipline	Conditions remain unchanged but emphasis has shifted
Career Development and Management	Self-managed	Addressed in this thesis

Academic careers are complex and can be conceptualised as three interrelated strands: disciplinary, institutional and external (Clark, 1986; Light, Marsden & Corl, 1974). The disciplinary career is the dominant strand, as an individual will choose their subject or field before they choose teaching as a career (Light et al.,

1974). Activities of a disciplinary career are connected with undertaking research in an individual's discipline or field of study; such activities are more likely to make an individual "cosmopolitan" and they count for promotion (Becher, 1994; Clark, 1987; Gouldner, 1957; Light, 1973). The institutional career involves research that is generally part of employment at a particular university. In other words, the employing university defines the duties of an institutional career and provides salary, recognition in the form of promotion and teaching awards (Light et al., 1974); such duties tend to make an individual "local" and are inclined to have a lower weighting for promotion (Becher, 1994; Clark, 1987; Gouldner, 1957; Light, 1973).The external career involves work-related activities outside the employing university and draws upon the individual's disciplinary and subject matter expertise, such as consulting or temporary work with industry or government.

In addition to disciplines influencing entry to academia (discussed in Section 2.3.5), the entry requirements to an academic career can also vary across countries, as countries widely differ in their structure, provision and support of higher education (Altbach, 1996; Henkel, 2000; Kogan et al., 1994). Drawing from the Changing Academic Profession (CAP) study (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012), more mature higher education systems such as Canada and the US have a higher proportion of academics with PhDs (92% and 83%, respectively) than in the emerging higher education systems such as Mexico (29%). In Australia, just over 68% of full-time and fractional full-time academics have PhDs (DEEWRS, 2014). Thus, the various entry pathways to academic careers reinforce the complexity and diversity that exists among academic careers, as echoed by Clark (1987, p. 190), "there are many front doors, backdoors, side doors, and hidden passageways for entering the vast workforce of the American academic profession that no simple picture of attraction and recruitment can be reconstructed".

The time period at which an individual enters academia can also influence their academic career pathway. In the Australian context, the HRM policies and programs in recruitment and the employment conditions such as work functions, career structures, tenure, salary, and rewards were different for academics who were appointed prior to the UNS in 1990 (discussed in Section 2.3.1) than for academics appointed post the UNS (Anderson et al., 2002; Marginson & Considine,

2000). The UK had a similar experience where Henkel's (2000) study revealed different career structures and pathways for those who entered academia during the 1960s–1970s as opposed to the 1980s–1990s. This latter period was when UK and Australian universities experienced significant and contentious changes such as the removal of tenure and the introduction of performance measures. Consequently, the preparation for an academic career has become more structured and graduated, with additional rules, and tangible and explicit criteria such as the requirement of a doctorate (Henkel, 2000).

Thus, given the complexities of academic careers, making generalisations about academic careers can be problematic. Indeed, Sorcinelli (1985) has argued that to better understand or enhance academic careers, it is important to acknowledge the full range of individual, institutional and social influences that enable academics to express satisfactions or concerns in these areas. Given that this thesis focuses on exploring the career management of older academics, the extent in which HRM policies and programs are tailored to the different career needs and expectations of older academics was explored as part of this research.

2.4.3 Academic Career Mobility

In many respects academic careers are mobile, as disciplines are the dominating force in the working lives of academics (discussed in Section 2.3.5). It is the nature of academics to establish scholarly networks, publish research in international journals and present at international conferences as the means of advancing knowledge. In addition to disciplines, other factors influence academic career mobility. One factor is the academic stratification system – the prestige of the employing university within the national system of universities, an individual academic's reputation within their discipline or an individual academic's status within their employing university (Finkelstein, 2006). Another factor is the national academic labour markets that have distinctive recruitment needs, hiring criteria and working conditions (Clark, 1987; Musselin, 2004, 2013) and, needless to say, an individual's personal circumstances, such as marriage and family

responsibilities, can restrict career mobility (Poole, Bornholt & Summers, 1997; Probert, 2005).

Academic careers typically have a relatively high degree of mobility, and this has become more evident due to the market-driven and competitive environment in which universities now operate (Clark, 1987). While it is not uncommon for academics to move between different academic positions, within and in different universities and in different countries, it is important to note that academic careers are to some extent, organised differently in specific national settings and this is reflected in career trajectories and working conditions (Clark, 1987). For example, the rank structure in each country is critical in defining academic careers (Clark, 1987). For example, in the US, a continuous, incremental structure progresses from assistant to associate to full professor with salary increments between each step, while in Australia, the incremental structure, which also contains salary increments between each step, progresses from an Associate Lecturer to Lecturer to S/L to A/P to professor.

Given the international mobility of academics, academic careers can be likened to boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994; Baruch & Hall, 2004). Then again, there are contradictory perspectives on the career mobility of academic careers. On the one hand, as discussed in Section 2.3.2, universities have shifted from collegial to corporate models of governance, which has resulted in HRM policies and programs that place greater control and influence on academic careers and, consequently, academics tend to be more bound to their organisation, such as the privilege of research and international publications (Harley et al., 2004; Kaulisch & Enders, 2005). On the other hand, boundaries are becoming blurred, loosened and broken down, generating new models for academic career progression (Henkel, 2010; Strike, 2010). Another perspective is that academic careers are neither wholly bounded nor boundaryless, as it depends upon how individuals experience and respond to the pressures of tenure (O'Dowd & Kaplan, 2005). A further view is that there are multi-directional academic career paths that refer to movement up and down (Baruch & Hall, 2004). For example, an academic can move from a university management position having occupied the position for a temporary period of time and then can return to their substantive teaching and research role.

One of the most prominent conceptualisations of an academic career that depicts career mobility is the terms "locals" and "cosmopolitans" (Gouldner, 1957). Academics who are "locals" share characteristics of the traditional career conceptualisation, as they develop their primary identification and build relationships typically within a single university. "Locals" tend to be more strongly associated with teaching and reinforce the institutional career. "Cosmopolitans", in contrast, are academics who develop their primary identification with their discipline and build relationships mainly outside their university and within their research field, and are more strongly associated with research. The career patterns of "cosmopolitans" are reminiscent of the contemporary career concept, whereby they are more mobile and move across universities and even to universities in different countries in order to advance their academic careers. Gouldner argues that "cosmopolitans" are more typically found in HP science fields reflecting their discipline nature (discussed in Section 2.3.5). In general, the mobility of academic careers can be argued to resemble patterns of both the traditional and the contemporary career.

Any discussion on career mobility needs an explanation for the moderating variables and influences of life development and career stage theories. The reasons these theories are so significant include their extensive use in studies that examine the effects of age and career stage on an individual's career attitudes and performance, the different predictions about individuals' adjustments, and reactions to their careers over time (Ornstein, Cron & Slocum, 1989). For example, Erikson's (1963) theory on adult development referred to adults aged 40–65 in the stage termed "generativity vs stagnation", which emphasised that adults are challenged to develop the capacity to focus on the generations that will follow, such as undertaking the role of mentor. Adults who fail to resolve this stage, either due to unwillingness or inability to assume such responsibilities, will experience stagnation. Another example is Levinson (1986), who referred to adults aged 40–65 as "middle adulthood" and proposed that this is a period for questioning, re-assessment, and renewal, and that there are important implications for career adjustment and development in the next life phase. Levinson argued that, depending upon the resolution of the individual during this stage, attitudes and

behaviours may impact on organisational commitment, job involvement, and overall satisfaction.

Just as adult development theories propose that life progresses in a series of stages which are linked to age ranges, career development theories offer the unfolding of an individual's career across stages in an orderly sequence. Based on Levinson's (1986) adult development model, Greenhaus et al. (2000) identified five stages, describing adults aged 40–55 as "mid-career". This stage typically involves a re-examination of one's life structure and the choices that were made during the early career period at age 25–40. Greenhaus et al. identified two important events that can occur during "mid-career": "plateauing", which can impact one's responsibilities and job advancement, and "obsolescence", which can impact one's knowledge and skills. Adults who successfully resolve these challenges will remain productive, while those who fail to resolve the challenges in this stage are likely to experience stagnation and frustration (Greenhaus et al., 2000). In addition, Hall and Mirvis (1995) have argued that career stages operate in a much more dynamic way than in the past; that there are various triggers in the individual, work environment and organisation; and the key to mid-career success is an individual who is adaptable and possesses the ability to learn continuously.

While an individual's career is determined by their perceptions of current circumstances, it is argued that career stages are not strictly determined by their age (Ornstein et al., 1989). Cytrynbaum and Crites (1989) reinforced this point, suggesting that career stage and adult life stage are separate, and each stage can inform the other. Acknowledging that career stage and adult life stage may not be the same has particular significance to the increasingly ageing demographics: the longer life expectancy leads to increased likelihood of experiencing different careers during the course of one's life. Hence, it is reasonable to expect that organisations would reflect this perspective in their HRM policies and programs.

Adult development and career stage theories have been utilised to examine academic careers. Studies have focused on examining the impact of age and career stage on academic productivity, and these studies provide another perspective to understanding the complexities of academic careers (Baldwin, 1979; Baldwin &

Blackburn, 1981; Baldwin, Lunceford & Vanderlinden, 2005; Entrekin & Everett, 1981). Notably, it has been argued that one cannot presume a career stage is based on one's chronological age, as it is contingent upon several factors, such as the balance between research and teaching, the differing practices and cultures across the range of disciplines, and the research intensity of the university (e.g., Entrekin & Everett, 1981). Furthermore, Baldwin et al. (2005) have argued that academics in the middle years (12–20 years in academia) are in the longest and, in most cases, most productive phase of academic life, and academic careers in the middle years should therefore be viewed from multiple perspectives to fully capture the diversity and complexities that can exist. Thus, mid-life and mid-career are to be viewed as separate entities.

Aside from age and career stage, gender plays a part in the complexities of an academic career, particularly in terms of career routes and career advancement. Studies have found that women's academic careers tend to be disrupted or delayed by factors such as family responsibilities (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Poole & Bornholt, 1998; Probert, 2005; Strachan et al., 2012). These factors all add to the complexities of an academic career, and provide justification for this study to explore whether career management perceptions of older academics will differ based on career stage and gender.

Clearly, adult development and career stage theories draw attention to life stage, career stage and age, as interacting aspects of how individuals' careers develop over time. While adult development and career stage theories can offer another perspective to understanding the complexities of academic careers, these theories should be applied with caution, as they cannot be applied universally. As academic careers do not develop within a vacuum (discussed in Section 2.4.6), an understanding of the employment relationship between the academic and the university is necessary. One construct that is central to understanding the employment relationship is the psychological contract.

2.4.4 Academic Psychological Contract

Career is a social product shaped by relationships between people, their work, experiences and/or organisations over the course of an individual lifetime (Hall, 1996). The relationship between an individual and an organisation is one of interdependence, and understanding the employer-employee relationship is fundamental. At the core of the career concept is the psychological contract (Herriot, 1992), which provides an insight into the employment relationship and to the likely factors that contribute to the development and management of careers.

While there is no universal or accepted definition of the psychological contract, in line with the majority of research studies, this thesis adopts Rousseau's (1989, 1995) definition of a psychological contract as an individual's beliefs, shaped by the organisation regarding terms of an implicit agreement between the individual and organisation. This definition is appropriate because the focus of this research is on an individual academic's perspective of career management. However, this research also explored the organisational perspective, and so this thesis also gives support to the argument that the perception of both the individual and organisation to the employment relationship is important when studying the psychological contract (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Guest & Conway, 2002).

The consensus in the HRM literature describes the psychological contract as two ends of a contractual continuum, from transactional to relational contracts (Rousseau, 1989). The focus of transactional contracts is mainly economic and short-term, with explicit performance terms such as pay for work, while relational contracts have both an economic and an emotional focus that involves considerable investment by employees and the employer, such as the socio-emotional elements of loyalty and support (Rousseau, 1989).

The academic psychological contract has changed over the past 50 years. During the "golden age" (discussed in Section 2.3.1), a relational contract prevailed amongst academics, as the employment relationship was based on mutuality, collegiality and trust. However, the transition from an elite higher education (that was designed only for a few) to a mass higher education (accessible to a substantial number) and a shift to a market approach have increased pressures on

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academic workloads, productivity, and accountability. Consequently, the changing external environment has impacted not only the formal employment contracts of employment, such as recruitment and promotion, but also the psychological contract. It is argued that the advent of managerialism in universities has led to contracts between academics and their employing universities becoming more transactional than relational (Enders & Kaulisch, 2006; Harley et al., 2004; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995). On this basis, academic careers are more akin to the contemporary career.

Researchers have predominantly used survey methods to try to better understand the employment relationship between academics and universities (e.g., Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012, McInnis & Anderson, 2005; Winter & O'Donohue, 2012; Winter & Sarros, 2002). In Australia, low levels of job satisfaction among academics have been attributed to the major national system reforms (McInnis & Anderson, 2005). Taking a longitudinal approach to assess academic satisfaction, McInnis and Anderson (2005) revealed that overall job satisfaction had suffered a 10 percentage point drop over five years, from 61% to 51%. The level of dissatisfaction across career stages was most evident for mid- and late-career academics. For early career academics (7 years or less), there was no significant change. However, mid-career academics (8–20 years) had an 18% drop, and for late career (21 years or more) there was a 20% drop. Late-career women academics had experienced the worst level of dissatisfaction, with a 27% drop. The findings from McInnis and Anderson's (2005) study highlight that career stage and gender are important dimensions as part of exploring job satisfaction, providing further justification for exploring whether older academics' career perceptions differ, based on career stage and gender.

Although empirical research on psychological contracts has gained momentum during the past two decades, and given the increasing interest in academic careers and the psychological contract, surprisingly little empirical research has explored the topic or the individual perspective, in particular. Employee perceptions are considered to be an important line of research in understanding the psychological contract with their organisation (Holland, Sheehan, Donohue, Pyman & Allen,

2012; O'Donohue, Donohue & Grimmer, 2007; Rousseau, 1989, 2001; Rousseau & Greller, 1994).

Research on the psychological contract of Australian academics is especially scarce and studies have mainly focused on the formation and contents of the psychological contract (O'Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko & Dowell, 2010; Shen, 2010). Even more significantly, no studies have investigated the psychological contract of older academics. Neither of the two known Australian studies on academic psychological contracts (O'Neill et al., 2010; Shen, 2010) adopted a qualitative approach, which would have been an attempt to capture an individual's perspective. While this study did not focus specifically on the academic psychological contract, the research design is qualitative and the psychological contract was used as an interpretative framework to analyse the data.

2.4.5 Academic Career Success

Like most professions, pursuing an academic career requires the opportunity to advance in both expertise and recognition. Academic career progression can occur in two main ways: through competitive selection to an advertised position, or through academic promotion based upon merit, demonstrated ability, the fulfilment of certain expectations in terms of research output, and general contributions to teaching and to the university.

Promotion is the main form of career advancement and it provides the incentive for academic staff to continue to strive for excellence in research and teaching (Moses, 1986). However, a review of the higher education literature has revealed increasing concern about academic promotion and academic workloads. A national survey of over 2,000 Australian academics (Anderson et al., 2002) found that older academics were more likely to perceive that their prospects for promotion had declined and that they saw this as a change for the worse. Furthermore, Australian academics reported one of the lowest levels of job satisfaction, with one reason being the lack of institutional management support for their career development plans (Coates et al., 2010). More recently, Bexley et al. (2013) surveyed the

attitudes of Australian academics and found that 40% believe they receive little support for their career development plans; half of mid- and late-career academics reported an unmanageable workload, a poor work/life balance, having to undertake an unreasonable amount of administrative work, and suffering considerable job-related stress. These studies demonstrate that academic promotion continues to be a key concern for academics and provides justification for this study to explore the perceptions of promotion among older academics.

Alongside the incentive of promotion, academia also has intrinsic rewards, including the high degree of job autonomy and freedom in the use of time, the challenging and interesting nature of the work, the reputation associated with the discipline, and social position in society, all of which might be more important than salary (Finkelstein, 2006; Kogan et al., 1994; Moses, 1986). As the external national political environment has brought about changes to academic employment conditions, the focus and emphasis on the intrinsic rewards of an academic career have shifted. For example, the perceived attractiveness of an academic career is now in question and the perceived career prospects are increasingly limited (Anderson et al., 2002; Coates et al., 2010; Bexley et al., 2013; Winter & Sarros, 2002). Despite the changes to the work environment resulting in low morale and a sense of dissatisfaction with university management, Coates et al. (2010) reported a relatively high level of overall personal satisfaction for academics. One of the key explanations for this apparent contradictory finding would appear to be the enduring strength of intrinsic motivation that is manifested in academic work, referred to as "psychic gratification" (Clark, 1987, p. 223) that makes up for the diminishing financial rewards. These can include the passion in teaching, the opportunities to interact with students, and the excitement of delving into research pursuits. Identifying what aspects of academic work are motivating for older academics was also explored as part of this study.

Academics are commonly regarded as self-motivated as they find their work intrinsically satisfying and they value the complexity of the work, their academic freedom and the relationship with and responsibility for other people (Moses, 1986). Furthermore, Kaulisch and Enders (2005) observed that the most important rewards that academics receive are not given by the organisation, but

from their accumulating reputation within the academic community. Nevertheless, the reward systems in universities tend to be dominated by the extrinsic reward of promotion, which, in turn, has strengthened the tensions between differentiated aspects of academic work, in particular between teaching and research. To what extent such tensions exist among academics in relation to promotion was explored as part of this research.

2.4.6 Academic Career Development and Management

There is a pervasive divide in the career literature in relation to the responsibility in career management, specifically, the role of the organisation and the role of the individual. The literature on traditional careers views the organisation as being responsible for managing an individual's career. The concept of organisational career management refers to practices and programs that form part of a comprehensive portfolio of HRM policies and programs that are purposely designed to help individuals to assess, plan, and manage their career direction and development (Baruch, 1999, 2003; Greenhaus et al., 2000; Gutteridge & Otte, 1983). Inherent in this concept is that both HRM professionals and management are responsible for organisational career management activities (Baruch, 2003, 2004a; Gutteridge & Otte, 1983; London & Stumpf, 1982; Portwood & Granrose, 1986; Stumpf, 1988).

Organisations have a wide range of possible career development practices and programs from which to choose. Baruch and Peiperl (2000) undertook one of the most comprehensive reviews of organisational career management practices and identified five categories: (i) "Basic" practices are elementary such as formal education and pre-retirement programs and offered by most organisations with HRM systems; (ii) "Active planning" includes practices such as succession planning, showing an active involvement on the part of the organisation in the careers of individuals and a planning element that considers the individual's development overtime; (iii) "Active management" practices, such as formal mentoring, have an informational element and are characteristic of organisations that take the time to use the information to develop individuals; (iv) "Formal" practices such as career

pamphlets and common career paths represent organisational information on career development; and (v) "Multi-directional" practices, such as peer appraisal, reflect the directions in which individuals can receive feedback and develop within the organisation and considered "cutting edge". Baruch and Peiperl argued that proactive organisations would be well placed to benefit from organisational career management practices from "Active management" and "Active planning", as these would maximise knowledge about an individual's potential, for both the individual and organisation. Given the nature of the primary research question in this thesis, these categories of organisational career management practices are appropriate to understanding the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics.

In recent decades, the focus in career management has shifted to the role of the individual, with new career concepts such as the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and the protean career (Hall, 1996) emerging in the literature. These career concepts emphasise the individual as the main "owner" of the career. Individual career management generally refers to the process by which individuals develop insight into themselves and their environment, formulate action plans to achieve career goals, and seek feedback to appraise career progress.

While there is the notion that either the individual or the organisation is in charge of managing careers, it is argued that organisational career management and individual career management are not mutually exclusive but are expected to complement one another (De Vos, Dewettinck & Buyens, 2009; Sturges, Conway, Guest & Liefooghe, 2005). In fact, many studies have revealed that, although a career belongs to the individual, in contemporary work settings the organisation plays a role in assisting the planning and management of an individual's career for its own productivity (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Baruch, 2004a; Koopman-Boyden & Macdonald, 2003). Hence, an individual's career does not develop and progress in a vacuum and, therefore, the work context, and the organisational effects should not be overlooked. This provides justification for this research to explore both the individual and organisational perspective on the career management for older academics and in order to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for academics aged in their 50s, adopt the

theoretical perspective of interpretivism-hermeneutics by means of "how" and "why" questions (see Section 3.3).

The concept of joint responsibility in career management highlights that both organisational and individual efforts are needed to foster individual career development (Pazy, 1988). This view emphasises that organisations and individuals need to both play a role in career management and that there is mutual ownership between people and organisations, where important information about opportunities is shared and pursued for the benefit of both (Baruch, 2004a; Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Inkson & King, 2011). As argued by Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007), an integrated approach to career management combines individual career management activities and organisational career management programs, as an interactive mutual process that resembles the metaphor of a dance between two partners – the employee and the organisation. More recently, Clarke (2013) has suggested that, as the organisational career has evolved into a new hybrid form which combines elements of the traditional and contemporary careers, both the individual and organisation will need to accept responsibility for employee development and career management if optimal outcomes are to be achieved.

The responsibility for management of academic careers is also debatable. Academics are traditionally regarded as independent professionals who, therefore, are responsible for managing their own careers. In spite of this, there is a mutual dependence between the individual academic and the employing university. To some extent, the employment relationship is like the metaphor of marriage (Baruch, 2004b), reflecting the plan to undertake years of education to enter academia, the time to build an academic career over one's working lifetime and, most of the time, lasting until retirement. Furthermore, Henkel (2000) has argued that the individual academic depends upon the institution for his or her place within the system, and the university depends upon its individual academics for its reputation and income. Hence, the nature of the mutual relationship depends upon the quality of the exchange relationships established.

With the mass higher education primarily driven by changes in the economy and the growth of managerialism (discussed in Section 2.3.1), universities have had to

respond and develop a variety of strategies that focus on efficiency and accountability. In particular, universities have been driven to adopt ways to measure and improve the performance of their academic staff. The performance of academics is particularly critical, as academics are the most vital asset for universities. Consequently, many universities have established academic development units that are concerned primarily with improving teaching (Kogan et al., 1994). It is argued that academic development should be more holistic and focus on all aspects of academic work, and it should accommodate academics at different career stages, and be directed towards sustaining motivation, vitality and productivity (Akerlind, 2005; Kogan et al., 1994). Baruch (2013) has argued that the leadership in universities should reconsider how they manage, engage and enrich their academic workforce. Given the changing work environment and that the dissatisfaction and disillusionment with university management felt by academics remain strong (discussed in Section 2.3.2), the quality of the relationship between academics and the university is now in question. Moreover, the responsibility for managing academic careers has become unclear. This research was designed to address this gap in the literature.

Academic career development and management is complex and includes all aspects of the academic work role. With the changes to the higher education work environment (discussed in Section 2.3.3), the academic work role now encompasses dimensions beyond the core functions of research, teaching and administration, and may also include in differing degrees projects that attract funding, marketing one's research, and compliance with legislative requirements (Kogan et al., 1994). With each of the functions of the academic work role, there are differing needs and expectations for career development, as well as potential cost implications at the university level, faculty/departmental level, and even individual level. Hence, career development policies and programs for all the functions of the academic work role would need to be flexible and responsive to individual needs (Kogan et al., 1994). To what extent organisational career management policies and programs are flexible and responsive to the differing career needs and expectations of older academics was explored as part of this study.

Varied perspectives on academic career development exist within the higher education and career literature. Clark (1987), for example, has suggested that how far one can progress in their academic career depends upon various hierarchies (discussed in Section 2.3.4). Baldwin and Blackburn (1981) offered another perspective on academic career development – different factors such as age and length of experience interact differentially at different stages of an academic career. They concluded that universities will benefit by paying more attention to each phase of the life cycle of the academic career; it is important to recognise that each academic is unique and has individual developmental needs and interests, and that universities must develop flexible policies and opportunities that provide a wide array of developmental opportunities to help overcome vocational stagnation. They also argued that universities must include the individual academic in the development process and invest resources. A further perspective on academic career development is that academics are said to be conscious of what age one should be in each academic level. In particular, those who believe that they are ahead of time in their academic career have more positive attitudes towards their work than those who are on time or behind time (Lawrence, 1984; Strike & Taylor, 2009). These different perspectives suggest that academic career development is not only to accommodate individual needs, but it is multi-faceted and, therefore, the degree of generalisability of the notion of academic career development is limited.

Given the array of organisational career management practices and programs within the career literature, this study utilised organisational career management programs that are relevant to the higher education context and, in particular, to academic staff. Purposely selecting organisational career management programs that reflect the distinctive nature of universities supports Baruch's (2013) argument that it is important to adopt a practical view on the specific career management programs that take into account the unique nature of universities. Hence, ten organisational career management programs were derived from the review of literature to form the basis for analysis in this research (Baruch, 2003; Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Greenhaus et al., 2000; Gutteridge & Otte, 1983; London &

Stumpf, 1982; Stumpf, 1988). Table 2.4 lists and defines each of the ten

organisational career management programs for Phase 1 of this study.

Table 2.4: **Ten Organisational Career Management Programs for Phase 1 of this Study**

Organisational Career Management Programs	Definition
1.Performance Appraisal	It is a review to identify and evaluate an academic's performance in teaching, research, scholarship, university, and community service contributions. It is also an opportunity to discuss and mutually agree on an academic's professional and career development needs ensuring they are aligned with the goals and objectives of the university and that of the academic.
2. Retirement Preparation Programs	This is a program directed at the target population of employees approaching retirement age (although there is no legislated compulsory retirement age) and/or contemplating retirement. Its aim is to enable the employee to make an informed decision and to ease the transition of the older employee from full working life to retirement. It may consist of several components such as flexible working arrangements, financial considerations, and pre-retirement planning seminars.
3. Succession Planning	This is an organisational workforce planning framework to determine the possible replacement of senior and experienced employees within an organization and to evaluate the potential promotional and developmental opportunities. Succession planning is a valuable strategic HRM program.

(continued overleaf)

Table 2.4 (continued)

Organisational Career Management Programs	Definition
4. Mentoring	The program of mentoring brings together an experienced and/or skilled person, not necessarily a direct manager, who will offer advice, guidance, support and facilitate the learning and development of a less skilled and/or experienced person.
5. Special Programs	Specific programs that aim to support populations of circumstances such as gender and age. The primary focus is on providing professional and development opportunities.
6. Secondments	Secondment is a temporary assignment to another area within the organisation and sometimes even to another associated organisation. It is an opportunity in which an employee can acquire a different perspective and gain new knowledge and skills within the organisation and/ or outside the organisation.
7. Professional Development	Focus is on the professional development and enhancement of knowledge and skills of employees in order to benefit their academic work and that of the university in meeting its objectives.
8. Academic Promotion	Process that recognises and rewards high-performing academics and advances them to the next academic classification level based on merit, demonstrated ability and achievement.
9. Career Development	Programs that prepare, implement and monitor the on-going career development and progress of academics with the intention to enhance performance for the benefit of the individual and the university.
10. Study Programs	A period of release from normal university duties that is granted in order to carry out a planned research program and further develop one's academic and professional skills.

A review of the literature across three key fields – HRM, higher education and career – has revealed that no empirical information focuses on the university's role in the career management for older academics. However, the field of strategic HRM

research has increasingly concentrated on HR as a mediator between HRM practices and organisational performance (Wright & McMahan, 2011). In fact, in the absence of research on age and work performance of academics, Koopman-Boyden and Macdonald (2003) found that US and Australian research had noted a trend towards older aged employment in the university sector, but there was little research on the strategies for dealing with such workers. Moreover, Koopman-Boyden and Macdonald pointed out that age-specific policies are not a typical feature of HRM policies in academia and argued that, while it is the university's role to offer the conditions for successful career management, an individualised approach to career matters and retirement planning would recognise the depth and diversity of skills, and expertise of older academics. These arguments are in keeping with the ongoing debate within the career literature about the responsibilities of the individual and the organisation in career management, and the need for an interdependent relationship. In the context of universities, this raises the question about the university's role in career management for older academics and, as a consequence, provides further rationale for this research.

There is a paucity of research on productivity in teaching and research associated with career and/or life stage, although some studies have examined the impact of ageing academics on research productivity (e.g., Gingras, Lariviere, Macaluso & Robitaille, 2008). It is argued that individual variability exists across the lifespan, and a strong predictor of subsequent research is an individual's past research productivity rather than age (Christensen & Jacomb, 1992; Over, 1982). For example, a large study of Canadian university professors found that older professors who stay active in research keep their productivity at a high level until their retirement (Gingras et al., 2008). These studies provide optimism that the productivity of an ageing academic should not be simply viewed as a declining function of age, and they strengthen the need for universities to work proactively with their ageing academic workforce across the range of academic work roles. This study explored to what this extent this is the case.

This section has reviewed the literature as it relates to academic careers and discussed the relevant issues that provide a context relevant to this research. The review of the literature suggests that it might be better to understand academic

careers as exemplars of career that exhibit both traditional and contemporary career features, and how they can best be incorporated into university HRM policies and programs. The review has also revealed that academics differ on several aspects such as career stage, in terms of when one enters academia, discipline groups, gender, and academic classification level. The diversity among academics is further differentiated by academic motivation and the reward system in universities. Hence, this research incorporated a multi-dimensional view of academic careers and explored whether perceptions of career management differ based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage.

2.5   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a review of the literature as it relates to career management for older academics and provided justification for this research. Given the nature of this research and the complexities of careers, a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach was adopted to review the literature in three key fields in the literature: HRM, higher education and career.

On the whole, the literature review has drawn attention to the changes to the higher education work environment and system, the nature and role of disciplines, and the complexities of the academic profession, all of which have profoundly impacted academic careers and what is means to be an academic. In the "golden age", when academics enjoyed academic freedom, they had more control over their careers, but the work environment has shifted to more rigid control and accountability under NPM. As the university environment is exposed to the market place, it is far more unpredictable and uncertain, creating tensions between university management and academics, and a continued sense of dissatisfaction and frustration being felt by the majority of academics.

The stability and predictability of the university environment of earlier decades no longer exists. Rapid change, uncertainty, and competition within the higher education work environment have created varied and multiple challenges that universities have not experienced before. The traditional value of individual

academic freedom has been affected and shifted to accountability, efficiency, compliance and quality assurance. The corporate model of governance has become part of a fundamental context for universities and the work of academics and, consequently, it has impacted on the relationship between academics and the university. Given the orientation of this research, as part of exploring the perceptions on the career management for older academics, this study also determined whether there is a shared purpose and a collaborative relationship between older academics and their university.

The literature review has exposed some critical gaps about career management for older academics. One gap is the lack of research that examines what universities are doing to support their ageing academic workforce. An unprecedented ageing academic workforce is one of the biggest HRM challenges facing universities in terms of replenishing older academics who will eventually retire. While the trend of ageing within the academic workforce has been noted by researchers, the universities' responses to an academic workforce have attracted a patchwork of research. Therefore, the issue of an ageing academic workforce requires further empirical research to help universities meet their workforce planning, educational and research needs.

A second gap is an exploration of the older academic's perspectives on career management, their career needs and expectations. If universities continue to implement HRM strategies and policies that ignore the demographic changes in the academic workforce, the loss of the advanced levels of highly specialised knowledge and experience among older academics could potentially create organisational risks and sustainability issues for universities. Given that international education is ranked as Australia's third-largest export industry and largest services export, this would be particularly detrimental to the Australian economy.

A third gap involves academics' attitudes to top level management –feeling alienated, distrustful and dissatisfied – suggesting that the employment relationship between academics and the university is open to question. To what extent this is the case formed part of this study.

A fourth gap revealed that, while academics are regarded as independent professionals, the changing work environment has changed the roles of both universities and academics. As a result, the responsibility for managing academic careers has become unclear.

Therefore, the evidence from the multi-disciplinary conceptual approach to the literature review across three fields – HRM, higher education and career – justifies the need for this study. The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of career management for older academics from both organisational and individual perspectives, and its primary purpose is to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics.

Chapter 3   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The research design is fundamental for any research project because it provides the underlying structure for integrating all the components of the study. Selecting the appropriate research design involves taking into consideration the nature of the research question, the researcher's personal experiences and the audience for the study (Creswell, 2009). According to Maxwell (2005), "a good design is one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficiency and successful functioning" (p. 2).

The focus of this research is to explore the perceptions of career management for Australian academics aged in their 50s, from both organisational and individual perspectives. The organisational perspective explored the institutional role in HRM policy-making for older academics and university management perceptions of career management for older academics, while the individual perspective explored the career trajectories of older academics and older academics' perceptions of career management. The primary purpose of this research is to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics. A multi-disciplinary conceptual approach was adopted to review the literature from three key fields: HRM, higher education and career. Drawing from the literature review, four research objectives were determined (outlined in Chapter 1). Given the nature of the primary research question, the research design is qualitative with an interpretative basis, and utilised both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources.

This chapter provides greater detail and discussion of the method for this study. The chapter begins with the justification of the research design and presents a description and explanation of the research approach. Section 3.2 outlines the chosen epistemological position; Section 3.3 provides an overview of the selected theoretical perspective; Section 3.4 explains the methodology adopted; Section 3.5 discusses the methods chosen; sections 3.6 and 3.7 provide the details for Phase 1

and Phase 2, respectively; Section 3.8 details the ethical considerations; Section 3.9 outlines the limitations of the research design; and Section 3.10 is the chapter summary.

It is important to clarify key terms used in this chapter. Epistemology is how we can understand the world and it relates to the relationship between the researcher and that being researched (Creswell, 2007). The epistemological position is embedded in the theoretical perspective and can influence the researcher's selection of methodological approaches (Crotty, 1998). Theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance that describes our understanding of what is the nature of reality and informs the chosen methodology (Crotty, 1998; Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). Methodology is the rationale for how the research should be undertaken and methods involve the forms of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998).

The framework proposed by Crotty (1998) formed the basis of the research design for this study. Crotty emphasised that the foundation of any social research design requires the researcher to carefully consider four elements that inform one another: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. Figure 3.1 illustrates the four elements of the research design: the epistemology position is constructionism; the theoretical perspective is interpretivism, specifically hermeneutics; the methodology is qualitative and the methods are document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Figure 3.1:   Research Design for this Study

(based on Crotty, 1998)

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│           Epistemology          │
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                 ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│      Theoretical Perspective    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│           Methodology           │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│             Methods             │
│      Phase 1: Document          │
│           Analysis              │
│      Phase 2: Semi-structured   │
│           Interviews            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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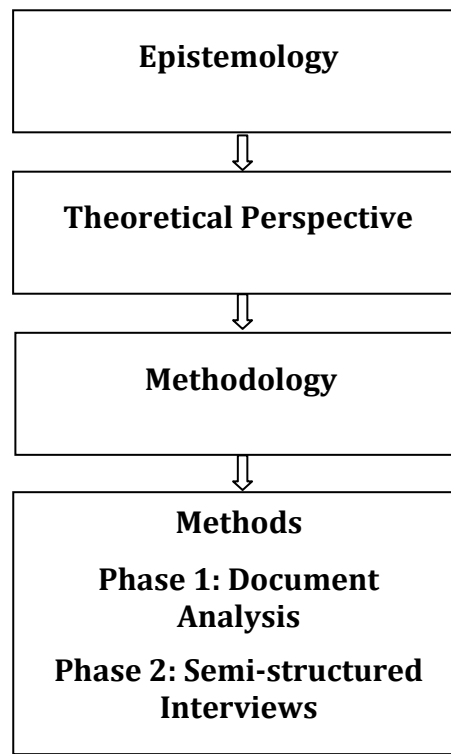
3.2   Epistemological Position – Constructionism

A range of epistemologies define how the researcher conceptualises their role in producing knowledge. Three epistemologies were distinguished by Crotty (1998): objectivism, subjectivism and constructionism. The objectivist epistemology is suited to research that is physically real (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). The epistemological position of objectivism, derived from the philosophy of science, can be considered in the context of positivism (Crotty, 1998). Thus, objectivism implies that social phenomena and their meaningful reality are independent or separate from the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Crotty, 1998). For example, the objectivist researcher would verify and test that an organisation is a tangible object and therefore the objectivist is completely independent of the object under investigation. As this research does not test or verify the university as an objective entity, but explores both organisational individual perspectives of career

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management for older academics, the objectivist epistemology is not appropriate for this study.

In contrast to objectivism, the subjectivist epistemology, derived from the philosophy of social science, is more appropriate to research that involves human behaviour (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). In subjectivism, the meaning of reality does not arise from the interplay between the researcher and object, but is constructed and imposed by the researcher (Crotty, 1998). This epistemology is not suitable for this study as this research relies on the participants providing their own explanation and experiences of career management.

Not unlike subjectivism, constructionism is also more appropriate to research that has to do with human behaviour. The premise of constructionism is that, as the human world is different from the natural, physical world, it must be studied differently (Patton, 2002). All meaningful reality comes into existence and is contingent upon human practices as human beings engage with the world they are interpreting (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998). It is worth noting that constructionism and constructivism are often used interchangeably in the research literature and Crotty (1998) offered a distinction between the two: constructivism focuses exclusively on the "meaning-making activity of the individual mind" and constructionism is where the focus includes the "collective generation and transmission of meaning" (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Crotty's term and meaning of constructionism are used for this research.

The goal of constructionism is to rely as much as possible on the participants' view of the situation (Creswell, 2009). The focus for the constructivist researcher is to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas (Crotty, 1998). For that reason, the role of the researcher is recognised within this epistemology position, as their interpretation of what is found is shaped by their own experiences and background, since "meaning is not discovered, but constructed" (Crotty, 1998, p. 9).

As the researcher endeavoured to develop an understanding of the multiple and varied perceptions of career management for academics aged in their 50s, the focus being on the collective generation of meaning, then the constructionism

epistemology is the most suitable choice for this research. Furthermore, constructionism is inherent in the theoretical perspective of interpretivism-hermeneutics (explained in the next section) and the qualitative methodology (see Section 3.3) chosen for this study. In addition, this study meets the constructionism assumptions proposed by Crotty (1998), presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: **Constructionism Assumptions of this Study**
(based on Crotty, 1998, cited by Creswell, 2009)

Constructionism Assumptions	Justification and Relevance to this Study
Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting.	The multiple and varied participant views and academic career trajectories, captured by using open-ended questions, formed the basis upon which the researcher was able to construct and collectively generate the meaning of the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics (see Section 3.4).
Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives.	The researcher sought to understand the context and setting of the participants by conducting semi-structured interviews at their place of work (see Section 3.4).
The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community.	This is a qualitative study that utilised both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources to collectively generate the meaning of the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for academics aged in their 50s from the perceptions of older academics and university management. This study is largely inductive (see Section 3.3).

3.3   Theoretical Perspective: Interpretivism-Hermeneutics

The theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance that informs the methodology (Crotty, 1998). As the research objectives explore participants' perceptions of career management for older academics and concentrate on "how" and "why" questions, this study is clearly located within the theoretical perspective of interpretivism. For this research, the interpretative understanding is achieved using hermeneutics. The interpretivist philosophy attempts to understand and explain human and social reality and is helpful for understanding social action and interaction (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2000). Interpretivism can be characterised as hermeneutic, which emphasises the need for the researcher to grasp the whole situation, including the complex intentions, beliefs of the text, institutional context, language, in which human actions make meaning in order to understand that particular action (Schwandt, 2000).

Hermeneutics is the practice of interpretation (van Manen, 1990) and involves the art of reading a text to fully understand the intention and meaning (Moustakas, 1994). The word "hermeneutics" is derived from the Greek god, Hermes, whose task was to communicate messages from Zeus and other gods to the ordinary mortals (van Manen, 1990). The hermeneutic process requires the researcher to be engaged in critical analysis or explanation of text using a hermeneutic circle (Schwandt, 2000). The notion of a hermeneutic circle of understanding is a method or procedure unique to human sciences (Moustakas, 1994). It is an intellectual process that involves researchers to set aside prejudices to pay attention to what the text is saying to them, as "the text or interview protocol provides an important description of conscious experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 10). Thus, hermeneutics assumes a kind of affinity between the text and the researcher that provides a basis for the interpretation that is to emerge (Crotty, 1998).

The aim of this research was to explore participants' perceptions of their career experiences of university support in career management or their "reality" with regard to this, in order to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for academics aged in their 50s. Whilst the broad question is about the existence, espoused purposes and other factual details of university

career management programs, the majority of information sought in Phase 2 utilised semi-structured interviews to explore participants' perceptions. In addition, the researcher had made a commitment to exploring, describing and interpreting participants' perceptions using a qualitative methodology (see Section 3.3) with documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources (see Section 3.4). For these reasons, interpretivism-hermeneutics is justifiable as the theoretical perspective underpinning the research approach for this study.

3.4   Choice of Methodology: Qualitative

The choice of methodology for this study was guided by the primary research question, the epistemology and the theoretical perspective. Given that the research question is exploratory, the epistemology position is constructionism and the theoretical perspective is interpretivism, this study is fundamentally positioned within a qualitative framework. "Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

Quantitative and qualitative research should not be viewed as opposites on the continuum of methodology. Instead, each approach has different strengths and logics and therefore is chosen for different kinds of research questions. While quantitative research relies on the use of standardised measures to facilitate comparison and statistical aggregation of the data, qualitative research facilitates studying issues in depth and detail and is not constrained by pre-determined categories of analysis (Patton, 2002). Other contrasting features relate to the point of view of the researcher who is the focus in quantitative research, yet the point of view of the participant is the orientation of qualitative research; quantitative data are often depicted as "hard", robust and unambiguous due to the precision offered by measurement, as opposed to qualitative research that engenders rich, deep and holistic data that results from the contextual approach to data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2007, Creswell, 2007). The characteristics of this qualitative study (adapted from Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994) are outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2:   Characteristics of this Qualitative Study

(adapted from Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Characteristics of Qualitative Research	Relevance to this Study
Natural Setting	The influence of the local context is retained as the researcher accessed institutional HRM policy documents from the institutions' website (see Section 3.6). The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews in the participant's office at their workplace (see Section 3.7).
Researcher as Key Instrument	The researcher collected all the data for this study. In Phase 1, the researcher collected all the institutional HRM policy documents and AUQA audit reports. In Phase 2, the researcher developed the interview guide and conducted all of the semi-structured interviews (see Section 3.7).
Multiple Sources of Data	This study utilised both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources. Both organisational and individual perspectives were obtained (see Section 3.5).
Inductive Data Analysis	The researcher analysed the data inductively to build patterns and themes (see Section 3.7.7).
Participants' Meanings	As this study is exploratory in nature, the researcher kept a focus on the participants' perspectives, their meanings, their "reality" (see Section 3.3).
Emergent Design	The research process for this study was not tightly prescribed but instead utilised semi-structured interviews as the method to learn about the primary research question from the participants (see Section 3.7).

Table 3.2 (continued)

Characteristics of Qualitative Research	Relevance to this Study
Theoretical Lens	The researcher adopted a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach to the literature review from three key fields: HRM, higher education and career, as it provided the context to understand the nature of this study (see Chapter 2).
Interpretative Inquiry	An interpretivism-hermeneutics perspective underpinned the research approach for this study (see Section 3.3).
Fruitful and Holistic Account	A fruitful and holistic account was achieved by the researcher reporting on multiple and varied perspectives derived from multiple data sources (see Sections 3.5).

The nature of qualitative research is to find patterns and themes, and produce explanations (Gibbs, 2007). The key strength of qualitative research is derived primarily from its inductive approach - specific situations or people and its emphasis on words are placed centre stage (Maxwell, 2005; Parker, 2014). An inductive approach builds patterns, categories and themes from the "bottom-up" by organising data into increasingly more abstract units of information (Creswell, 2009). The process requires the qualitative researcher to work back and forth between the identified themes and the data, an iterative process, until a comprehensive set of themes are established. Furthermore, the researcher seeks to understand the multiple interrelationships among themes that emerge from the data without making prior assumptions (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2009) emphasised the importance of focusing on the participants' meaning and not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or ideas expressed in the literature.

As this study is positioned within a qualitative framework and the intention was to identify patterns and themes from the perceptions of participants to collectively

generate and construct meaning about the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics, an inductive approach is appropriate. However, it is worth noting that this study is not a grounded theory study, that is, research with no prior knowledge of the literature. In fact, the researcher had adopted a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach to review the literature from three key fields, HRM, higher education and career (see Chapter 2), and this framework helped shape this research design by providing general constructs in advance, but it is not a deductive approach in that sense. The inductive process for the qualitative study in this thesis is depicted in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2:   The Inductive Process for this Qualitative Study
(adapted from Creswell, 2009)

Researcher poses generalisations from broad patterns, themes and literature

Researcher looks for broad patterns from themes

Researcher analyses Phase 2 data to form themes

Phase 1 informs Phase 2: Researcher gathers data from interviews developed

Phase 1: Researcher gathers documents and analyses data

Researcher adopts a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach to the literature review

The broad nature of this study, combined with the exploratory focus of the research objectives, concerned with asking "how" and "why" questions, justifies the

adoption of the qualitative methodology. In addition, the researcher considered that a qualitative methodology offered an optimum way of creating fruitful, deep, and holistic data in order to find meaning from the perceptions of academics and university management on the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for academics aged in their 50s.

3.5   Methods: Document Analysis and Semi-structured Interviews

The research method involves the form of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2009). Primary and secondary data sources can be used to answer the research objectives. Primary data sources are original works of research or raw data without interpretation, and secondary data are existing material that was not collected by the original researcher and was for another intended purpose (Creswell, 2008; Veal, 2005).

This exploratory study had two phases. In arguing for two phases, the researcher wanted to explore, review and determine the extent of the research question utilising primary data sources in Phase 1 and then use these findings to inform Phase 2. In Phase 1, the primary data sources were the institutional HRM policy documents and the AUQA audit reports (further details in Section 3.6). The advantages of the methods used for this study are shown in Table 3.3. In Phase 2, the primary data source was semi-structured interviews (further details in Section 3.7).

Table 3.3   **Advantages of the Chosen Qualitative Methods for this Study**
(adapted from Creswell, 2009)

Qualitative Methods	Advantages of the Chosen Method
Phase 1: Documents **Institutional HRM policy documents** **AUQA audit reports**	- Data collection was unobtrusive. - The documents provided valuable background information about the selected universities. - The researcher was able to build up a description of the selected university. - The documents offered a partial insight into past managerial decisions and actions. - The documents were written evidence and this saved the researcher the time and expense of transcribing. - The researcher was able to access the documents at her convenience.
Phase 2: Semi-structured Interviews	- Participants were able to provide personal and historical information to the researcher in the comfort of their own workplace. - The researcher captured rich and holistic data. - The researcher was able to be flexible and at the same time keep to the main line of questioning.

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques for this Study

Sampling in qualitative research can follow different logics and there are tight and loose qualitative research designs that can guide the sampling decision (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A tight research design can be characterised by well-delineated constructs and pre-structured selection procedures, while a loose research design tends to be highly inductive, with less defined concepts and flexible methodological procedures (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This distinction of research design provides a context for the sampling alternatives, as qualitative sampling focuses not only on the selection of documents and participants, but also on the selection of sites (Flick, 2007).

This study used two sampling techniques: predominantly a purposive sampling technique, with a snowball sampling technique introduced in Phase 2. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), "qualitative samples tend to be purposive, rather than

random" (p. 27). Purposive sampling is a strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately to obtain information-rich cases for in-depth understanding (Maxwell, 2005). One of the key advantages of information-rich cases is that they enable the researcher to learn a great deal about the issues that are of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling (also referred to as chain sampling) achieves the same purpose as purposive sampling, which is to locate information-rich cases, but the approach involves the researcher asking interviewees for other people who might be relevant and prove a fruitful source of information for the study (Flick, 2007). The chain of recommended information could typically diverge initially as many possible data sources are recommended, then converge as key names are repeatedly mentioned (Patton, 2002). This study meets the four sampling parameters adapted from Creswell (2009) and Miles and Huberman (1994): 1. Setting – where the research will take place; 2. Actors – who will participate in the study; 3. Events – what the participants do: they took part in semi-structured interviews; and 4. Process – the interview process. Details of the samples are provided in sections 3.6 and 3.7.

3.5.2 Triangulation for this Research

The focus of triangulation is to enhance the quality and credibility of qualitative research (Creswell, 2008; Flick, 2007). Triangulation reduces the risk of chance associations of the data, where the study conclusions will reflect only the limitations that arise from the use of a single data source, single method and/or single theoretical base (Maxwell, 2005). Thus, triangulation entails using more than one source of data or one method or one theoretical base within the study in order to gain a more complete understanding of the issues being researched (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Veal, 2005). It serves as a process of corroborating evidence from multiple sources of information, individuals or processes to enhance the accuracy of a study (Creswell, 2008).

As shown in Table 3.4, the triangulation for this research was achieved by drawing from multiple data sources (documents and semi-structured interviews); adopting

multiple data sampling methods (institutional HRM policy documents, AUQA audit reports, academics aged in their 50s and university management); exploring multiple analytical perspectives (the organisational perspective and individual perspective) and adopting a multi-disciplinary conceptual approach (drawn from the literature review in three key fields: HRM, higher education and career, as presented in Chapter 2) to explore the primary research question.

Table 3.4: Triangulation for this Research

Multiple Data Sources	Documents
	Semi-structured Interviews
Multiple Data Sampling Methods	Institutional HRM policy documents
	AUQA audit reports
	Academics aged in their 50s
	University management
Multiple Analysis	Organisational perspective
	Individual perspective
Multi-disciplinary Conceptual Approach	HRM literature
	Higher Education literature
	Career literature

3.6 Phase 1: Documents

Phase 1 involved the use of primary data sources in the form of public and organisational documents. Documents are a valuable source of information in qualitative research as they help researchers understand central phenomena (Creswell, 2008). Potential documents for this study were evaluated against the four criteria for assessing the quality of documents proposed by Scott (cited in Bryman & Bell, 2007): 1. Authenticity – the origins of the documents were not questionable. 2. Credibility – the documents were genuine; 3. Representativeness – this was not in a statistical sense, but the majority of the documents were typical of their kind, though some aspects of the documents were not made available to the public for confidentiality reasons; and 4. Meaning – the documents were clear and comprehensible.

3.6.1 Description of Documents

The organisational documents were publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities (see Table 3.5), and AUQA audit reports from 21 Australian universities for the period 2006–2009. Of the 21 audit reports, 12 were from Cycle 1 (see Table 3.6) and nine were from Cycle 2 (see Table 3.7). All documents collected in Phase 1 were selected based on geographic location and university grouping, as explained next.

Table 3.5: **Phase 1 – Sample for Institutional HRM Policy Documents Collected for Australian Universities by Geographic Location by University Grouping**

	Go8	**ATN**	**IRU**	**Regional Universities**
NSW	University of Sydney	University of Technology, Sydney	Macquarie University*	University of New England
QLD	University of Queensland	Queensland University of Technology	Griffith University	James Cook University
VIC	Monash University	RMIT University	La Trobe University	Deakin University
WA	University of Western Australia	Curtin University of Technology	Murdoch University	Edith Cowan University

*MQ had chosen to opt out of the IRU grouping during the course of this study

Table 3.6:   Phase 1 – Sample for AUQA Audit Reports for Cycle 1 of Australian Universities by Location by University Grouping *

	Go8	ATN	IRU	Other Universities	TOTAL
ACT	Australian National University (2007)				**1**
NSW	University of New South Wales (2006)	University of Technology Sydney (2006)		University of Western Sydney (2007) University of Wollongong (2006)	**4**
QLD				Central Queensland University (2006) University of the Sunshine Coast (2007)	**2**
SA			Flinders University of South Australia (2006)		**1**
VIC	University of Melbourne (2006) Monash University (2006)			Victoria University (2006)	**3**
WA			Murdoch University (2006)		**1**
TOTAL	**4**	**1**	**2**	**5**	**12**

* AUQA audit report year given in parentheses

Table 3.7:   Phase 1 – Sample for AUQA Audit Reports for Cycle 2 of Australian Universities by Location by University Grouping *

	Go8	ATN	IRU	Other Universities	TOTAL
ACT				University of Canberra (2009)	1
NSW			University of Newcastle (2008)	Southern Cross University (2008)	2
QLD			Griffith University (2008)		1
SA	University of Adelaide (2008)				1
VIC				Swinburne University of Technology (2008)	1
WA		Curtin University of Technology (2009)		University of Notre Dame (2008)	2
National				ACU National (2008)	1
TOTAL	**1**	**1**	**2**	**5**	**9**

* AUQA audit report year given in parentheses

Institutional HRM policy documents were selected to include several of Australia's states and territories and to recognise the different types of universities in the higher education system. Australia consists of six states and two territories. Four states were selected: New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC), Queensland (QLD) and Western Australia (WA). Four university groupings were selected (see Neumann, Kiley & Mullins, 2007): three main university groupings that are formal and self-selected – Go8, ATN and IRU – and Regional Universities (RUN) as the fourth university grouping. The Go8 is a coalition of eight of Australia's oldest and leading universities that are internationally recognised for scholarship and

research excellence (Go8, 2009). The ATN is a coalition of five Australian universities that share a common focus on the practical application of tertiary studies and research (ATN, 2009). The IRU comprises six Australian universities recognised for their distinctive and innovative approaches to research, teaching and learning (IRU, 2009). The fourth university grouping, RUN, was formed in 2011 and comprises six universities that reside either as outer-metropolitan institutions or in large regional locations outside capital cities (RUN, 2011) (see Appendix 2 for details of each university grouping).

3.6.2 Data Collection Process

The institutional HRM policy documents were collected using web-searching. Web-searching is a form of structured exploration and content analysis that is relatively easy to access, low cost and the interpretation of documents can be confirmed or made more or less plausible using a range of criteria (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The process commenced with accessing the homepage of each selected university and identifying access to the "staff" section of the university website. From this point, particular attention was given to locate the HRM policies and procedures of each university website. Online documents, either from the homepage or from the HRM policies and programs site within the university website, were downloaded utilising the list of selected organisational career management programs (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.6). Only institutional HRM policy documents were selected. In recent years, nearly all universities have shifted to making their HRM policies and programs and other management information available in electronic form. There was no attempt to assess the effectiveness or degree of implementation of the organisational career management programs.

The AUQA audit reports were accessed via the AUQA website homepage. Only the audit reports for universities for the period 2006–2009 inclusive were selected. AUQA was a not-for-profit company established in 2000 by the group of Ministers of Education in each of Australia's six states and two territories, acting jointly through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (AUQA, 2009, p. 5). AUQA was a core part of a total national

quality assurance framework for Australia, responsible for quality audits of higher education institutions and state accreditation authorities. Part of AUQA's objectives was to arrange, manage, monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on the quality of outcomes in Australian universities (AUQA, 2009). The AUQA audit combined university self-report with documentation for audit panel assessment with site visits and interviews once every five years. The audit panel members were from AUQA's Register of Auditors. During the conduct of this study, AUQA was replaced by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as Australia's regulatory and quality agency for higher education, effective 30 July 2011. The regulatory functions of TEQSA commenced on 29 January 2012.

The selected AUQA audit reports for 2006–2009 inclusive were based on different audit cycles. AUQA audits are initiated by AUQA and the AUQA Board approves the schedule of audits approximately a year in advance. AUQA Cycle 1 audits commenced in 2001 and were completed in 2007, with the Australian National University being the last institution to be audited in that cycle. The major aim of Cycle 1 audits was to consider and review the "whole of the institution", its policies and procedures that monitor and achieve the university's objectives. The audit panel also seeks evidence of achievement of, and performance against, academic objectives and these are expressed in relation to themes. All AUQA audit reports contain a summary of findings and more detailed comments. They include commendations for programs deemed commendable by the audit panel, and recommendations that relate to areas the audit panel believes require improvement. The audit panel also suggests possible approaches and affirmations (a sub-set of recommendations) that relate to areas the audit panel believes require improvement but have already been identified by the auditee. The audit report is the output of a complex and collaborative panel process and, once it is approved by the AUQA Board, it is sent to the auditee for comment and to ensure it is a true account prior to its public release on AUQA's website (AUQA, 2009).

Approximately five years after the first audit is conducted, AUQA reviews the auditees' responses to the audit. AUQA Cycle 2 audits commenced from 2008 and the focus was to determine whether recommendations and affirmations in the AUQA Cycle 1 audit report had been implemented as a means of "closing the loop"

from Cycle 1. In addition, AUQA Cycle 2 audits addressed two thematic areas in consultation with the auditee, informed by an assessment of academic risk, with attention to benchmarking activities and their effect on standards and outcomes (AUQA, 2009, p. 26). The AUQA audit reports analysed for this study comprised both Cycles 1 and 2 and depended upon the university's position in the cycle.

3.6.3 Document Analysis Process

The contents of the institutional HRM policy documents were examined, based on a list of ten selected organisational career management programs derived from the literature review (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.6). Content analysis is considered to be a research technique for making valid inferences from texts that ultimately satisfy external criteria determined by the researcher (Krippendorff, 2004).

Prior to the data analysis, the researcher undertook a literature review of the wide range of organisational career management programs (see e.g., Baruch, 2003; Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Greenhaus et al., 2000; Gutteridge & Otte, 1983; London & Stumpf, 1982; Stumpf, 1988). This review formed the basis for the selection of the ten career management programs and careful consideration was given to include career management programs relevant to the higher education context and, in particular, to academic staff (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.6). Ten selected organisational career management programs were identified for analysis:

1. Performance Appraisal
2. Retirement Preparation Programs
3. Succession Planning
4. Mentoring
5. Special Programs
6. Secondments
7. Professional Development
8. Academic Promotion
9. Career Development
10. Study Programs.

The researcher commenced the document analysis process by entering the list of the selected ten career management programs into a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was organised by geographical location for the content analysis of the institutional HRM policy documents. Recruitment and selection policies and programs were excluded from this study, since the focus was on organisational career management policies and programs once academics are employed.

The content analysis of the institutional HRM policy documents followed a systematic process by counting the instances of the selected ten career management programs. The first step involved the researcher reading and reviewing each document to identify whether any of the selected ten career management programs were evident. Details of each document were entered into the spreadsheet. There were three columns for each of the ten career management programs: (i) if the career management program was mentioned; (ii) if the career management program was not mentioned; and (iii) for notes and comments if the career management program had been mentioned. At the conclusion of the data collection and analysis of the institutional HRM policy documents, the researcher reviewed the selected universities' websites once again. The purpose was to double-check and verify that there were no changes in content to the documents accessed. No changes were found.

The AUQA audit reports used in this study were drawn from 21 out of the 39 Australian universities for the period 2006–2009. Of the 21 audit reports, 12 were from Cycle 1 (see Table 3.6) and nine were from Cycle 2 (see Table 3.7). The focus of analysis was on the academic staffing component of the audit reports and, more specifically, what AUQA has identified in terms of issues of concern about the ageing of academics. In this way, the audit reports provided insights into the question of how well these universities were responding to their ageing academic workforce. The findings of Phase 1 of this research are presented in Chapter 4.

3.7   Phase 2: Semi-structured Interviews

The primary data source for Phase 2 was semi-structured interviews. The researcher's decision to use this method over a survey or questionnaire was based on the exploratory nature, the qualitative orientation of the research, and moreover, the goal to collect detailed and fruitful data. Although the factual data about university career management programs across the Australian higher education sector was significant in terms of volume of the available data, the important focus was to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics. The findings from Phase 1of this research provided a basis for the type of information to be collected in Phase 2. These rationales led the researcher to select semi-structured interviews as the most appropriate method that would offer the greatest advantage to develop an understanding of the salient issues and concerns. This section describes and discusses the semi-structured interviews: the interview process (Section 3.7.1); selection of participants (Section 3.7.2); overall participant profile (Section 3.7.3); discipline groups of the participants (Section 3.7.4); profile of participants for each university (Section 3.7.5); university management participants (Section 3.7.6); and the interview data analysis process (Section 3.7.7).

3.7.1. The Interview Process

An interview is "literally an inter-view, an inter-change of views between two people conversing about a common theme" (Kvale, 2007, p. 21). Interviews can include a wide variety of forms, from structured, semi-structured or unstructured, and there are multiple uses (Fontana & Frey, 2003). Kvale (1996, 2007) suggested two contrasting metaphors that represent the interview with different concepts of knowledge production: the "miner" metaphor is appropriate to a positivist epistemology as the interview is a process of knowledge collection and would suggest a structured interview. The alternative is the "traveller" metaphor that reflects the constructionism epistemology that leads to the interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction and would suggest semi-structured interviews. The emphasis of this study is on the knowledge construction

of the perceptions of both older academics and university management on the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for academics aged in their 50s, making the semi-structured interview suitable for the research. This reflects the interrelated four elements of the research design as previously discussed in Section 3.1: this is an exploratory study, the researcher "walks along with the local inhabitants, asks questions and leads the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world" (Kvale, 1996, p. 4), the epistemology position is constructionism, the theoretical perspective is interpretivism, specifically, hermeneutics and the methodology is qualitative.

A semi-structured interview sits between an unstructured interview, where there is often a single question that the interviewer asks and the interviewee responds freely, and the structured interview, where the interviewer asks questions that are very specific and fixed. All interviewees are asked the same questions and in the same order as presented in the interview guide. The semi-structured interview is particularly sensitive and a powerful method for capturing the experiences of the interviewee's social world via a sequence of themes to be covered and some suggested questions (Kvale, 2007).

The findings from Phase 1 of this research provided a clear understanding of the extent of the primary research question and this informed the relevant areas, such as performance management and promotion, to be covered during the interview. The key advantage of the semi-structured interview was that the interview process was flexible. It enabled the researcher to alter the order of questions in the interview guide and ask other questions, depending on how the interviewee framed and understood the issues and events, yet remain focussed to ensure that the most critical areas of the study's focus were covered. Adopting a narrative account can provide insightful perspectives on the diversity of academic working lives (Henkel, 2000).

The focus of this research was to explore the perceptions of university management (organisational) and academics (individual) on career management for older academics. Thus, interview guides were designed to capture both organisational and individual perspectives. The researcher was familiar and

experienced in the range of possible questions and carefully designed the interview guide using open-ended questions so that different dimensions from the participant's responses could be pursued by the interviewer (Kvale, 1996). It was critical to ensure that all salient issues would be covered in the allotted time and that questions were linked back to one of the study's research objectives. The interview questions were framed in a simple, straightforward and neutral style. The interview guides followed the same format for each of the academic participants and for each of the university management participants, allowing responses to semi-structured questions as well as providing the opportunity to elaborate on their responses, offer further comments or raise matters of importance to the interviewee.

The focus of the interview questions varied for university management and for older academics. The key focus of the interviews with university management was to explore the role of university management in formulating strategy and implementing HRM strategies, policies and programs that support the careers of older academics, and also to explore their perceptions of career management for older academics (see Appendix 3 for a copy of the interview guide for university management). The interview questions asked of older academics explored their career trajectories and their perceptions of career management (see Appendix 4 for a copy of the interview guide for older academics). Thus, for example, explorations about the participant's academic career included themes such as academic career entry, academic career motivation, and positive and negative experiences about career management programs such as performance management. Explorations about their career plans for the next ten years included themes about promotion and retirement.

The 52 semi-structured interviews were conducted over 20 months, between October 2009 and June 2011, with two distinct interview periods. Period 1 was from October 2009 to April 2010 and 30 participants were interviewed (19 academics and 11 university management). Period 2 was from March 2011 to June 2011 and 22 participants were interviewed (13 academics and nine university management). Due to the evolving nature of this research, the period of data collection was deliberately prolonged as it allowed the researcher to take the time

to explore and understand the data collected from Period 1 and to identify any new areas for examination or questioning for the interviews that were to be conducted in Period 2. This iterative reflective process is characteristic of the inductive approach to quality research as explained in Section 3.4. The time between these two periods of semi-structured interviews proved to be beneficial, as the researcher had identified some strong reactions to institutional HRM policies and also detected some ageist and discriminatory attitudes towards academics aged in their 50s from the semi-structured interviews conducted in Period 1. In light of this, the researcher made slight variations to the interview guide for the semi-structured interviews in Period 2 to ascertain whether patterns and/or themes existed in those areas, and also reviewed sample selection to ensure there was no bias.

Potential participants were initially approached via email or telephone to brief them about the study and invite them to participate. Information about the researcher, the study and ethics approvals was attached to the email. There was no pressure (real or perceived) on individuals to participate; they were free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation at any time without having to give a reason and without adverse consequence. No participants withdrew or discontinued. Additionally, the researcher was not aware of any complaints or concerns arising from the research. In some instances where the initial approach did not elicit a reply or potential participants were keen to partake but were unable to do so as they were outside the sampling parameters for this study, the researcher utilised the snowball sampling technique to select suitable participants. This technique involved the researcher asking interviewees to recommend colleagues who could be suitable to be contacted to participate in this study. Snowball sampling proved to be useful and a total of eight participants were recruited by this additional sampling technique.

All of the semi-structured interviews were conducted at the participant's place of work and in their office, at a mutually convenient time and date, with the exception of four participants. Of the four semi-structured interviews, two academic participants had requested for the interview to be conducted in a meeting room at the researcher's institution, as it was in close proximity to where each of them

lived; another academic participant had wanted to be totally frank and open and away from her office and colleagues, so she chose the gardens of her institution for the interview; and the fourth was a university management participant who asked to be interviewed at an office where he had a meeting scheduled directly after the interview and this office was within walking distance of his institution.

The researcher started each interview by thanking them for agreeing to participate, explaining the research purpose and asking them to sign the Information and Consent form (see Appendix 6). After the participant had signed the form, the researcher asked permission to record the interview on a digital audio recorder. The purpose of the recording was for backup and to supplement the handwritten notes that were taken during the interview. All participants agreed to record the interview on a digital audio recorder.

Following the opening and general explanation of the interview, the researcher asked the participant if they had any questions of the study before proceeding with the questions in the interview guide. The opening question asked the participant to talk about their academic career to date and to highlight a few of their significant academic career achievements. The intention was to create a positive and encouraging atmosphere so that the participant would feel at ease and comfortable to frankly express their underlying attitudes and share their personal career experiences with the researcher. None of the interviews required the researcher to prompt the participant to answer, and full and candid answers to the questions were provided. This was possibly because participants were talking about their career experiences and generally about their lives. The remaining interview process proceeded as a "real conversation" and in keeping with the broad questions of the interview guide. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher asked if the participant wanted to add any comments and then thanked them for their time and their thoughts. The interview concluded with the researcher asking for demographic details (see Appendix 5) and whether the participant would like a copy of the summary results emailed to them. Most participants expressed how much they had enjoyed the discussion as it they were very interested in the topic and the questions had made them think about issues differently. Some participants offered their thanks and appreciation to the researcher for the opportunity to talk

about their academic career and experiences and, in fact, were grateful to be able to release some of their angst and concerns about issues that they were harbouring for one reason or another.

Sixteen of the 20 university management participants were also asked the questions from the interview guide for academics. The researcher decided that this approach was justified on the basis that an academic during their career trajectory can be appointed into a university management position and this may be for a contractual period. For all of these 16 university management participants, their academic career had begun as a lecturer or tutor before progressing to their current university management position.

Although the semi-structured interviews were scheduled for up to 45 minutes, the interviews ranged from 24 minutes to 124 minutes, with an average of 51 minutes for academic participants and an average of 61 minutes for university management participants. Overall, the interaction between the participant and the researcher was one of respect and mutual satisfaction.

3.7.2   Selection of Participants

A total of 52 participants were interviewed, of which 50 were academics aged in their 50s and two participants were administrative staff in senior university HR positions. Of the 50 academics aged in their 50s, 18 were academics holding university management positions. The sample was chosen using purposive sampling (discussed in Section 3.5.1). As a result, participants were drawn from three different universities (discussed in Section 3.7.5) and aged 50–59, being the age cohort that represents almost a third of the Australian academic workforce. In addition, the participants covered the diverse range of disciplines found in Australian universities. The sampling process commenced with the researcher accessing publicly available information on selected university websites, such as an individual academic's biography and the university's organisational chart, and this was combined with the snowball sampling technique on a needs basis (discussed in Section 3.5.1).

3.7.3 Overall Participant Profile

Of the total of 52 participants interviewed, 50 participants were academics aged in their 50s (30 were men and 20 were women) and two participants were administrative staff in senior university management positions with responsibilities in HRM policy development and implementation. More than half of the academic participants were in the 50–54 years age range. It is worth pointing out that the second highest proportion of academics within the Australian academic workforce are aged 50–54, at 14% (DEEWRS, 2015). Nearly a quarter of the academic participants were overseas-born.

Over 70% of participants had entered academia prior to 1990. Eight academic participants were initially employed in CAEs prior to the college becoming a university, of which five were women and three were men. The number of years in academia ranged from 3 to 34, with an average of 25 years. Fifty-six per cent had been employed in academia for more than 21 years (termed late career), followed by 38% for 7–20 years (termed mid career) and 6% for 6 years or less in academia (termed early career). The number of years employed at the current university ranged from 2 to 37, with an average of 18 years. Twenty-six per cent had been employed at their current university for more than 21 years, 50% for 7–20 years and 24% for 6 years or less.

All but four of the academic participants had completed a PhD. Of these four, the highest qualification obtained was a Masters qualification (two were men and two were women). Three of these four academic participants were initially employed by CAEs. Seven (14%) academics, six men and one woman, completed their PhD at universities overseas.

The year in which academic participants had obtained their PhD ranged from 1979 to 2009. Almost half of the academics (48%) obtained a PhD during the 1980s, followed by 24% during from 2000s, 22% during the 1990s and 7% during the 1970s. Of those who had obtained their PhD since 2000, women outnumbered men threefold. This is not surprising, given that some of the female academics had talked openly about family responsibilities and family-work conflict being constraints that delayed their decision to undertake a doctorate.

Half of the academic participants were classified at Level E (Professor), followed by Level D (22%) then Level C (18%) and Level B (10%). There were twice as many women than men at levels B and C, yet there were almost twice as many men than women at Level D. At Level E, men outnumbered women fourfold. The length of time that academic participants had been in their current position ranged from 1year - 23 years, with an average of 9 years.

In terms of academic positions, 31 (62%) occupied Teaching and Research positions, two (4%) were employed in research-only positions, one (2%) was a teaching-only position and 16 (32%) currently held academic university management positions but had the opportunity to maintain research and remain involved in teaching. These percentages across the academic positions among the academic participants reflect overall proportions in the Australia academic workforce (DEEWRS, 2015) and, hence, the sample is representative of the national academic workforce profile.

3.7.4 Discipline Groups of the Participants

The nature of disciplines is one of the fundamental characteristics that contribute to the complexity of the academic profession (Austin, 1990; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Biglan, 1973; Clark, 1987). On this basis, this study recognised the influence of disciplines on the nature of academic work. As discussed in Chapter 2, the discipline groups that relate to participants of this study are the four distinct academic discipline groups identified by Biglan (1973) and more recently adapted by Becher (1984, 1987, 1994): HP fields represent the knowledge domain for pure sciences such as physics and biology; HA fields, represent the knowledge domain for applied science-based professions such as engineering and agriculture; SP fields, represent the knowledge domain for humanities and pure social sciences such as history, philosophy, sociology and psychology; and SA fields, represent the knowledge domain for applied social science professions such as management, law and education (Becher & Trowler, 2001). These four academic discipline groups are distinguished by a range of characteristics, such as entry requirements, enquiry process, nature of knowledge growth and relationship between the researcher and

knowledge (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Purposive sampling enabled careful participant selection to ensure representation across the four academic discipline groups, as well as the three university types included in the research design.

Table 3.8 summarises the representation of the discipline groups of the academic participants. The total number of 50 academic participants was relatively evenly spread across the four distinct academic discipline groups. There were marginally more academic participants at the senior positions of Level E and Level D among the HP and SP discipline groups. Within the "pure" discipline groups, a doctorate and post-doctoral experience are the "norm" prior to commencing an academic career, and it is likely that an academic career may commence when one is aged in their mid to late 20s and, therefore, there would be more time and opportunity to advance one's academic career. This is in contrast to the applied discipline groups, where an academic career may commence when one is aged in their late 30s to early 40s (Clark, 1987).

The gender representation within each discipline group varied, with the least number of female participants in the HA discipline group but the most female participants in the SA discipline group. In contrast, there were the least number of male participants in the SP and SA discipline groups. The HA discipline group had the most male participants.

The academic participants in the HP discipline group represented physics, chemistry, geology, microbiology and zoology. There were a total of 13 participants, of which there were seven professors (Level E), five A/Ps (Level D) and one S/L (Level C). The average number of years in academia among HP participants was 27 years.

The academic participants in the HA discipline group represented engineering, physiotherapy, statistics and mathematics. There were a total of 10 participants, of which there were five professors, one A/P, three S/Ls and one lecturer (Level B). One participant did not have a PhD and was employed as a lecturer. The average number of years in academia among HA participants was 25 years.

The academic participants in the SP discipline group represented anthropology, psychology, English literature and history. There were a total of 13 participants, of whom there were seven professors, three A/Ps, two S/Ls and one lecturer. One participant that did not have a PhD was an A/P. The average number of years in academia among SP participants was 25 years.

The academic participants in the SA discipline group represented management, education, marketing and finance. There were a total of 14 participants, of whom there were six professors, two A/Ps, three S/Ls and three lecturers. Of the two participants that did not have a PhD, one was an A/P and one was a lecturer. Five participants had completed their PhD post 2000 (two lecturers and three S/Ls). The average number of years in academia among SA participants was 21 years.

Table 3.8:   **Summary of Participants by Discipline Group, Gender and Position**

	Female	Male	TOTAL
HP	3	4	7 (13%)
HA	2	6	8 (15%)
SP	5	3	8 (15%)
SA	6	3	9 (17%)
Total Academics	16 (31%)	16 (31%)	32 (62%)
University Management	5 (9%)	15 (29%)	20 (38%)
TOTAL	**21 (40%)**	**31 (60%)**	**52 (100%)**

3.7.5   Profile of Participants for Each University

Three universities participated in this research and the sample size for each university was relatively evenly spread. The researcher purposely selected the three universities in recognition that there are different types of universities in Australia's higher education (discussed in Section 3.6). Out of the four university groupings, one university was selected from the Go8, one from the IRU and one from the ATN. No university was selected from the Regional university grouping.

University 1 is an IRU. Table 3.9 summarises the 20 participants selected from this university, 19 of whom were academics and one was an administrative staff in a senior university HR position. Among the 19 academic participants, seven held university management positions. The number of years that the academic participants had been employed at University 1 ranged from 6 to 37 years, with the average being 26 years.

Table 3.9:   Summary Statistics for Participants from University 1 (IRU)

	Academics Total	University Management Total	TOTAL
HP	2 (2F)	3 (1F, 2M)	5 (3F, 2M)
HA	3 (3M)	0	3M
SP	3 (1F, 2M)	2 (1F, 1M)	5 (2F, 3M)
SA	4 (2F, 2M)	2 (1F, 1M)	6 (3F, 3M)
Administration	0	1M	1M
TOTAL	**12 (5F, 7M)**	**8 (3F, 5M)**	**20 (8F,12M)**

University 2 is a member of the Go8. The 17 academic participants selected from this university included seven who held university management positions (Table 3.10). Three of the academic participants were initially employed in CAEs before the college became a university. The number of years that the academic participants had been employed at University 2 ranged from 3 to 35 years, with the average being 24 years.

Table 3.10:   Summary Statistics for Participants from University 2 (Go8)

	Academics Total	University Management Total	TOTAL
HP	2M	3M	5M
HA	2 (1F, 1M)	1M	3 (1F, 2M)
SP	3 (2F, 1M)	2M	5 (2F,3M)
SA	3 (2F, 1M)	1F	4(3F, 1M)
Administration	0	0	0
TOTAL	**10(5F, 5M)**	**7(1F, 6M)**	**17 (6F, 11M)**

University 3 is a member of the ATN. The 15 participants from this university comprised 14 academics and one administrative staff member in a senior university HR position (Table 3.11). Five of the academic participants were initially employed in CAEs before the college became a university. The number of years that academic participants had been employed at University 3 ranged from 5 to 34 years, with the average being 26 years.

Table 3.11:   Summary Statistics for Participants from University 3 (ATN)

	Academics Total	University Management Total	TOTAL
HP	3 (1F, 2M)	0	3(1F, 2M)
HA	3 (1F, 2M)	1M	4 (1F, 3M)
SP	2 (2F)	1M	3 (2F, 1M)
SA	2 (2F)	2M	4 (2F, 2M)
Administration	0	1F	1F
TOTAL	**10 (6F, 4M)**	**5 (1F, 4M)**	**15 (7F, 8M)**

3.7.6 University Management Participants

The 20 university management participants included 18 academics holding university management positions and 2 administrative staff in senior university HR

positions. Senior university management encompassed DVCs with institutional responsibility for academic staffing, and university HR Directors. Middle-level management comprised FD and HoS. All senior level managers were typically external appointed, as were most of the FD positions. HoS and HoD were generally appointed by FDs in consultation with departmental academic staff.

For the purposes of understanding university management levels, it is important to delineate the accountability, formulation and implementation of organisational strategies, policies and programs in universities. Senior and middle management have different roles within the university structure (Anderson et al., 2002; Henkel, 2002; Kogan & Teichler, 2007). In universities, the equivalent to the role of Chief Executive is the role of VC, responsible for establishing the university's values and mission. Strategic planning and managerial tasks are also key functions. Senior university management positions such as the DVC and PVC are academics who are likely to give up all teaching and research responsibilities to concentrate on being a full-time administrator, which would encompass policy-making, policy implementation and management of finances as key functions. Middle-level management – FD and HoS – are academics who accept the additional managerial responsibilities, such as directing others' work and evaluating their performance for a specified and temporary period, and then return to substantial teaching and research responsibilities. The focus is on operational managerial activities involved at the school level.

Among the academic participants, 18 (36%) held university management positions and, in these positions, men (78%) outnumbered women (22%). This profile lends support to the HRM literature on women in leadership positions, in that in Australia, despite over 30 years of legislation aimed at addressing inequalities and discrimination in employment, women have not attained the leadership positions in any significant numbers (Still, 2006). Furthermore, this profile is typical of the gender representation in Australian universities that have a disproportionately small number of women occupying senior levels in academia (Probert, 2005; Rawstron, 2013; Wallace & Marchant, 2009, 2011; White, 2001).

The number of years in academia among the university management participants ranged from 17 to 35 years, with an average of 26 years. All had been employed in academia for more than 21 years (termed late career) except for two in the mid-career stage (7–20 years in academia).

In relation to academic positions, all were classified at Level E (Professor) except for one, who was classified at Level D (A/P). Sixteen occupied middle-level management positions (four were HoS and 11 were FD) and there were two in senior university administration positions (DVC positions with institutional responsibility for academic staffing).

3.7.7   Interview Data Analysis Process

Data analysis is the process of making an interpretation of text and moving deeper into understanding the data (Creswell, 2009). However, prior to data analysis, Miles and Huberman (1994) have emphasised that the way a qualitative study is managed can strongly influence the kinds of analyses that can be performed. Computer-assisted software can be used to facilitate qualitative data analysis but the decision should be made on the basis of the quantity and complexity of the documents to be analysed (Veal, 2005). Moreover, Kvale (2007) has asserted that computer programs can "replace the time-demanding cut and paste approach to hundreds of pages of transcripts with electronic scissors" (p. 99).

As the researcher was faced with 52 lengthy semi-structured interviews to analyse (the largest interview transcript was 80 pages), she decided to use "electronic scissors" to help manage and provide structure to the copious amount of data collected. One of the most widely used computer programs in qualitative research, NVivo 9, was selected. This software stored the data, facilitated its analysis and allowed for in-depth exploration of the data. It was particularly useful for classifying emerging themes, identifying dominant and subsidiary themes and the potential connectivity between them.

The data analysis strategy proposed by Creswell (2009) was used in this study. The six steps are linear and hierarchical, yet the steps are interrelated and involve

interactive and multiple levels of analysis (Creswell, 2009) (Figure 3.3). The details of the data analysis steps in Phase 2 are described below.

Figure 3.3:   Data Analysis Strategy for Phase 2 of this Research
            (based on Creswell, 2009)

```
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │  Step 6. Interpreting the │
              │   Meaning of Themes /     │
              │      Descriptions         │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                          ▲
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │ Step 5. Interrelating Themes / │
              │      Descriptions         │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                  ▲               ▲
          ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
          │   Step 4.    │   │   Step 4.    │
          │   Themes     │   │ Description  │
          └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘
                  ▲               ▲
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │  Step 3. Coding the Data  │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                          ▲
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │ Step 2. Reading through the │
              │          Data             │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                          ▲
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │  Step 1. Organising and   │
              │    preparing the Data     │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                          ▲
                   ╭───────────────╮
                   │   Interview    │
                   │  transcripts   │
                   ╰───────────────╯
```
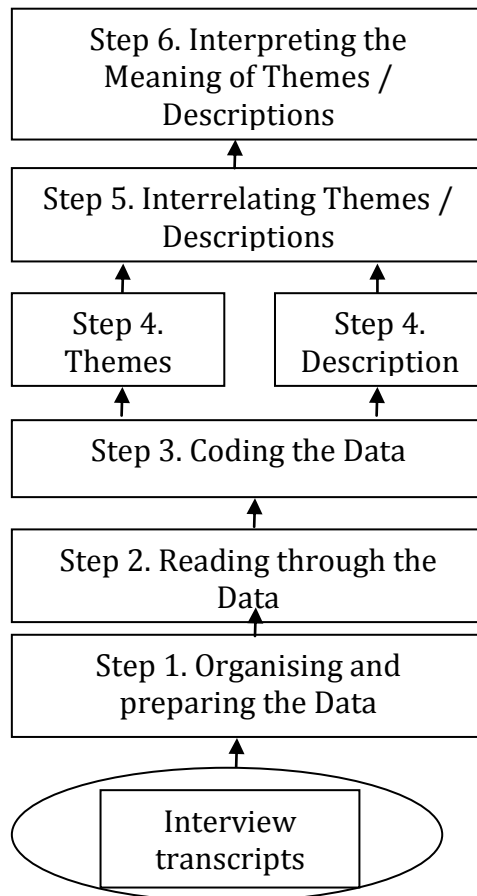
The first step is to organise and prepare the data for analysis. The researcher reviewed the notes taken during each interview and also accessed data from other sources such as the individual academics' curriculum vitae. She then listened to each interview prior to transcription, as all of the semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded. All the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. The researcher transcribed the first three interviews but, to save time, decided to outsource the remaining 49 interviews to a professional transcription provider.

The researcher listened and read each interview transcript in its entirety and then re-read to ensure accuracy of transcription from the interview recording.

The second step is to read through all the data. First, the researcher imported the interview transcripts which were Word documents into NVivo 9, and each interview was set up as a case to analyse in NVivo. A case is viewed as a unit of analysis that is the entity on which the interpretation of the study will focus and is not an indication that case study research is being undertaken (Bazeley, 2007; Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher then listed and read through each interview transcript case to obtain a general sense of the data and created a memo for each case that recorded general thoughts and tentative ideas about categories and relationships. Memos are useful to capture analytic thinking about research and can also facilitate and stimulate analytic insights (Maxwell, 2005).

The third and fourth steps are the coding process and the generation of themes and descriptions. Coding is how the researcher defines the data that will be analysed. It is a way of indexing or categorising the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas (Gibbs, 2007). Furthermore, a good thematic code is one that captures the qualitative fruitfulness of the phenomenon and there are five elements (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 31):

1. A label (that is, a name)
2. A definition of what the theme concerns
3. A description of how to know when the theme occurs
4. A description of any qualifications or exclusions to the identification of the theme
5. Examples of both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking for the theme.

An example of a theme identified in the study is shown in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12:   An Example of a Theme identified in this Study

Label	Age and Academic Promotion
Definition	Age refers to chronological age. Academic Promotion refers to the process that recognises and rewards high-performing academics and advances them to the next academic classification level based on merit, demonstrated ability and achievement.
How to know when a theme occurs	Reference to words such as old, young, ageist, ageism, career advance, opportunities, early career, mid-career, late career, S/L, A/P, Professor.
Qualifications to the identification of the theme	Reference to university, faculty, school, discipline, management, application, criteria.
Examples of positive and negative	Positive examples: positive adjectives used and positive feelings expressed. Negative examples: negative adjectives used and negative feelings expressed.

Taking into account the above five elements for a thematic code, the researcher established predetermined "free" nodes that were drawn from the literature and added further "free" nodes as they emerged during the data analysis. "Free" nodes do not assume relationships with any other concepts, and enable ideas to be captured without imposing any structure on these ideas and "chunk" text into broad topic areas (Bazeley, 2007). The researcher then utilised the initial coding strategy, known as the broad-brush coding or bucket coding, which involved sorting text by "chunking" it into broad topic areas. As Bazeley (2007) noted, this process allows the researcher to carry out several tasks: sort answers to questions; broadly see the various areas for the study and identify any gaps in the data; identify text that is particularly relevant to the areas for the study; "park" text that may or may not be relevant; complete some preliminary analyses.

Where appropriate, the researcher also used "parallel coding" and this process involved assigning the same piece of text in more than one node. For example, comments made about family responsibilities that had impacted the progress in a participant's academic career were coded in both "academic career barriers" node as well as "family responsibilities" node. As the data analysis progressed, "trees" of

nodes were created reflecting dominant and sub-themes. This is reinforced by Miles and Huberman (1994), who discussed the importance of the researcher's ability to "cluster" perceived themes in order to move to higher levels of abstraction. For example "retirement" was identified as a dominant theme with further sub-themes such as "push" factors and "pull" factors. Creating trees of dominant themes and sub-theme trees required intense engagement with the data, including renaming and splitting or merging themes (Bazeley, 2007) and this process of refining the larger "free" nodes enabled a deeper understanding of the data. Reflective of qualitative research as an on-going process, much moving back and forth between interview transcripts occurred and this included identifying potential similarities and differences and exploring emerging themes.

The fifth step is the representation of the findings of the qualitative data analysis and these are presented in chapters 4 and 5. The sixth and final step is the interpretation and the implications of the data and this is discussed in Chapter 6.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations for this research. The research design included steps to ensure that a high ethical standard and practice was maintained throughout all of the study components. To ensure ethical conduct, the following steps for access and sampling, collection of data and analysis of data were incorporated in the research design (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Flick, 2007).

Ethical issues in relation to access and sampling for the research question were aptly addressed and ethics approval was obtained from the University's Ethics Committee for the research. In addition, ethics approval was obtained from each of the other universities involved in the research. This process involved submitting the ethics approval from the University's Ethics Committee and then completing the other university ethics application for approval (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the university's ethics application approval letter).

The researcher ensured that the procedures for data collection were explicit and she was vigilant in maintaining ethical standards during the collection of data.

Before the interviews, all participants were provided with an Information and Consent form that outlined information about the purpose and design of the research, details on the researcher, the procedures for data collection and storage of the research, the contact details for the researcher's supervisors and the University Research Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). All participants were asked whether they agreed to participate in the research and signed the Information and Consent form witnessed by the researcher (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the Information and Consent form).

The researcher ensured that participant anonymity and confidentiality was of utmost importance. The interview transcripts have been stored as secure Word documents on the researcher's password-protected computer hard drive. The digital back up and hard copies of the interview recordings have been stored in securely locked filing cabinets and are accessible only by the researcher and her supervisor. All data have been held in strict confidence, de-identified, and not disclosed to other participants.

Each interview transcript is read in its entirety and analysis of the interview transcripts involves coding the data from each interview into "nodes" in order to build up knowledge about the data (Bazeley, 2007). All participants and universities were de-identified to preserve anonymity. Within the discussion of findings, quotations from academic participants give their academic classification level, gender, university grouping, discipline grouping, and the number of years in academia, while the quotations from academic participants holding university management positions, only their classification level, university grouping and number of years in academia are revealed. No further identification is provided in the context of preserving individual and university confidentiality and anonymity.

3.9   Limitations of the Research Design

As with most research, this study had strengths and limitations. A key methodological strength of qualitative research is that it typically produces a wealth of detailed information and facilitates the study of issues in depth and detail

(Patton, 2002). However, this increase in the depth of understanding of individuals and situations presents a limitation, as it reduces the generalisability of the findings. There are several limitations in this research.

The first limitation relates to the data sources used for this study. In Phase 1, some university HRM policy documents were incomplete as they contained confidential information that was protected and, therefore, not made available to the public. The researcher was required at times to search out the information in other areas of the university's website that were not necessarily dedicated to HRM policy documents, due to the different website designs of the selected universities. Although some of the breadth of documents is inevitably compromised by the limited access, the documents that were accessed generally reflected the university profiles. In Phase 2, not all participants were equally articulate and perceptive in their interview responses. For some participants there was limited time to participate in the interview and this possibly may have had an impact on the scope and depth of interview responses. Within these limitations, the researcher worked to the best of her ability, using data from other sources such as the individual academic's curriculum vitae and direct observation and experience to understand the career trajectories of the participants.

The second limitation relates to the sample in relation to size and representativeness. While there was a total number of 50 academic participants (note: an additional two participants were administrative staff occupying senior university HR positions), the researcher took into account the four distinct academic discipline groups to broaden the representation of the academic workforce. Furthermore, the researcher purposely selected the interview participants from three identified formal university groupings out of a total of 39 universities in Australia to reflect the diversity found in Australian universities. In addition, the numbers of universities were extended to 21 universities in the documentary data. Thus, the sample in this study is representative and reflected in the national statistics (discussed in Section 3.7.2).

The third limitation is the sample was purposely restricted to academics aged in their 50s. It is apparent that while this concentration on this age cohort may result

in academics aged in their 50s being perceived as a potential source of sustained competitive advantage for universities, this does not mean that it could also be the case for academics of different ages. Moreover, there could be other possible sources of competitive advantage for universities, such as intangible resources, for example, the university's reputation and its organisational culture that would deserve further investigation and consideration.

The fourth limitation is the role of the researcher. The researcher is a student as well as an academic, and this raises the possible limitation of interviewer bias. The researcher ensured that the research was undertaken in a competent and responsible manner, and undertook steps to minimise researcher bias, as she was mindful of the possibility that her position might influence or cause misinterpretation of the research findings. Therefore, she adopted a detached and systematic approach in the analysis of the data in order to protect the independence of the research (Kvale, 1996, 2007).

3.10   Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed explanation and justification of the research design for this study. Careful consideration was given to the four elements of research design: the epistemological and theoretical perspectives, the methodology, and methods so as to ensure that the research design of this study was not compromised. The selected epistemology position was constructionism; the most appropriate theoretical perspective was interpretivism, specifically, hermeneutics; the chosen methodology was qualitative and the most suitable methods to be complementary were document analysis and semi-structured interviews. This chapter has also discussed the ethical considerations, the triangulation of the research, and the limitations of the research design.

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that the most appropriate research design for this study was a qualitative two-phase study with an interpretative frame utilising both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources. Figure 3.4 is a schematic representation of the findings for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of

this research. The organisational perspective on career management for older academics is presented in Chapter 4, while the individual perspective on career management for older academics is presented in Chapter 5.

Figure 3.4:   **Schematic Representation of Research Findings and Chapters in this Thesis**
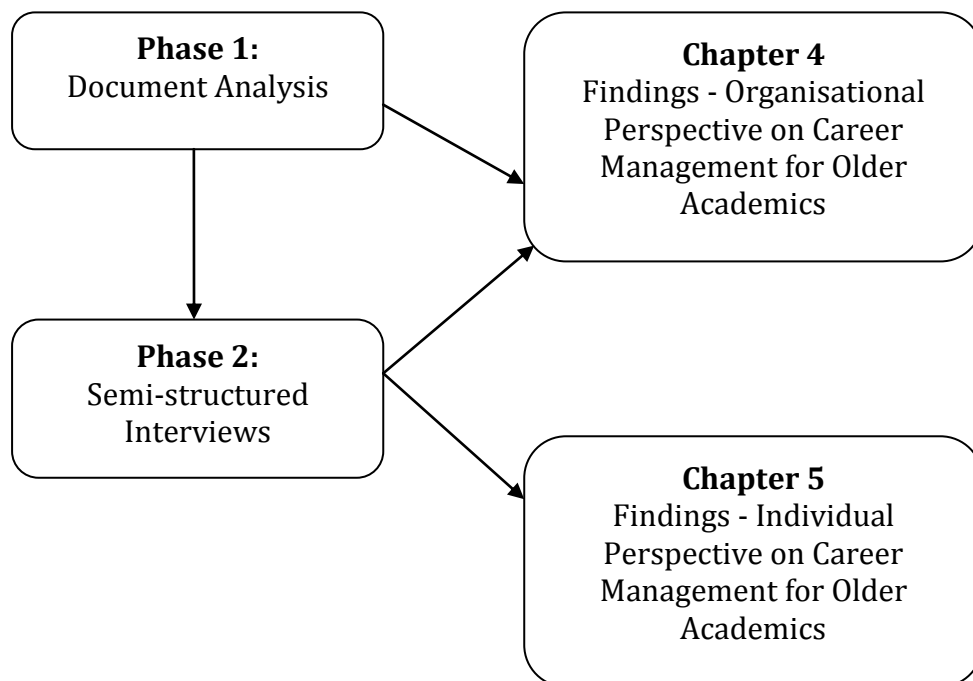
Chapter 4   Findings – Organisational Perspective on Career Management for Older Academics

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the organisational perspective on career management for older academics. This perspective is derived from two data sources: documents and semi-structured interviews. The documents were publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities, as well as AUQA audit reports for the period 2006–2009 for 21 Australian universities. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 university management participants.

This chapter seeks to answer the two research objectives: RO1: Identify what universities do to support the careers of older academics and RO2: Explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics. The analyses of the public institutional HRM policy documents and the AUQA audit reports are presented in sections 4.2 and 4.3, respectively, and the findings are summarised in Section 4.4. The findings and analysis of the interviews with university management participants are introduced in Section 4.5. The findings relating to the two aims of the interviews are presented and discussed in Section 4.6, and the analysis of the interviews is summarised in Section 4.7. Finally, the chapter summary is presented in Section 4.8.

4.2   Document Analysis: Public Institutional HRM Policy Documents (Phase 1)

The public institutional HRM policy documents were obtained from 16 of the 39 Australian universities and were collected using web-searching (see Section 3.6.2). Each document was examined to determine the extent of representation of ten organisational career management programs. These programs were derived from

the literature review (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.6) and are specifically designed to help individuals to assess, plan, and manage their career direction and development. The ten organisational career management programs are listed in Table 4.1.

Only three of the ten programs were evident in the documents of all 16 universities – performance appraisal, academic promotion and study programs. The low representation of the ten programs within the documents suggests that the wide range of organisational career management programs, as discussed in the HRM and career literature, may not be fully utilised by universities or it may have been due to such programs not being publicly available at all universities.

Secondment programs were evident in the documents of 12 universities (75%). These programs aim to provide academic staff with opportunities for knowledge and skill development and to encourage collaboration and exchange. Such programs are not directed specifically at older academics, but there is no reason why those personnel cannot take advantage of them. However, older academics may be perceived by management as nearing the end of their careers and therefore may not be given the same encouragement to take advantage of these opportunities.

Professional development programs were evident in the documents of nine universities (56%). Professional development programs are concerned with matters such as enhancing the skills of academics, both in their roles as teachers and researchers, as well as in university leadership and management positions. However, programs related to professional development – mentoring and career development – were evident in the documents of only three universities (19%), although the actual universities were different in each case. Given the importance of the development of human capital within knowledge-intensive organisations, these low representations suggest a relatively modest attention to what should be a critical HRM responsibility. As human capital theorists have pointed out, continual professional development is particularly important to professionals in knowledge-intensive organisations in order to stay at the forefront of their disciplines and professional fields (e.g., Becker, 1975). The low level of reference to development

programs may also reflect universities' expectations that academics should be personally responsible for their professional development; indeed, this is consistent with the literature on contemporary careers, where the individual is viewed as the main "owner" of their career. However, others argue that there is mutual ownership in managing and developing careers between individuals and organisations (Baruch, 2004a; Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Inkson & King, 2011).

Over a third of universities (six universities, 38%) had programs designed to assist academics in the transition to retirement and also programs related to voluntary retirement schemes. These findings suggest that universities are actively managing older academics towards retirement and may even be discouraging older academics from continuing to work after the traditional retirement age. It was notable that, while supporting the transition to retirement, no universities had programs on succession planning that seek to proactively replenish key positions vacated by the retirement of older academics.

Nearly one-third of universities (five universities, 31%) had special programs for academics. These programs provided support and opportunities at the different career stages, such as early-career or mid-career, or for academics with carer responsibilities for young children and/or elderly parents. While the university recognises that different life circumstances and different career stages need to be supported, there were no programs that respond specifically to the different career needs and expectations of older academics.

University grouping and geographic location appear to influence the representation of the ten organisational career management programs. Of the four university groupings, the Go8 had the highest representation (63%), followed by the ATN (58%), the Regional Universities (Regional) (50%) and the IRU (45%). This finding reinforces the diversity of Australian universities regarding the way they manage and develop their academic workforce. It is perhaps not surprising that the Go8, internationally recognised for scholarship and research excellence, had the highest representation of career management programs, given their need to attract and retain high-performing academics in a competitive and global environment.

Of the four geographic locations, QLD had the highest representation (65%), followed by VIC (60%), with the least representation in NSW and WA, both at 45%. The low representation of career management programs in NSW, in which 11 out of 39 Australia's universities are located, was also highlighted in the Auditor-General's report for the State of NSW (A-G NSW, 2010). This report noted that the continued absence of policies, particularly succession planning, was a risk associated with an ageing academic workforce. It was recommended that all universities in NSW "develop and implement effective policies to address and manage the ageing academic workforce" (p. 24) and that they "ensure strategies are in place to develop, attract and retain staff whose skills are aligned with the strategic direction of the universities" (p. 24). Moreover, the impending retirements of academics were described as "a significant loss of academic skills" (p. 24) and it was suggested that among the strategies, for universities to adopt was to "promote the return of former skilled academic staff" (p. 24).

4.2.1 Summary of Public Institutional HRM Policy Documents

Overall, the analysis of public institutional HRM policy documents, as shown in Table 4.1, suggests only a low to moderate level of representation of the ten organisational career management programs among the 16 selected universities. Of concern were limited career management programs designed for older academics, except for retirement preparation programs that would discourage older academics from continuing to work. In addition, no HRM policy documents mentioned succession planning, which would proactively replenish key positions that would be vacated with the impending exit of retiring older academics. The representation of these ten programs differed across university groupings and geographical locations. These findings lend support to the NTEU's concern that was expressed in Chapter 1, whereby universities are taking a reactive response to the ageing academic workforce with short-sighted policies and strategies aimed at minimising staffing costs, which, in turn, could possibly threaten the future sustainability of a quality higher education sector (NTEU, 2007). The analysis of the AUQA audit reports is discussed next.

Table 4.1:   Summary of Document Analysis – Public Institutional HRM Policy Documents

Group	Institution	Performance Appraisal	Academic Promotion	Study Programs	Secondments	Professional Development Programs	Retirement Preparation Programs	Special Programs	Mentoring	Career Development	Succession Planning
Go8	University of Sydney	x	x	x	x		x				
	Monash University	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	University of Queensland	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
	University of Western Australia		x	x				x			
ATN	University of Technology, Sydney	x	x	x	x						
	RMIT University	x	x	x	x	x		x			
	Queensland University of Technology	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
	Curtin University	x	x	x	x						
IRU	Macquarie University[2]	x	x	x		x					
	La Trobe University	x	x	x	x		x				
	Griffith University	x	x	x	x	x					
	Monash University	x	x	x	x						

(continued overleaf)

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[2] MQ was part of the IRU at the time of the selection of documents

Table 4.1 (continued)

		Performance Appraisal	Academic Promotion	Study Programs	Secondments	Professional Development	Retirement Preparation Programs	Special Programs	Mentoring	Career Development	Succession Planning
Regional	University of New England	X	X	X		X					
	Deakin University	X	X	X							
	James Cook University	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
	Edith Cowan University	X	X	X	X	X	X				
TOTAL		100%	100%	100%	75%	56%	38%	31%	19%	19%	0%

4.3   AUQA Audit Report Analysis

The AUQA was responsible for two cycles of quality audits of higher education institutions. AUQA audit reports for Cycle 1 commenced in 2001 and finished in 2007. The aim of Cycle 1 was to consider and review the policies and procedures that monitor and seek to achieve a university's objectives. Each audit report contained a summary of findings, including commendations of achievements and recommendations for improvements across a range of areas such as planning and quality assurance, governance and management, staffing, research, education and community. Cycle 2 audits commenced in 2008[3] and the focus was to review the university's progress in addressing the recommendations from the Cycle 1 audit and review major changes to the university's quality management system. In addition, AUQA audit reports for Cycle 2 assessed institutional standards and performance outcomes, with attention to benchmarking activities and their effect on academic standards and outcomes.

The AUQA audit reports used in this study were drawn from 21 of the 39 Australian universities for the period 2006–2009. Of the 21 audit reports examined, 12 were from Cycle 1 (see Section 4.3.1) and nine were from Cycle 2 (see Section 4.3.2). The focus of analysis for this study was on the academic staffing component of the audit reports and, more specifically, what AUQA has identified in terms of issues of concern about the ageing of academics. In this way, the audit reports provide insight into the question of how well these universities are responding to their ageing academic workforce.

Academics aged 50 and over make up a substantial proportion of the Australian academic workforce, as shown in Table 4.2. The table presents the percentage of full-time and fractional full-time academics aged 50 and over, for the 21 selected universities in 1997, 2002 and 2007. The table also shows the national average for those years, and the change in the percentage for each university over that 10-year period to illustrate that there is an increasing trend of academics aged 50 and over.

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[3] Cycle 2 audit report occurs approximately five years after the Cycle 1 audit report

The national average of the percentage of academics aged 50 and over steadily increased between 1997 and 2007. Similarly, all but one of the 21 universities also experienced an increase in their academic workforce aged 50 and over during this period. Southern Cross University had the highest increase, from 26% in 1997 to 56% in 2007. The University of Notre Dame was the only university that experienced a decrease in its academic workforce aged 50 and over[4], falling from 46% in 2002 (the first year data were available) to 41% in 2007. ACU National University had the highest percentage of academics aged 50 and over, with 45% in 1997, 59% in 2002 and 64% in 2007.

Four universities from the Go8 were below the national average for academics aged 50 and over in 2007, and this had remained relatively stable over the ten-year period. A reason for the younger age profile in these universities may relate to the high level of research-intensive short-term employment contracts associated with research grants. While many of the selected AUQA audit reports do not specifically mention the ageing of academics, the data from Table 4.2 show that it is a significant HRM issue for each of the 21 universities.

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[4] The University of Notre Dame, Australia is a new university and would have likely started with experienced academics and casuals. The decrease possibly occurred through natural attrition. It is atypical of the university system.

Table 4.2: **The National Average and the Percentage of Full-time and Fractional Full-time Academics Aged 50 Years and Over for the Selected 21 AUQA Audit Reports for 1997, 2002 and 2007**

(DEEWRS, 1997, 2002, 2007)

University	% in 1997	% in 2002	% in 2007	% change 1997–2007
ACU National	45	59	64	**+19**
Australian National University	31	38	37	**+6**
Central Queensland University	24	37	44	**+20**
Curtin University of Technology	36	41	44	**+8**
Flinders University of South Australia	37	43	45	**+8**
Griffith University	30	38	41	**+11**
Monash University	28	32	32	**+4**
Murdoch University	32	38	40	**+8**
Southern Cross University	26	40	56	**+30**
Swinburne University of Technology	39	42	46	**+7**
University of Adelaide	34	38	38	**+4**
University of Canberra	41	52	50	**+9**
University of Melbourne	25	30	31	**+6**
University of Newcastle	30	38	39	**+9**
University of New South Wales	33	39	42	**+9**
University of Notre Dame, Australia	*	46	41	**−5**
University of Western Sydney	28	44	57	**+29**
University of the Sunshine Coast	*	27	45	**+18**
University of Technology, Sydney	39	46	48	**+9**
University of Wollongong	32	41	42	**+10**
Victoria University	27	43	51	**+24**
DEEWRS average	**32**	**38**	**40**	**+11**

* data unavailable

4.3.1 AUQA Audit Reports for Cycle 1 – Analysis

The twelve AUQA audit reports examined for Cycle 1 were shown in Table 3.6, presented by geographical location and university grouping (see Chapter 3, page 82).

Australian National University

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for the Australian National University highlighted that, like most Australian universities, the university is facing a considerable turnover of staff in the near future, with almost 50% of academic staff aged 55 years or older. As shown in Table 4.2, the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over increased by 6% over the ten-year period, from 31% in 1997 to 37% by 2007. The AUQA audit panel has affirmed that this challenge is being recognised by the university and is being addressed in its strategic plan.

Central Queensland University

While the AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for Central Queensland University identified no direct ageing issues, the report does highlight problems with the university's management of its HRM systems and academic workforce. For example, there is no university-wide HRM plan and the HR data management system has been identified as inadequate for intended strategic purposes. As noted in the report:

> The HRM capability and capacity of the University are weak. Staff and management's perception of the value provided by HRM is low ... it is incapable of providing appropriate data for workforce planning and analysis (p. 51).

The report also raised concerns about other HRM matters, such as high turnover rates, heavy reliance on casual staff, a comparatively junior staff profile as shown by the lowest rate of academic staff with doctoral qualifications across almost all levels, and difficulties in recruiting staff, given that the applicants-to-vacancies ratio is the lowest in the country. In addition, the report highlighted the general lack of professional development courses on reflective teaching practice, mentoring, and effective student learning. Central Queensland University's academic workforce aged 50 and over had almost doubled from 24% in 1997 to 44 % in 2007 (Table 4.2), indicating that the university has likely ignored their ageing academic workforce. These statistics and the AUQA report raise concerns about the university's preparedness in managing their ageing academic workforce.

Flinders University of South Australia

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for Flinders University of South Australia conducted in 2004 highlighted that workforce planning processes needed to be developed as a matter of priority. The university's proportion of its academic staff cohort aged 45 and over (65%) was higher than the national average (56%). As shown in Table 4.2, the percentage of the academic workforce aged 50 and over at the university increased by 8% over the ten years in question (from 37% in 1997 to 45% in 2007) and also exceeded the national average by 5% in 2007. This steady increase over the decade suggests that little had changed in the university's HRM policies and programs. Furthermore, the AUQA audit panel encouraged Flinders University to consider this cohort in the development of a holistic future workforce and succession planning strategy.

Monash University

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for Monash University makes no reference to the ageing of academics, even though 32% of its academic workforce were aged 50 and over in 2007 (Table 4.2). In fact, the report highlighted that Monash University had a clear strategic approach to raising its research profile and achieving excellence in both education and research, which raises the question of a place in the university's plans for older academics who are less active in research. The university's stated aim of attracting new research academics, and a lack of mention of ageing academics, suggest that Monash University's focus is on recruitment rather than on retention. As stated in the report:

> It is a priority for Monash to attract high quality staff, not least senior staff, as a means of raising its research profile and achieving excellence in both education and research … Monash recognises the need for a more coordinated and strategic approach to its HR management. That has led to the establishment of a separate HR Division which is responsible for assisting the development and implementation of recruitment and retention strategies with an increased focus on ensuring that only research-active academic staff who can contribute to the strengthening of Monash's research profile and performance are appointed (p. 20).

Murdoch University

As shown in Table 4.2, Murdoch University's academic workforce aged 50 and over increased by 8% over the ten years, from 32% in 1997 to 40% in 2007. The AUQA audit panel identified that the looming retirement of long-term academic staff is an issue for Murdoch University to address in their succession planning processes. As indicated by the following quote, gender equity and early career academics are also identified as challenges the university needs to address, which reinforces a lack of strategic concern by Murdoch University for their academic workforce.

> AUQA recommends that Murdoch University more clearly define its commitment to gender equity, and urgently implement an action plan to provide opportunities for women to advance in their careers and in a range of leadership roles across the University … AUQA recommends that Murdoch University urgently develops systems to attract, support, and advance early career academics across all aspects of teaching, research, and engagement; and encourages such staff to engage in the University's strategic change processes, so they can be actively involved in the shaping of the institution's future (p. 49).

University of Melbourne

While almost a third of the University of Melbourne's academic workforce were aged 50 and over in 2007 (Table 4.2), the AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 made no mention of issues associated with the ageing of academics. In fact, the University of Melbourne received a number of commendations from the AUQA audit panel in relation to its management of their HR, which would suggest that the university may be dealing more effectively than many universities with their ageing academic workforce.

University of New South Wales

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for the University of NSW does not specifically mention ageing of their academics in the discussion of workforce matters. However, the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over increased by 9% in the ten years, from 33% in 1997 to 42% in 2007 (Table 4.2) and, with almost

half of their academic workforce aged 50 and over, it is clear that this is a significant HR issue for the university. In fact, the AUQA audit panel noted an urgent need to develop a comprehensive HRM strategy at the university, including succession planning, and that this would require a sustained commitment from top level management. The lack of a comprehensive HRM strategy suggests that their ageing academics are not being addressed in the university's existing workforce planning processes.

University of the Sunshine Coast

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for the University of the Sunshine Coast highlighted a higher proportion of academic staff in the 45–54 age range than the sector average. As shown in Table 4.2, the university had a 19% increase in their academic workforce aged 50 and over in five years, from 27% in 2002 to 45% in 2007. The report noted that the university is not responding adequately to their HR needs, highlighting a lack of formal succession planning processes and formal support to early-career researchers, a declining proportion of doctoral qualifications among its academic staff (from 60.8% in 2004 to 53.7% in 2005), and one of the highest gender imbalances of academics (8% of academic staff employed at levels D or E were women, compared with a national average of 20%). In light of these concerns and the large percentage of academics aged 50 and over, the University of the Sunshine Coast is unlikely to be giving appropriate attention to the ageing of their academic workforce.

University of Technology, Sydney

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 highlighted the University of Technology, Sydney's academic profile as an older than average workforce for the Australian university sector, especially for the proportion of staff aged 55 or older. In 2007, almost half (48%) of the university's academic workforce was aged 50 and over, representing a 9% increase from 39% in 1997 (Table 4.2). The report also noted the university's high reliance on casual and adjunct academic staff, although the numbers have declined over recent years. The report identified that the university recognises the challenges faced by the likely large-scale retirement of staff, many of whom have been at the university for a considerable time, and is integrating

workforce planning with longer-term strategic planning, the annual planning and budget cycle. The university is clearly giving attention to their HR, but there is no specific action that was identified by the report in terms of how the university is responding to the ageing of their academic workforce.

University of Western Sydney

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for the University of Western Sydney drew attention to an ageing academic staffing profile. As shown in Table 4.2, among the selected 21 universities the University of Western Sydney had the largest increase over the ten years in their academic workforce aged 50 and over, at 29%. Furthermore, by 2007, 57% of their academic workforce was aged 50 and over, the second largest percentage of the 21 universities listed in Table 4.2. As the following quote from the report highlights, the university is aware of their ageing staff profile and assumes that their ageing academics will not remain after retirement age. Hence, there is a focus to recruit new staff in the future, suggesting that there is no plan to retain their older academics.

> The Strategic Plan of UWS acknowledges this ageing profile and indicates that [g]iven the current age profile of UWS staff and the anticipated growth in student numbers, there will be a significant need to recruit new staff, particularly academic staff, in line with … strategic priorities (p. 40).

University of Wollongong

There was no mention of the ageing of academics for the University of Wollongong in the AUQA audit report for Cycle 1, despite their academic workforce aged 50 and over increasing by 10% in ten years, from 32% in 1997 to 42% in 2007 (Table 4.2). However, the report did mention the university's attraction and retention scheme, whereby special incentives are made available to target staff for retention based upon two criteria: exemplary performance and involvement in mission-critical areas, such as key research projects. This raises the question of the retention of older academics who are generally less research active in the university's retention scheme.

Victoria University

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 1 for Victoria University highlighted that its academic staff profile differed in several respects from sector averages. For example, the university had a higher level of academic staff at levels D (A/P) and E (Professor) than national averages, and the proportion of academic staff aged 45 years or older was 73%, compared with the sector average of 56% (2004 data). Notably, as shown in Table 4.2, the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over had almost doubled during the ten years, from 27% in 1997 to 51% in 2007, and it exceeded the national average of 40%. On the basis of these staff profile differences, especially the increase in their ageing academic workforce, the report pointed out that a more purposeful workforce management strategy was a priority for the university.

Summary of AUQA Audit Reports for Cycle 1

Research has shown that the numbers of ageing of academics have been steadily increasing for several decades (Hugo 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2008; Hugo & Morriss, 2010), yet the AUQA audit reports for Cycle 1 have revealed that the selected universities are not adequately developing policies related to their HR and the ageing of their academic workforce. Only one of the twelve universities (University of Melbourne) received commendations from the audit panel for their HRM. Overall, the AUQA audit reports for Cycle 1 have highlighted that universities give little prominence to the ageing of academics in the discussion of their HRM strategies, workforce planning, and succession planning.

4.3.2   AUQA Audit Reports for Cycle 2 – Analysis

The nine AUQA audit reports examined for Cycle 2 were presented in Table 3.7, presented by geographical location and university grouping (see Chapter 3, page 83).

ACU National

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 identified that workforce planning remains a major issue for ACU National, even though it had been highlighted in the audit report for Cycle 1. As shown in Table 4.2, ACU National had the largest percentage of academics aged 50 and over of the 21 universities in 1997 (45%), 2002 (59%) and 2007 (64%). As outlined in the following quote, the AUQA audit panel had recommended urgent attention by ACU National to their workforce plans, suggesting a lack of strategic concern by the university for their ageing academic workforce and raising questions as to why this significant HRM issue continues to be neglected:

> It is becoming increasingly important for ACU National to manage workforce planning in an integrated and purposeful way … [urgent] AUQA recommends that, while noting ACU National's current and planned activities to address workforce planning issues, mechanisms be strengthened to resolve workforce issues proactively (p. 11).

Curtin University of Technology

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 made no mention of the ageing academic workforce at Curtin University of Technology, even though the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over increased by 8% over ten years, from 36% in 1997 to 44% in 2007. The AUQA audit panel commended the university for the development, implementation and monitoring of their Work Planning and Performance Review Policy. The report noted that staff believed that the process to be very useful and working well, indicating that the university is giving attention to their HR and, by implication, to the needs of their ageing academic workforce.

Griffith University

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 made no mention of the ageing of academics or HR matters at Griffith University, even though the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over had increased 11% over ten years, from 30% in 1997 to 41% in 2007.

Southern Cross University

While the AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 noted Southern Cross University's intention of attracting younger research-degree qualified academics, there had been only modest progress in terms of workforce planning since the Cycle 1 audit. In fact, the AUQA audit panel recommended that the university develop and implement a university-wide workforce plan as soon as practicable. As shown in Table 4.2, its academic workforce aged 50 and over had the highest increase of academics aged 50 and over during the ten years to 2007, from 26% in 1997 to 45% in 2007. Given the modest progress in workforce planning, the 19% increase in their academic workforce aged 50 and over, and the university's focus on attracting younger research-degree qualified academics, Southern Cross University's planning for their ageing academic workforce would seem to be inadequate.

Swinburne University of Technology

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 for Swinburne University of Technology highlighted that the university had embraced the recommendations from the Cycle 1 audit and had addressed them systematically, and with a positive spirit. There was no mention of ageing academics, however, despite the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over increasing from 39% in 1997 to 46% in 2007 (Table 4.2).

University of Adelaide

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 made no mention of issues associated with the ageing of academics at the University of Adelaide, even though the university's academic workforce aged 50 and over increased by 4% in ten years, from 34% in 1997 to 38% in 2007 (Table 4.2). The report noted modest progress on implementing recommendations from Cycle 1, which suggests that HR had not been a priority.

University of Canberra

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 made no mention of ageing academics at the University of Canberra, even though half of the university's academic workforce was aged 50 and over (Table 4.2). The report highlighted that the university had acknowledged the need to address the loss of corporate memory and turnover of key staff. However, the report drew attention to the urgent need for the university to develop their workforce planning, policies and principles, which suggests that the university's HRM policies are underdeveloped.

University of Newcastle

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 for University of Newcastle commended better systems to support the university operations, successful senior leadership to "Your Voice Climate" Survey 2007 project as part of their self-review and the university-wide benchmarking practices. While ageing of academics was not mentioned in the Cycle 2 AUQA audit report, the university had a 9% increase of academics aged 50 and over, from 30% in 1997 to 39% in 2007 (Table 4.2).

University of Notre Dame

The AUQA audit report for Cycle 2 for the University of Notre Dame made no mention of ageing academics. Unlike other universities, the University of Notre Dame's academic workforce aged 50 and over had decreased by 5% in the five years to 2007, from 46% in 2002 to 41% in 2007. As a relatively new university, it may take some time for the university to develop a similar ageing academic profile to other universities. However, the report highlighted that several recommendations concerning HR matters from the Cycle 1 audit report had not been adequately addressed. One area of concern related to career development, which suggests a lack of attention to long-term HRM strategies typically associated with maximising the effectiveness of HRM, including older academics.

Summary of AUQA audit reports for Cycle 2

As mentioned in Chapter 3, one of the objectives of the AUQA audit reports for Cycle 2 is to review a university's progress – in other words, to "close the loop" on

recommendations made by the AUQA audit panel from the Cycle 1 audit. The period between the two audits is typically five years. Of the nine AUQA audit reports for Cycle 2, only Curtin University and Swinburne University had received commendations from the AUQA audit panel on their positive approach and progress to "closing the loop" between the Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 audits. Overall, analysis of the Cycle 2 audit reports indicated modest progress since the Cycle 1 audit to the implementation of recommendations, particularly in terms of workforce planning, which suggests that HR are not a priority for these universities.

As for the AUQA Cycle 1 audit reports, a continued lack of response by universities to their HR was evident in the AUQA Cycle 2 audit reports, reinforcing the point made by the NTEU (2007) regarding national concern about the future impact and consequences of the short-sighted institutional staffing strategies and policies. Out of the nine universities investigated for Cycle 2 reports, ACU National was the only university whose Cycle 2 report identified ageing academics as a significant HRM issue. In fact, ACU National had made only slow and limited efforts to address the AUQA audit panel's recommendation on workforce planning that had been identified as a major risk in the Cycle 1 audit report, suggesting a lack of strategic concern by the university to their ageing academics.

Overall, the 21 AUQA audit reports have provided an insight into the question of how well these universities are responding to their ageing academic workforce. As was also evident in the analysis of public institutional HRM policy documents, universities are generally lacking a clearly defined strategy for their ageing academic workforce.

The limited HRM approaches to the ageing of their academic workforce, largely evidenced in the AUQA audit reports for Cycle 1, are similar to the perspective of the "Reactor" organisation, as proposed in the Miles and Snow strategy typology (Miles & Snow, 1978). "Reactor" organisations are typically characterised by the lack of a stable and coherent strategy and the tendency for management to maintain the organisation's current strategy-structure relationship despite changes in the environment (Miles & Snow, 1978). Moreover, "Reactor"

organisations tend not to capitalise on their current capabilities, but rather shift their strategic orientation in reaction to competitive and short-term environmental pressures as they arise (Miles & Snow, 1978). With the national average of the percentage of academics aged 50 and over steadily increasing (shown in Table 4.2), it is surprising that university management seem unperturbed and unresponsive to maximising the effectiveness of their older academic workforce. One explanation for this lack of focus to the needs of older academics may be the assumption that older academics will soon retire. In support of this assumption, the AUQA audit reports for Cycles 1 and 2 highlighted that universities are giving greater attention to recruiting academic staff, particularly in research-intensive positions. On the other hand, the reports also criticised universities for their lack of attention towards developing and implementing HRM strategies such as workforce planning and succession planning. These examples of incohesive and unstable strategies further highlight the reactive nature of universities to managing their HR, particularly their older academics (Miles & Snow, 1978).

4.4   Summary of Document Analysis (Phase 1)

The analyses of public institutional HRM policy documents and AUQA audit reports, Phase 1 of this research, answered the first research objective of this study, which was to identify what universities are doing to support the careers of older academics. Overall, the findings revealed a limited range of HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce, with older academics not featuring prominently in universities' HRM and workforce planning strategies. As universities are knowledge-intensive organisations that are expected to be innovative, the most startling finding was the absence of policies in relation to succession planning, noticeable in the analysis of the public institutional HRM policy documents and also an issue raised in the AUQA audit reports.

On the whole, the document analysis has revealed that, despite some universities responding to their ageing academic workforce, most universities' HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce are reactive and ad-hoc, designed to

respond to immediate and short-term needs, and lacking an organisational strategic focus regarding workforce planning. No conclusions could be drawn on either policy implementation or effectiveness of the career management programs identified in Phase 1 using just web-based publicly accessible documents, therefore, Phase 2 utilised semi-structured interviews to explore in greater depth the university management perceptions of career management for older academics (the second research objective of this study). The findings from the interviews with university management participants are discussed in the next section.

4.5 Interviews with University Management Participants on Career Management for Older Academics (Phase 2)

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews with university management was to explore their perceptions of career management for older academics. This included university management's role in relation to formulating and implementing HRM strategies, policies and programs that support the careers of older academics. The interviews provided more depth and exploration to the public institutional HRM policy documents and AUQA audit reports (Phase 1 of this study, discussed in the previous section). The main categories of responses to the interview questions clustered around a total of seven findings, outlined in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3:   Findings from the Interview Data with University Management

Research Objective (RO) 2	Interview Data Findings
RO2: Explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics (Section 4.6)	Older Academics are not perceived as a priority for senior university management (Section 4.6.1)
	No need for age-specific policies and programs (Section 4.6.2)
	Managerialism and bureaucratic nature of universities as impediments to HRM strategy formulation (Section 4.6.3)
	Tension between academics and university HR departments (Section 4.6.4)
	Ageist and discriminatory attitudes towards older academics (Section 4.6.5)
	Misconception of age and productivity (Section 4.6.6)
	Narrow view of age and career stage (Section 4.6.7)

The sample for university management consisted of 20 participants from three universities. Of these 20 participants, 18 were academics holding university management positions and two were administrative staff in senior university HR positions (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.6). As explained in Chapter 3, university management participants included senior and middle-level management. Senior university management include DVCs and university HR Directors, both of whom have institutional responsibility for academic staffing matters. Middle-level management included FD, HoS and HoD. All senior level managers are typically externally appointed, as are most of the FD positions. The HoS and HoD are generally appointed by FDs in consultation with departmental academic staff. Middle-level management roles are responsible for operational managerial activities at the department level. For example, the HoS is typically an academic who will accept additional managerial responsibilities for a specified and temporary period, such as directing others' work and evaluating their performance, who then will return to regular academic work responsibilities.

4.6 University Management Perceptions of Career Management for Older Academics

A total of seven findings emerged from the interview data with university management. The following sections discuss and analyse the findings and include quotations from the interviews.

4.6.1 Older Academics are not Perceived as a Priority for Senior University Management

Based on the interviews, older academics are "not on the radar" of some senior managers, suggesting that older academics are not perceived as an important resource and, consequently, are largely ignored. For example, one senior manager was keen to stress:

> Academics in their 50s are not a priority at the moment. There are so many other things that need to be done. This at the moment is not on the radar, as we have a list of 20 projects that we want to achieve over the next 10 years. (Senior University Manager, IRU, 26 years in academia)

The most critical asset for universities, as knowledge-intensive organisations, is the intellectual capital of their academic workforce (Herremans & Issac, 2004; Lynch & Baines, 2004; Yazdani, 2008). However, university management showed little recognition of an ageing academic workforce, nor concern for actively managing the potential loss of institutional knowledge and skills. These senior management perceptions reinforce the document analysis that revealed that universities were inactive in workforce capability planning, with an absence of HRM policies in relation to succession planning, and they generally failed to clearly define the organisation's strategy for its ageing academic workforce.

In contrast to senior management, middle-level management expressed their desire to be proactive in supporting and utilising their older academics. However, middle-level management reflected a certain cynicism and a sense of disappointment with how senior management were responding to their older

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academic staff. In fact, middle-level management seemed to be disillusioned that senior management do not recognise the value and contribution of older academics. The following comments reflected this point of view:

> I do see a need for career management for academics in their 50s, but I think the reality is different from that and I don't necessarily agree with that position. I think people in management roles, one of their key tasks is to get the best possible performance out of everyone rather than choosing those people that they know will perform and essentially ignoring potential issues. I think most people, there are a range of reasons for under-performance and that's one of the challenges management have to come to grips with some of those issues. The reality is in universities it's very rare for people to be managed out of the university, where they sort of stay and therefore it's not a very good use of resources to not be encouraging all of them to perform as well as possible. (HoS, IRU, 18 years in academia)

> Once people are in their 50s – I don't necessarily agree with this, is that the university doesn't really address the issue of performance in academics in their 50s in a particularly effective way. They either write them off or think that they need to be left alone because they're doing okay. But I think that there's a lot of examples around of people who potentially could be much more effective, but they're sort of stranded for all sorts of reasons. (HoS, Go8, 18 years in academia)

This view that managing older academics is too challenging is inconsistent with the RBV framework on the treatment of HR. Central to the understanding of the RBV, as highlighted in the literature, is the role of the manager, specifically with strategy and resource responsibilities, as mediator in the relationship between the organisation's strategies and performance (Barney & Wright, 1997; Boxall, 1996; Wright et al., 1994; Wright et al., 2001). In other words, the extent in which HR act as a competitive advantage is within a manager's control. Hence, senior management's failure to effectively manage older academics and recognise their advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience, suggests that senior management do not perceive older academics as a valuable resource. Moreover,

while middle-level management were interested in taking a more proactive role in regards to supporting and utilising their older academic workforce, senior management's institutional accountability for academic staffing matters in general and responsibilities for academic programs and resource allocation were impeding strategy development and implementation at the middle level of management. Without a deliberate shift in attitude by senior management, and greater collegiality with middle-level management to address policy and strategy development to retain the advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience of older academics, the HR advantage of older academics is unlikely to be exploited as a source of competitive advantage.

4.6.2 No Need for Age-specific HRM Policies and Programs

Given senior management's lack of interest in engaging and tapping into the resource of its older academic workforce, it was not surprising that most of the university management participants thought there was no need for specific policies based on age. The following comments were representative of this view:

> The university doesn't have career development for people in their 20s, 30s, so I'm not entirely sure if it would for people in their 50s. You can't deal with people in their 50s as a kind of homogenous group. They're highly heterogeneous. It's about an individual. It's not about classifying people by their age. (Dean, IRU, 26 years in academia)

> Nothing specific to that cohort. We don't look at age cohort in terms of the policy development. So, there would be – we don't say, there's the policy for the 40 to 49, there's the policy for the 50 to 59, there's the policy for the 60 to 69. So all of the policies are, in effect, age neutral. (Senior University Manager, Go8, 27 years in academia)

> I don't see any good reason for developing a scheme [career development support for academics in their 50s] which is based on age. I think it's much better to sort of think about people at what stage of their career they're at. (Dean, IRU, 31 years in academia)

Notwithstanding these statements about age-neutral policies and programs, there was acceptance by management participants of the need for specific HRM policies and programs that target early-career academics. As highlighted in the document analysis, around one-third of the universities surveyed had special programs for early- and mid-career researchers, but there was no evidence in the documents of policies and programs that cater specifically for late-career academics. Thus, these findings suggest that the highly specialised advanced knowledge and experience of older academics are not being recognised accordingly in university HRM policies and programs. This lack of utilisation of older academics stands in contrast to the RBV framework that argues HRM policies and programs contribute to competitive advantage through developing and exploiting all of an organisation's HR (Barney & Wright, 1997; Boxall, 1996; Wright et al., 1994; Wright et al., 2001). One reason that university management participants gave for a lack of HRM strategies for older academics was the impact of managerialism and bureaucratic nature of universities, discussed next.

4.6.3 Managerialism and Bureaucratic Nature of Universities as Impediments to HRM Strategy Formulation

Middle-level management participants considered that the bureaucratic nature of universities was a negative influence on the development of HRM policies and programs for older academics. For example, one Dean from the ATN remarked:

> It's quite a complex process in universities and constantly changing and improving that process and it can get overly bureaucratic and restrictive. (Dean, ATN, 21 years in academia)

In addition, middle-level management participants were concerned about feeling under pressure to adhere to senior management's tendency to stick to a narrow agenda, designed to address immediate concerns and short-term planning (within 12 months) at the cost of addressing long-term workforce planning issues. The following comments reflected this sentiment:

I think most Heads of Department, when we all get together and have a whinge session, which is quite frequently, most Heads of Department complain that their day-to-day, there's so much day-to-day trivia, "administrivia" to do, that there's not a lot of time for reflection and forward planning and strategic thinking. So it's almost like we have to be forced to do it by some structure, like this new operational plan – to do it, because otherwise it's very easy to fritter your day away on the immediate reactive needs of people wanting you to sort things out. (HoS, IRU, 19 years in academia)

Usually, it [succession planning] comes to attention when there is a crisis. I think more often than not it's reactive and if it's not reactive, at best it's ad hoc and is very much dependent upon the foresight of the head of the school or the head of the department. (Dean, Go8, 19 years in academia)

Middle-level management participants also raised their concerns about uncertain, tight, and short-term budget allocations determined by senior management that inhibited any HRM strategy development and implementation at the middle management level, as noted in the following comments:

I am [responsible] to the extent that there can be succession planning and workforce planning. Because a lot of these things are simply controlled by budget. We don't, even though we'd like to replace someone, we can't because the budget won't allow it. I've got control over the budget to the extent that on a year-by-year basis I know how much I can spend. But if somebody leaves then I may or may not be able to replace that position. It's very difficult to have succession planning in that sort of environment where the budget is controlled more globally. (HoS, Go8, 34 years in academia)

A responsibility that I have is to ensure that the faculty operates within budget and I might cast the budget but the amount of money I have at my discretion is ultimately not my responsibility, it depends on the income, the activities of the people in the faculty are generating and also on what other things are happening within the university. (Dean, IRU, 33 years in academia)

We're now on a radically kind of devolved budget, and universities have budgets that have to be balanced and we all have to contribute to that but, look, I'm constrained by all kinds of things when it comes to the budget and that is a constraint on our ability to do things. (Dean, Go8, 17 years in academia)

Furthermore, middle-level management felt a sense of powerlessness that seemed to reflect their different levels of responsibility to senior level management (explained in Chapter 2). For example, as one HoS from the IRU commented:

The power of departments to determine their own academic structures has been taken away by what's been going on by the senior [university] administration. (HoS, IRU, 35 years in academia)

While leadership for HRM strategy formulation and implementation resides at the senior management level, it was evident that middle-level management want to exercise autonomy and operate in a more proactive manner to support and utilise their older academic workforce. Middle-level management's frustration with the bureaucratic nature of universities was not surprising, given that managerialism aims for efficiency through control and one of the outcomes is the weakening of academic freedom (discussed in Chapter 2). Indeed, middle-level management's dissatisfaction with senior management's priorities illustrates the tension that has developed between the old university values (collegiality) and the new university values (managerialism). As stated by Clark (1987): "Collegial control is substantially diminished; the bureaucratic framework is much more prominent" (p. 159).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the corporatisation of higher education has encouraged universities to adopt managerial practices that emphasise the hard HRM model (where people are viewed as costs and rational, quantitative and control-based strategies for managing people are emphasised) at the cost of the soft HRM model (where both individuals' needs and business objectives are recognised and addressed). Middle-level management's comments reinforce the document analysis, which revealed that universities' approaches to an ageing academic workforce are reactive and ad-hoc, designed to respond to immediate and short-

timer needs. Thus, within this top-down form of managerialism, the flexibility to exercise autonomy at the middle management level is inevitably constrained and, therefore, perhaps limits their ability to attend to the different needs of older academics and adopt a more proactive role in academic staffing matters in general.

4.6.4 Tension Between Academics and University HR Departments

In addition to concerns about the impact of managerialism and bureaucratic nature of universities, which were seen as constraints on HRM strategy formulation concerning staffing matters, middle-level management participants expressed considerable frustration with their university HR departments. In particular, they considered that the non-academic staff in these departments had insufficient knowledge about the nature of academic work and, for that reason, provided only limited support for HRM policies and programs for older academics. The following comment draws attention to this position:

> The HR department has absolutely no knowledge of the academic side of the business: what academics do and how academics work and think. HR are entrenched in a sort of central bureaucracy. The corporate models are not adapted actively and reflectively to the situation of a university. That means that academics often are torn between the different demands that are made on them by the institution, by their profession. These things have to be developed, co-developed and there has to be some understanding of the substantive fields that people actually work in to make it [policies and practices] really more effective. There cannot be just a generic model for academics – that one size fits all solutions for it. (Dean, ATN, 33 years in academia)

As discussed in Chapter 2, universities are unique organisations, with knowledge assets as their core business and academic staff as their prime knowledge assets (Neumann, 2009). Compared with typical profit-making organisations, the core mission of universities is knowledge production. Indeed, knowledge defines academic work, determines the division of labour and the types of beliefs held, and

is concentrated within disciplines (Henkel, 2000). The following comment highlights the importance of academic knowledge:

> In order to understand an academic institution you have to be an academic. There are plenty of business schools that have brought in business leaders from the private sector to run them, and it doesn't work, it really doesn't. They [HR] don't understand the processes that apply in a university and they have no idea that you can't just announce a new policy or a strategy and expect to implement it as it would happen in many private organisations. There's a lot of discussion and debate, areas of resistance where you need to exercise persuasion. (Dean, Go8, 21 years in academia)

Ironically, the interviews with university HR Directors revealed that they lack confidence in the HRM skills of senior and middle-level academic management:

> I think there's still a degree of lack of sophistication in many of our academic managers and supervisors, in terms of their own confidence as managers and supervisors, and that's probably partly reflected as a fact that many of them are only appointed for a three-year term or something like that. So they're conscious that they still need to act a fair bit like a colleague because next year they might be the person's colleague, not their manager anymore. So that's a little bit of a tricky situation. (HR Director, ATN)

In contrast to the academic management participants, university HR Directors commented that universities should pay greater attention to the career needs and expectations of older academics, and be more proactive in relation to succession planning. Their views are reflected in the following statements:

> One of the things we're going to need to tackle at some stage is a more structured approach to succession planning ... I think we'll need to help a range of people move to the next level of sophistication in their thinking about succession planning and succession management. (HR Director, IRU)

> I don't think we've done as much as we'd like to in terms of career management [for academics in their 50s] because our workforce has been so stable, because probably the tradition of academics being quite

autonomous and therefore taking strong individual ownership in terms of their career. I think also that more traditional organisations haven't seen it as their responsibility to manage career progression. (HR Director, ATN)

One of the main aspects of the RBV framework is the role of HR. In applying the concepts of value, rareness, substitutability and inimitability, researchers have argued that the role of HR constitute a source of competitive advantage since the capabilities and potential of HR are influenced by appropriate HRM policies and programs that respond to the changing needs of the organisation (Barney & Wright, 1997; Boxall, 1996; Wright et al., 1994; Wright et al., 2001). The view of university HR Directors tended to highlight the need for universities to give greater attention to career management for older academics. However, within the university system, HR strategy formulation and implementation is the responsibility of senior academic management, with the support of university HR departments. Interviewees noted tensions and feelings of disconnect between university academic management and their HR departments. However, as university HR Directors are senior administrative rather than academic staff, while they may have allies at middle-level management, they need to wait for direction from senior academic leadership. Consequently, this may explain why university HR departments are limited in the extent to which their professional view can play a role in the development of HRM policies and programs for older academics.

4.6.5 Ageist and Discriminatory Attitudes Towards Older Academics

Given that almost all the university management participants could be classified as older academics, it was surprising that some of their perceptions of academics aged in their 50s could be considered as ageist and discriminatory. For example, one Dean from the IRU commented:

> There's no good reason to be in a rut but some of them do get into a rut, particularly in the 50s. Some of them in reality are better off leaving. These people do become or can become counterproductive. Talk about embittered 50 year olds and often you'll find them. If you can find them, you'll find

tragedy there. You'll find for whatever reason they didn't take the opportunities. (Dean, IRU, 32 years in academia)

Another Dean from the Go8 remarked:

I don't think disgruntled, burnt-out academics in their fifties are a priority at all. They're a lost cause. (Dean, Go8, 22 years in academia)

One reason to explain the lack of interest and concern for older academics was the opinion that there would be little or no benefit to the university from developing or investing in the careers of older academics, as echoed in the following comments:

It's not the old and grey 50 year olds. It's the 25–35 that need the most help. They need to be given the most assistance and encouragement. (Dean, IRU, 24 years in academia)

Growing old is not fun. It impacts on some people differently to other people. So you're much more likely to find people who are bitter in their 50s than people in their 30s - if they were bitter in their 30s, you'd have to worry about them, I think. If they're bitter in their 50s, then there are reasons that are beyond even the best manager to have done something about. Is it a problem for us? Not significantly. (Dean, Go8, 27 years in academia)

It's probably the group [academics aged in their 50s] that is least receptive. They're sort of either in a position that their expectations are fairly low that they're not going to progress much further, and therefore they would regard formalised training or activities to improve their performance difficult. (HoS, IRU, 19 years in academia)

There are a few people in their 50s who feel that either they've run out of steam and they don't have any other options and they're going through the motions until retirement. They need to last the distance and are hoping that they do just enough but they don't draw too much attention to themselves. So those people are not looked upon very favourably by us. (Dean, ATN, 21 years in academia)

The inference that older academics are embittered or disgruntled or "run out of steam", as they did not take the opportunities presented to them, reflects the "fundamental attribution error" (Ross, 1977). The fundamental attribution error is the tendency to underestimate the degree to which behaviour is externally caused and attribute dispositions and character traits as the causes for the actions of others (Ross, 1977). Thus, if senior management perceive that older academics have failed to achieve professorial status because of individual shortcomings, such as lack of effort or motivation, rather than due to external causes, such as a changing work environment or promotion, then senior management have committed the fundamental attribution error.

In fact, the feelings of embitterment, disgruntlement and lack of career opportunities are not isolated to academics aged in their 50s, as these feelings are evident and widespread among the academic workforce, regardless of age. It seems that university management participants have lost sight of the situational variables that could cause embitterment and disgruntlement among academics. A number of scholars have identified that managerialism and top-down leadership is at odds with the traditional values of university autonomy and academic freedom; consequently, this has led to a deterioration in the motivation and morale of academics, with the majority of academics reported to feel frustrated, dissatisfied, de-motivated and highly stressed (e.g., DETYA, 1999; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; Winefield et al., 2002). As discussed earlier (Section 4.6.3), the impact of managerialism, the bureaucratic nature of universities, and budget control by senior management were areas of concern for many of the middle-level management participants, and may be a source of stress for them, which may have also contributed to their negative perceptions about older academics.

4.6.6 Misconception of Age and Productivity

While both senior and middle-level university management saw no need to differentiate HRM policies and programs for academic staff by age, middle-level managers preferred to recruit and develop younger academics. This view is evident in the following comments:

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The point is that within the budget environment we operate in I can't afford to recruit the new, young, hungry academics that I would like to if I don't make space for them by encouraging older, less productive, less enthused academics to depart ... you tend to sort of exercise your ingenuity on the careers of younger people because they've got more years ahead of them. They've got more decisions to make. They're the ones who are going to inherit the university when I retire. I don't often think of the people over 50 as a group of people, in the same way that you might think of the recent appointees, for example, as a group of people who need some kind of attention. (Dean, IRU, 27 years in academia)

We appoint a lot of new staff. I'm blessed, I've got nothing but young – I think our average age here would be between 40 and 45, 45 at the most. (HoS, Go8, 22 years in academia)

University management's bias towards younger academics was also evident in the document analysis; several universities had strategic approaches to raising their research profile that included recruiting new research academics as opposed to retaining and effectively utilising their older academics. The bias towards younger academics may signal a belief that older academics are less likely to produce innovative research and are unlikely to fit with the demands of the new research culture. Contrary to the view that older academics are unlikely to produce innovative research, it has been found that one's research output varies across one's lifespan, and a strong predictor of subsequent research is an individual's past research productivity, rather than age (Christensen & Jacomb, 1992; Over, 1982; Stroebe, 2010). As Gingras et al. (2008) have argued, the productivity of older academics should not be simply viewed as a declining function of age. Ironically, there were also several early career stage academics aged in their 50s in the sample of this study to juxtapose this view.

4.6.7 Narrow View of Age and Career Stage

Together with a preference to supporting the careers of younger academics, several middle-level managers considered that older academics were "old enough" to look after themselves and should be self-directed in their career, as highlighted in the following comments:

> If you're in your 50s you're assumed to be pretty self-sufficient, you've made your way, you've built up your contacts and the emphasis is not on what we can do for you but on what you can do for us? If not, why not, and if you're not and if you're not contributing in other ways that compensate for the lack of it then maybe you're on an exit track from the university and you won't get any support. (Dean, ATN, 21 years in academia)

> I think there's a limit to how much people in their 40s and 50s should expect or even be offered assistance. I think if you get to that point, heavens you know, you're a parent, often a grandparent. You should be able to stand on your own two feet, frankly. (HoS, IRU, 14 years in academia)

> Academics in their fifties? I think by that time, staff, really, well and truly are expected to know the ropes and to be able to look after themselves. (HoS, Go8, 22 years in academia)

These perceptions about older academics suggest that middle-level managers possess a narrow and stereotypical view about age and career stage. Two assumptions underlie these perceptions. The first assumption is that older academics have been in academia for many years and, consequently, should be professors by the time they are aged in their 50s. This view reflects the traditional conceptualisation of the academic career as a vertical pre-defined career pathway (Anderson et al., 2002; Strike, 2010). However, an academic career has multiple entry pathways (Clark, 1987; Kogan et al., 1994). As discussed in Chapter 2, a doctorate and post-doctoral experience would be the typical pre-requisites to an academic career in the HP science fields such as physics. However, for the SA fields, such as management, entry to academia may be after an extensive industry career.

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Indeed, the sample for this study contained numerous early career stage participants.

The second assumption underlying middle-level management's view of age and career stage, is that age and experience and, ignoring late (age) entry into a career, necessarily provide knowledge and capability to successfully navigate and manage one's academic career. However, research shows that the benefits of managing one's career are as great for individuals in their late career stages as they are for younger individuals (Greller & Stroh, 2004). As noted by Hall (1996), careers are a life-long learning process and effective career management requires an individual to be adaptable and able to learn continuously. Thus, self-understanding, knowledge and the capability to manage one's academic career are not due to one's age and/or academic experience. Since people are living longer and, consequently, working longer, it is argued that the concept of retirement requires reinvention to embrace new pathways, new arrangements and new meaning, as opposed to a well-defined and virtually universal life stage (Sargent, Lee, Martin & Zikic, 2013). Older academics, like other groups of professionals in knowledge-intensive organisations, are likely to continue in employment beyond the traditional retirement age of 65 years of age for a variety of reasons and, therefore, require a supportive and encouraging context that will foster and value their research, teaching and service contributions (discussed in the next chapter).

4.7   Summary of Interviews with University Management (Phase 2)

This section has examined the interview findings with university management with the intention to answer the second research objective, which was to explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics, including their role in relation to formulating and implementing HRM strategies, policies and programs that support the careers of older academics The aim of this objective was to provide more depth and exploration to the public institutional HRM policy documents and AUQA audit reports (Phase 1 of this study and discussed in the previous section).

The interviews revealed that senior managers possess an obvious lack of focus on the contextual environment regarding potential workforce crises and issues associated with an ageing academic workforce. In fact, senior management appeared to have a low level of interest in the career needs of older academics, did not perceive them as a current priority, and saw no need for specific policies based on age. There was a perceived lack of interest by senior management in developing the careers of older academics as there would little or no return to the university. This finding suggests the underlying causes to be ageist and discriminatory attitudes, including a misconception of age and productivity, and a narrow and stereotypical view about age and career stage. University management expressed views about older academics that are consistent with the fundamental attribution error, emphasising the personal characteristics of older academics and overlooking any environmental issues associated with any perceived problems of older academics. Middle-level management, in contrast, expressed their desire to be able to be proactive in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce. However, the interviews provided evidence that these middle-level managers were constrained by managerialism, the bureaucratic nature of universities and budget control by senior management.

The divergence of views between senior and middle-level management about older academics may reflect the level of accountability, formulation, and implementation of strategies indicative of the decision-making of a top-down management structure within universities (discussed in Chapter 2). This finding is in agreement with McInnis (1998), who identified uneasy and ambivalent relationships between academics and specialist administrative roles, which stem from the disintegration of the functional boundaries between the two groups. Indeed, middle-level management expressed concern about the impact of managerialism, the bureaucratic nature of universities and tight and uncertain budgets centrally controlled by senior management, which were deemed to impede HRM strategy formulation at the middle management level. Thus, despite the RBV framework highlighting that the role of managers is to develop a competitive advantage through actively recognising, developing and exploiting HR (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1997), senior management are not creating the

conditions to capitalise on the advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience of their older academic workforce; instead, older academics are being overlooked and ignored in their planning processes.

Another insight from the interviews revealed tension between senior and middle-level management and university HR departments about career management for older academics. Middle-level management, in particular, considered university HR staff to have insufficient knowledge about academic work, and this was seen as an underlying cause for the lack of development of HRM policies and programs for older academics. However, the HR Directors interviewed did, in fact, express the need for universities to give greater attention to the career needs of older academics and to be more proactive in relation to succession planning. These HR Directors felt the need to wait for direction from academic senior leadership. In light of these different perceptions, a shared understanding about the career needs for older academics, between the university's most influential leaders and its HR policy-makers seems unlikely and, consequently, the question about how best to utilise older academics is not being addressed.

The findings suggest that university management's role in career management strategies for older academics is inconsistent with the RBV framework, which asserts that managers should seek to develop a competitive advantage by taking active steps to recognise, develop and exploit HR (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1997). As highlighted in the document analysis, the interview findings reinforce the view that the university is not proactive in dealing with the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) and this behaviour is characteristic of "Reactor" organisations (Miles & Snow, 1978), which tend to respond to short-term concerns rather than long-term strategic issues. However, Clark (2001) has argued that "the many demands and challenges of the day in themselves are not going to determine the fate of universities. Rather how universities respond to and shape the many forces that play upon them becomes the heart of the matter" (p. 9). As highlighted by this research, an ageing academic workforce is a vital resource that requires universities to adopt a more strategic and proactive approach.

Overall, the interviews with university management revealed that management's role in career management strategies for older academics is limited and ineffective, as older academics are not perceived as a valuable resource. Given the increasing number of ageing academics, current HRM policies and programs for older academics are likely to be unsustainable, as they fail to capitalise on the advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience of older academics who could potentially create distinctive capabilities that set one university apart from another. There is clearly a need for university management to acknowledge and understand that the productivity of an older academic should not be simply viewed as a declining function of age. What is also needed is a conviction among university management and their HRM policy-makers that older academics really matter, and HRM strategies that are conducive to retaining the talent of their older academic workforce. However, this will require grappling with competing agendas, eliminating ageist and discriminatory attitudes about older academics, dealing with senior management's lack of recognition of the diversity of their older academics aged 50-59 years ranging from early to late career, and establishing an active partnership with university management and their HRM policy-makers to focus on the different career needs and expectations of older academics.

4.8   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the organisational perspective of career management for older academics from two data sources – documents and semi-structured interviews, and sought to answer the first and second research objectives. The first research objective was to identify what universities are doing to support the careers of older academics. The analysis of both public institutional HRM policy documents and AUQA audit reports revealed that universities give little prominence to the ageing of academics in the discussion of their HRM strategies. Indeed, there was a limited range of HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce, in particular in relation to succession planning, career development and mentoring programs. It can be concluded that the current HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce are reactive, ad-hoc and designed to respond to

immediate and short-term needs, and that universities generally fail to define the organisation's strategy for its ageing academic workforce.

The second research objective was to explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics. Interviews with senior (DVCs, PVCs and HR directors) and middle-level (FD and HoS) management provided the opportunity to go beyond web-based publicly accessible documents and explore in greater depth the organisation's perspective on career management for older academics. The interviews revealed that university management play a limited role in career management strategies for older academics and that older academics are not perceived as a valuable resource.

In sum, both the document analysis and the semi-structured interviews with university management have revealed that the HRM approaches by universities to an ageing academic workforce lack an organisational strategic focus to workforce planning and to the career needs of older academics. It is evident that the universities' actions to date on career management for their older academics are deficient. While there was evidence in the document analysis that some universities have begun to make progress in this area, these efforts are being counterbalanced by many more universities that are, by and large, delaying their strategic response to their ageing academic workforce, citing more important "priorities".

Furthermore, it was evident that university management were obviously not capitalising on the advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience of academics aged in their 50s. This view is contrary to the RBV of strategy formulation to capitalise on HR to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1997). Given the limited or lack of strategic HR approaches to an ageing academic workforce, coupled with the negative views expressed about older academics by university management, it is understandable that there is no conscious agenda to support the career needs of older academics. If older academics were perceived to be a valuable source, then universities and their HRM policy-makers would strategically orient their HRM policies and programs to fully capitalise on the highly specialised advanced knowledge and experience of its

older academics and, simultaneously, prepare universities to meet the pressures associated with an ageing academic workforce.

Returning to the question embedded in the title of this thesis, "Fading @ 50?", as discussed in Chapter 1, an implication of this question relates to whether academics aged in their 50s are fading from the radar of university management and HRM policy-makers. Together, the document analysis and interviews with university management suggest that academics aged in their 50s are generally "not on the radar" for university management. Older academics are considered to be "not a priority at the moment" and, consequently, are largely ignored in their planning processes. Comments made by some university management, suggest ageist and discriminatory attitudes in their perceptions. Those middle-level managers who do consider older academics to be "on the radar", expressed their desire to be proactive in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce; however, they viewed this age cohort to be an obstacle to recruiting younger and more research-active academics.

The next chapter presents the individual perspective on career management for older academics.

Chapter 5: Findings – Individual Perspective on Career Management for Older Academics

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the individual perspective on career management for older academics, derived from the semi-structured interviews with older academics. The sample, reflecting the diversity found in Australian universities, comprised 50 academics aged in their 50s (30 were men and 20 were women), selected from three universities and from among the four distinct academic discipline groups (see Chapter 3, Section 3.7.3).

This chapter discusses the participants' views on the third and fourth research objectives: RO3: Explore older academics' perceptions of career management and RO4: Identify whether these perceptions of career management for older academics differ based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage. The interview questions concentrated on promotion and performance management, as these were the two organisational career management programs that were represented by all 16 universities in the document analysis (discussed in Chapter 4). The main categories of responses to the interview questions clustered around retirement, promotion, and performance management, with a total of twelve findings, outlined in Table 5.1 and discussed in the following sections.

Table 5.1:   Findings from the Interview Data with Older Academics

RO3: Explore older academics' perceptions of career management	Interview Data Findings
Older Academics' Retirement Plans (Section 5.2)	Fifty and Flourishing (Section 5.2.1) Fifty and Financially Focussed (Section 5.2.2) Fifty and Frustrated (Section 5.2.3) Fifty and Fit (Section 5.2.4) Fifty and Flexible (Section 5.2.5)
Older Academics' Perceptions on Promotion (Section 5.3)	Age and Promotion (Section 5.3.1) Gender and promotion (Section 5.3.2) Flawed Promotion Process (Section 5.3.3) Lack of Career Development (Section 5.3.4)
Older Academics' Perceptions on Performance Management (Section 5.4)	Lack of Purpose and Integration of Performance Management (Section 5.4.1) Deficient Performance Management Process (Section 5.4.2) Cynicism Towards Management (Section 5.4.3)

5.2   Older Academics' Retirement Plans

Given that 42% of academics are aged over 50, and previous researchers expect a significant loss of academics through retirement in the next two decades (Hugo, 2005a, 2005b, 2008), the interviews with academic participants explored their retirement plans. While there is no mandatory retirement age legislated in Australia and neither is there an imposition to retire at a certain age, it is well established within the literature that "push" and "pull" factors influence the decision to retire (discussed in Chapter 2). "Push" factors such as poor health are regarded as negative, while 'pull' factors such as the pursuit of leisure activities are deemed to be positive.

Contrary to the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a), the interviews revealed that close to two-thirds of academic participants have no

intentions of retiring. Academic participants talked about a range of reasons for their intentions to continue work, discussed below. The one-third of academic participants who plan to retire or were strongly considering retirement within the next 10 years mentioned a range of "push" and "pull" factors influencing their retirement decisions. The issues concerning their retirement plans were grouped under five themes, with most academic participants being associated with several of these thematic groups: "Fifty and Flourishing", "Fifty and Financially Focussed", "Fifty and Frustrated", "Fifty and Fit" and "Fifty and Flexible". The following sections discuss and analyse each thematic group, and include quotations from interviews.

5.2.1 Fifty and Flourishing

The thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flourishing" represented the majority of participants, who had no plans to retire because, predominantly, they were highly motivated, strongly committed, and passionate about their academic pursuits. The concept "flourishing", drawn from the positive psychology movement, is argued to encompass several elements such as the cultivation of one's talents, a sense of engagement, and being driven by a sense of purpose and achievement (Seligman, 2011). Based on the interviews, the intrinsic rewards of an academic career, and the core academic tasks of teaching and research, were found to be enduring sources of academic career satisfaction and, as a result, they were influential in the decision to delay retirement. As one S/L from the IRU stated:

> The university might have to take me out kicking and screaming. I've always loved writing, academic writing, journalistic writing, whatever. So I would want to continue that for as long as possible. (S/L, Male, IRU, SP, 17 years in academia)

One A/P from the Go8 explained:

> I thought about it long enough to stop myself thinking about it, because it worries me. I can't imagine doing anything else ... I'm just going to keep going until they throw me out. I haven't really got a strong plan. I've still got

a lot of things I want to write and I'm quite happy in the classroom as well. That's what I miss most. I just don't want to retire. (A/P, Male, Go8, SP, 31 years in academia)

In addition, the following comments clearly reflected this view to delay retirement:

I will never retire. While ever I have breath or brain I will be doing work of some kind. (Professor, Female, Go8, SP, 23 years in academia)

I thought I would die sitting here because like I said it's an obsession and, well, it is a profession, but it's not a job. (Professor, Male, Go8, HP, 22 years in academia)

Even though some universities have a clear strategic intention to enhance their research profile (discussed in the document analysis in Chapter 4), the majority of academic participants pointed out that their passion for teaching was a primary motivator in continuing to work. In fact, the testimonies were near unanimous, with many participants conveying unequivocally their passion and enthusiasm for teaching, and the satisfaction that they felt, when they witnessed the "light bulb", "eureka" and "buzz" moments that occur within the classroom. As one Professor from the IRU explained:

I care immensely about teaching and that's part of where I get a lot of the reward in this business and it is so important in changing people's lives. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 32 years in academia)

Alongside teaching as a key reason to continue working, many academic participants also expressed their passion for research and the excitement when they were engaged in the value of discovery, pursuit of intellectual puzzles and supervising research students. The following comments reflected these sentiments:

It is still research that drives me and I love being part of that. I've got eight or nine PhD students and the highlight of the week is when I meet with them. (Professor, Male, HP, Go8, 22 years in academia)

> Because I love to think and I love to learn and in short that's what it's all about, learning. Learning the unknown is immensely exciting. Even learning the known is a great pleasure and sharing that with other people is significant. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 32 years in academia)

Clearly, academic participants' comments about their enthusiasm and passion for academic pursuits, as reasons to delay retirement, suggests that many older academics are not fading in the latter stage of their career but, in fact, are flourishing. There was a strong belief and commitment that being an academic is a profession and not a job. In other words, there was a distinct sense of engagement, a strong determination and energy amongst older academics, who wish to continue with academic pursuits. However, it was interesting that university management have a low level of interest in the career needs of older academics and largely ignore their advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience. This lack of attention by university management to effectively manage older academics is based in part on the perception that older academics are not a valuable resource (discussed in Chapter 4). The disparity that seems to exist between older academics and university management supports the many scholars who found a lack of shared purpose between the university and its academic staff (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winter, 2009) and the need for a more collaborative relationship between academics and the university (Marginson & Considine, 2000). Thus, a better understanding of the career needs and expectations of older academics would provide some answers for how universities and their HRM policy-makers can tap into the motivation of this age cohort, and support their ongoing research, teaching and service contributions, which can be harnessed as a source of competitive advantage.

5.2.2 Fifty and Financially Focussed

The thematic group labelled "Fifty and Financially Focussed", represented those academic participants who have no plans to retire, mainly because they want to build up their superannuation in order to comfortably support themselves in retirement. Two key explanations were given for the lack of accumulated

superannuation for this group: entering academia via the sessional pathway or via the industry pathway.

The sessional pathway to academia typically involves being initially employed as a tutor either on a sessional, casual or part-time basis. More female than male participants had entered academia via the sessional pathway. While little is known about the demographic profile of the Australian casual academic workforce, these career patterns are consistent with the gender distribution of data from UniSuper, which showed that 57% of casual academic staff were women (May, Strachan & Peetz, 2013).

Most female academic participants were not planning to retire within the next 10 years and this was predominantly due to the sessional pathway to academia and, consequently, not acquiring sufficient superannuation. This intention to delay retirement based on financial reasons support the view that an individual's ability to accumulate superannuation is impeded due to the irregularity and uncertainty of sessional academic work (Loretto & White, 2006; Patrickson & Hartmann, 1996; Shacklock et al., 2009). As one female A/P from the IRU explained:

> I wouldn't see myself retiring before the age of 65 and possibly later. I'm nowhere near retiring. I was a casual for 20 years, came into permanent work in academia late. I have a mortgage. In terms of superannuation and in terms of projecting my future, I'm nowhere near as well placed as many of my colleagues who didn't ever leave school and have a very tidy superannuation packet and three houses and are happy to go off and retire at 60. There's just no way I can do that. (A/P, Female, IRU, SP, 16 years in academia)

Some female academic participants explained that their decision to enter academia via the sessional pathway was to accommodate their family responsibilities. These views are consistent with the research that women tend to reach career stages at different ages to men, as their workforce participation is often moderated by family responsibilities (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1), as the following female academic participants recounted:

> I was part-time and I was half-time for probably the first 10 years because the kids are a big factor. I did maintain a little bit of consulting. (S/L, Female, ATN, HA, 18 years in academia)

> I finished my honours degree and then I decided I'd go back to work full-time in a government department. I came to academia later than most people and started my university studies, while being a casual tutor at the same time I had my first child. There were lots of challenges along the way, another child coming along at the same time. I completed my PhD in 2004. (S/L, Female, Go8, SA, 11 years in academia)

One female academic participant initially taught part-time whilst working as a camera assistant on feature films and directing occasional films. She explained that she was able to pursue an industry career and have her income supplemented by part-time teaching. However, the work within the industry became more unreliable and it was an incentive for her to seek a full-time position in academia.

Academic participants who initially had an industry career prior to becoming an academic were unlikely to have plans to retire, as they explained that insufficient superannuation was a key motivator to continue to work. Of these participants, more academics were from the SA discipline group, such as education, business, management and law, and were employed mainly at the IRU. For these participants, an academic career was either a second or third career. For example, one female A/P employed at the IRU, spent 15 years in a banking career, she then left as an executive of the bank to complete a PhD, before commencing employment as an academic. Another example was one male S/L at the IRU, who was a school teacher before accepting his first academic job.

Thus, comments made by academic participants in the thematic group labelled "Fifty and Financially Focussed" reveal that they were also not fading in their motivation in the latter stage of their career. Whilst academic pursuits for these individuals may be highly valued, it was their personal financial circumstances that were the key driver to delaying retirement, compared with the "Fifty and Flourishing" group. This finding reinforces the need for universities and their HRM policy-makers to better understand the career needs and expectations of older

academics, as it is evident that the nature of managing the retirement process is not one-dimensional nor is it a straightforward process.

5.2.3 Fifty and Fit

Research has found that health is one of the two common factors influencing an individual's decision to retire, deemed a "push" factor in the retirement decision process (Hanisch, 1994; Schultz et al., 1998; Taylor & Shore, 1995). The thematic group labelled "Fifty and Fit" were academic participants who thought that their intention to retire depended upon whether they remained fit and healthy, as highlighted in the following comments:

> Retirement depends on health too. I don't know whether my health is going to hold up over 10 years. Blokes tend to degenerate pretty fast after about 50. (S/L, Male, IRU, SA, 12 years in academia)

> Health is a big issue … the potential future health issues will help determine what kind of retirement I have. (Professor, Male, Go8, HP, 22 years in academia)

> Maybe I'll look at retiring, I don't know. It will depend a bit on my health, a bit on how exhausted I am. (A/P, Female, IRU, HP, 30 years in academia)

Hence, the thematic group labelled "Fifty and Fit" represented academic participants who were also not fading in their motivation in the latter stage of their career, but rather were conscious about the state of their health and the impact it may have on their plans to retire. As the ageing rate is different among people of the same age (OECD, 2006), universities and their HRM policy-makers will need to abolish their stereotypical views of age and bias to support the careers of younger academics (discussed in Chapter 4), and this includes putting unnecessary pressure on older academics to retire, as one Lecturer from the Go8 commented:

> This is a pretty dysfunctional department but somebody came and said to the staff, there are four people here who are getting close to retirement and

all of those people are in their 50s. I found that quite amazing that there was an expectation that there was – it was time to leave. That was the message that they were being given is if you people leave, we can get on with the show and it really rocked me. I was really thinking that the world was going towards longer careers, putting your retirement age up but I don't see all that in academia that's necessarily the direction that I feel it's going. The messages that I'm getting is that it's time to go. (Lecturer, Female, SA, Go8, 3 years in academia)

5.2.4 Fifty and Frustrated

Academic participants who noted the unsatisfactory state of their working environment as a factor that would induce retirement, were categorised into the thematic group labelled "Fifty and Frustrated". In this context, the notion of frustration refers to the feeling of being annoyed or irritated as a result of having limited control over changes that impact their work.

Several academic participants, predominantly employed at the IRU, explained that the working conditions were no longer being satisfactory would be a strong reason to think about retirement. At the time of conducting the interviews, the IRU was undergoing significant organisational change that involved recruiting various university management positions following an organisational re-structure, and this created a sense of uncertainty and insecurity that was frustrating for many of the academic staff. This organisational re-structure may explain the more negative comments being made about the working conditions at the IRU, but also reinforces that management have a key role in fostering the organisational culture in an institution (Clark, 1987), as highlighted by the following comment:

To be really frankly honest, one of the most serious ones would probably be best described as irritation. So if I were to get too irritated with the bureaucracy, retirement is a way of stepping out of bureaucracy. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 32 years in academia)

Central to the psychological contract framework are HRM policies and programs through which employees come to understand the terms of their employment and, consequently, shape employee behaviour, performance, and cooperation with fellow employees (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Rousseau & Greller, 1994). University management's lack of concern and interest in the career needs of older academics was evident in the interviews. Hence, there is some validity in academic participants' perceptions that the university does little to encourage older academics to continue working and, therefore, reflects a "psychological contract breach" (Rousseau, 1989). A psychological contract breach is when an employee perceives that the organisation has not adequately fulfilled promised obligations (Rousseau, 1989). Thus, if older academics perceive that universities do not care about them or value their contributions, such as by ignoring them or not providing opportunities to support their careers, then universities have committed a psychological contract breach. As one Lecturer from the IRU was keen to stress:

> A lot of us feel that we are not treated in any way that is conducive to getting us to stay. (Lecturer, Female, IRU, SA, 5 years in academia)

Furthermore, academic participants' negative perceptions about their employing university raise the question for universities about the kind of relationship that they want to foster with older academics in the latter stage of their careers. Clearly, older academics can change their psychological contract through the retirement decision process, and this depends upon the extent to which HRM policies and programs encourage or discourage older academics to continue to work. Given that two-thirds of academic participants had expressed their desire to continue working, a challenge for universities is to recognise the pivotal role that HRM policies and programs play in shaping the nature and state of the psychological contract of older academics. According to Rousseau (1989), once an employer fails to fulfil the obligations of the psychological contract, it is difficult to rectify, and there are negative consequences related to job satisfaction, organisational commitment, contentment and enthusiasm. Therefore, older academics who feel frustrated with the working environment may view the employment relationship as more transactional (economic focus with pay for work and short-term basis) than relational (social exchange focus with effort and loyalty by the employee in

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return from job security, support and career development from the employer) (Rousseau, 1989).

5.2.5 Fifty and Flexible

The thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flexible" reflected those academic participants who expressed a range of "pull" factors that would positively influence their decision to retire. These "pull" factors encompassed flexible options such as the financial incentive of having sufficient superannuation, the appeal of more leisure and travel activities, and the desire for variable transition to retirement arrangements.

While a lack of accumulated superannuation was a key motivating factor for some academic participants to delay their decision to retire (the "Fifty and Financially Focussed", as discussed in Section 5.2.2), for other academic participants, especially for those whose academic career spanned 25 years or more, their significant accumulated superannuation was a key reason to retire. These academic participants explained that, as they were in the superannuation defined benefit scheme that was financially lucrative, they had the flexibility to choose when they would retire. Under this scheme, a set monthly pension amount is based on a mathematical formula that utilises a combination of employment factors such an employee's average salary leading up to retirement, length of employment, and age (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). Therefore, the higher accrued benefits are a result of the greater number of years of employment. In keeping with the literature, the superannuation defined benefit scheme is considered to be a "pull" factor in the decision to retire, as explained by one Professor from the IRU:

> I like the idea that when I wake up in bed on the day I turn 60 that I can think that I don't have to go into work – I could play golf or go to the beach. My superannuation provides options to consider this. (Professor, Male, IRU, SA, 25 years in academia)

Another "pull" factor in the decision to retire was the university policy of a pre-retirement contract. A pre-retirement contract is typically a fixed-term contract of

employment between the university and an employee who has indicated a willingness to commit to a retirement date. The length of the pre-retirement contract will be determined within the context of the individual and university's circumstances, and is typically a period between 6 and 24 months. Several academic participants had been offered a pre-retirement contract by their university and, given the extra financial incentive to retire, decided to accept the offer, as noted in the following comment:

> The main driver is my superannuation situation. What makes it extremely attractive is this pre-retirement contract that offers me a salary loading that is reflected in my superannuation pension for the rest of my life. So financially it was hard to resist. (S/L, Male, Go8, HP, 29 years in academia)

The desire for more leisure activities and time with family was a further "pull" factor that was evident among some of the comments made from several academic participants when discussing their plans to retire. This view of retirement is in keeping with the traditional expectation of retirement as the end of working life (Wang & Schultz, 2010), as highlighted in the following comments:

> Retirement means doing a bit of sailing, one or two days a week, and probably less a degree of what I'm doing but still contributing. (Professor, Male, Go8, HP, 19 years in academia)

> I suppose the opportunity to travel and you know do things that I've never had the chance to actually do. (A/P, Female, ATN, SA, 16 years in academia)

> It could mean more time with my family (Professor, Female, ATN, SP, 22 years in academia)

> I'm not going to sit on my laurels, I'll find opportunities. I'm thinking of doing some volunteering or going overseas. (Lecturer, Male, ATN, HA, 21 years in academia)

The process of retirement can be gradual, phased or partial (Beehr, 1986; Borland, 2004; Kim & Feldman, 2000). These were the flexible transition-to-retirement arrangements that several academic participants, irrespective of discipline group,

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gender or career stage, had mentioned that they were considering, as noted in the following comments:

> I will suffer relevance deprivation syndrome when I retire, so like a lot of academics I will gradually tail off. I might go part-time or do a bit of adjunct work and I might be on a board here and there. (S/L, Male, IRU, SA, 12 years in academia)

> I'd like to look at fading out rather than jumping out and gradually cut down those working hours. To stay in the research area and ... gradually just cut down until I stop. (A/P, Female, Go8, HA, 34 years in academia)

> It'll be a phased retirement and I doubt I'll ever retire fully for quite some years; I'll just do some fractional work and do contract work and have PhD students. (Lecturer, Female, IRU, SA, 6 years in academia)

> I don't want to retire completely. I do want to retain a strong link with the university. I'm happy to do a bit of teaching, happy to do supervision of students and happy to maintain a contact with the development of the research centres and the general teaching areas. (Professor, Female, ATN, SP, 24 years in academia)

Academic participants' preference for a transition to retirement is consistent with the concept of retirement as a career development stage (Wang & Shultz, 2010). In other words, instead of viewing retirement as a career exit, there is recognition of the continued potential for career development in an individual's retirement life (discussed in Chapter 2). One of the HRM challenges for universities would be to take into account this perspective of a transition to retirement and assess how this can be adjusted to fit in with the demands of the various academic work roles.

Furthermore, the majority of academic participants, irrespective of discipline group, university type, gender or career stage, were of the opinion that retirement would involve the need to sustain some form of intellectual stimulation, as pointed out in the following comments:

Academics really never retire. I don't imagine that I would ever let it go. I would probably end up, like many people, stepping down from a position, a full academic position, and just continue with research. (A/P, Female, IRU, HP, 34 years in academia)

I've had plenty of opportunities to retire and financially could do so and some of my friends have retired recently, early retirement. My thought is what would I do if I retired? I didn't come here to retire. I came here to do things that keep my mind active. (S/L, Male, ATN, HA, 5 years in academia)

I think it's essential I'd remain intellectually active for as long as I can because I think partly that's desirable for everybody. But, for me, I think it's just essential. (Professor, Male, Go8, HP, 27 years in academia)

I don't particularly want to cut myself off from a structural academic position. It's valuable to retain access to the international academic community and to retain access to the standing that an institutional position has to be able to retain commitments. (Professor, Female, ATN, SP, 22 years in academia)

This view about retirement that would involve some form of intellectual pursuits is consistent with the concept of "continuing scholars" (Davis & Jenkins, 2013). According to Davis and Jenkins (2013), a key characteristic of continuing scholars is a "step-change" in the employer-employee relationship, as opposed to termination of the relationship. As a result, retirement releases the individual's responsibilities of being employed, enables individuals to leave behind the bureaucratic activities, and allows them to focus selectively on aspects of the academic role of their choosing.

5.2.6 Summary of Older Academics' Retirement Plans

The interview findings revealed that retirement is a feature in the future career plans of older academics. However, academic participants' comments illustrated a diversity of preferences and different ways of experiencing retirement. Given the

forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a), it was surprising that close to two-thirds of academic participants have no plans of retiring, citing a range of factors such as a passion for academic pursuits (thematic group "Fifty and Flourishing") and the financial need to accumulate more superannuation (thematic group "Fifty and Financially Focussed"). What seems clear is that academic work is highly valued and holds significant meaning for older academics, and a strong commitment that being an academic is a profession and not a job.

The typical "push" and "pull" factors to retirement have been supported by the interview findings with older academics. "Pull" factors to retirement were found to be the financial incentives of superannuation and the anticipation to pursue leisure activities if they so chose (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flexible"), while "push" factors to retirement were identified to be health (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Fit"), and job dissatisfaction from a demanding and unsupportive work environment (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Frustrated"). There was variation across discipline groups and by gender among the comments made by academic participants about their decision to retire. These differences reflected the diverse pathways to academia that can vary based on the different discipline groups, gender and also the time period in which an individual enters academia (Clark, 1987; Henkel, 2000).

Overall, the interviews with older academics about their retirement plans suggest that the "one-size fits all" approach to retirement decision-making is out of date and supports the argument that the decision to retire is multi-faceted and complex (Feldman & Beehr, 2011; Wang & Shultz, 2010). As highlighted in the document analysis, the limited HRM approaches to career management for older academics (discussed in Chapter 4) signal that universities and their HRM policy-makers have little understanding of what motivates older academics as they approach retirement and the current policies and programs do not cater for the diversity of retirement plans. Furthermore, these findings reinforce the view that it is important not to classify an individual into a particular career stage based on age,

as careers can unfold in different ways and are not strictly determined by age (Cytrynbaum & Crites, 1989; Ornstein et al., 1989). Thus, a better understanding of the full range of factors that are either "pushing" older academics or "pulling" them into retirement is needed. This would involve universities and their HRM policy-makers working collaboratively with older academics in order to recognise the diverse career needs and expectations of this age cohort.

5.3   Older Academics' Perceptions of Promotion

As discussed in the previous chapter, the document analysis found that promotion was an organisational career management program that featured across the HRM policy documents for the16 universities sampled. Like most professions, pursuing an academic career requires continued growth and development. Promotion is argued to provide the incentive for academic staff to continue to strive for excellence in research and teaching (Moses, 1986). The following sections explore older academics' perceptions of promotion, and discuss and analyse the findings that emerged from the interview data (outlined in Table 5.1).

5.3.1 Age and Promotion

The views expressed by some academic participants about promotion suggest that there is a feeling of disenchantment and apathy about their promotional prospects, resulting in a low level of career motivation and aspiration. This belief was irrespective of discipline group, university type, and gender, and did not include participants aged in their 50s who have already achieved the highest classification of Level E (Professor), as reflected in the following comments:

> I'm too old to even think about another promotion, I guess it just depends where things go. If I felt that I had made a significant contribution in the research area it would justify an application for professor. (A/P, Female, Go8, HA, 34 years in academia)

It's an ageist thing – a sort of thing that I don't need that. I do not need and I won't do that. You've got to be able to tick all the boxes and be confident in your mind that you can tick the boxes or you can defend those boxes. There are some boxes you're not interested in and are not going to do the hard yards to get those boxes to be able to tick. You're not really putting yourself in the frame for a chance. (A/P, Male, ATN, HA, 31 years in academia)

More recently I think there's a sort of age or a level thing. So people – everything new is better than everything old, or everything from outside is better than whatever was home-grown. So I think that of course affects the level of support that people get. (S/L, Female, Go8, SA, 11 years in academia)

Academic participants' perceptions about their opportunities for achievement and promotional prospects were that these were limited and constrained by non-supportive management and leadership. This view reinforces university management's opinions that older academics should "stand on their own two feet" and the expectation that one should have achieved professorial status in their 50s (discussed in Chapter 4). This analysis suggests there is a need for universities and their HRM policy-makers to have a greater recognition that career motivation constitutes an important factor for the pursuit of career development, and also in the retention of older academics.

5.3.2 Gender and Promotion

Several female academic participants expressed their concerns about the difficulties and frustrations with promotion and were keen to point out that there was an expectation that women should assume more of the administrative academic workload than their male colleagues. This view suggests there are apparent gender disparities within the promotion process and that a stereotype of older women as nurturers exist, as echoed in the following comment:

I just recently completed this role as a research coordinator and it was very time-consuming. To be honest it meant that I didn't have as much time as I would've liked to devote to my research. It was a role that you did for the

good of the group and everybody said, wow, you did such a great job, you're fantastic, I wish you'd do it again, But in a sense, I think that's the kind of expectation – you're a nice, middle-aged woman who's a mother, and it sort of fits that you would be really good at the role which is all about looking after the group, providing opportunities for the group, supporting the group, (S/L, Female, Go8, SA, 11 years in academia)

There was a general view among female academic participants who had childcare/family responsibilities that their limited research profile was a barrier and, consequently, they were more cautious about applying for promotion. For example, one female Professor from the IRU explained:

There's a bit of black hole in my publications – it took a while to catch up after maternity leave. I felt I wasn't quite ready and I think it is common with a lot of women. I think it's quite typical that women tend to go for promotion a bit later than they probably need to because they want to be really, really sure of not getting knocked back. (Professor, Female, IRU, HP, 14 years in academia)

There were contradictory views among some female academic participants about the working relationship with their male colleagues. On the one hand, a few female participants found male colleagues to be encouraging and supportive, as one female A/P from the ATN explained:

I didn't want to apply for a promotion. I wasn't ready, but this one fellow who was not my immediate supervisor who was just in a different department, a colleague, a lovely man, and every time he'd see me he would say have you applied and I'd sort of say no and he'd say well do it. So I just said okay I will apply just to stop your telling me to apply and I got it. (A/P, Female, ATN, HP, 25 years in academia)

On the other hand, a few female academic participants vented their concerns of how discouraging their male colleagues were when it came to them applying for promotion. There was a sense of frustration and anger felt among these female academic participants towards their male colleagues, suggesting a lack of

collegiality between women and men academics. The following comments highlight what seems to be a gender power structure:

> There was quite a lot of discouragement from male professors in the faculty that perhaps I should go and be a professor somewhere else before I dared to apply for a chair [professorial position] here. But I think the difference for women is that, certainly my generation of women, it was socialised into not necessarily seeking promotion and not necessarily being assertive about one's achievements. (Professor, Female, Go8, SP, 22 years in academia)

> I thought, about the politics, the gender dynamics of the place, the fact that someone cannot see it from your point of view. One of my female colleagues said to me, you just behave like one of the boys – you went in there and made your case [in the promotion interview] and they [male colleagues] got really angry with you about it. There are a lot of discrepancies. In that case it's entirely around gender. (S/L, Female, Go8, SA, 11 years in academia)

It is evident that gender can be an obstacle to promotion. The perception that there is an expectation for women to assume more of the administrative tasks, and the apparent lack of collegiality between women and men older academics, support previous research findings that women's promotional opportunities tend to be blocked by both direct and indirect discrimination, with a dominant factor in the discrimination being the narrow white Anglo-Celtic male management profile (Wallace & Marchant, 2009; White, 2001, 2003; Winchester, Lorenzo, Browning & Chesterman, 2006).

The literature contains increasing amounts of research findings on gender inequities in academia, particularly in relation to the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions, as clearly the gender inequities within academia continue to persist. In one of the few studies on older women and discriminatory practices in academia, Bornstein (2001) found that ageism and sexism have intersected to form a barrier to advancement in academia for older women, and argued the need for universities' policies to recognise the abilities and experiences of older female academics. While that study was conducted over 15 years ago, the recurring themes are consistent with more recent research on the

opportunities and challenges for women academics post 50 years of age (Henry & Closson, 2010).

As highlighted in the document analysis (discussed in Chapter 4), universities are giving attention to gender equity and gender imbalance issues among their academic workforce. However, academic participants' comments illustrated examples of indirect discrimination for some older female academics. For that reason, universities may need to provide greater support to older female academics. In particular, support should be considered for those older female academics who had entered academia via the sessional pathway and for those who tended to be pushed into administrative roles during their academic careers and, consequently, negatively impacted their research profiles and promotional prospects. Additionally, older female academics who are juggling childcare/family responsibilities may need support and assistance.

5.3.3 Flawed Promotion Process

Research has revealed that promotion policies in Australian universities generally reflect a commitment to fairness and equity and, for the most part, have achieved a commendable level of good practice (e.g., Winchester et al., 2006). Despite these findings, the majority of academic participants found the promotion process overwhelming and obscure. One S/L from the IRU felt a sense of frustration with inconsistent promotion processes with his applications, as he explained:

> I put together a portfolio and evidence. There were like two volumes of argument and evidence and supporting documentation which disappeared off into the university and about six months later an email came back saying, congratulations you've been promoted. So that was the process. There was no interview. [The next promotion] in the interview there were eight professors, I think, sitting around quizzing me on the veracity of my claims in the promotion application, but their decision is now being appealed on the grounds that they applied much more rigorous selection criteria to me, than were published. (S/L, Male, IRU, SA, 13 years in academia)

Furthermore, several academic participants commented on a lack of transparency in the promotion process, resulting in cynicism and a lack of trust, as highlighted in the following comments:

> There's some unofficial rumours going around that you've actually got to apply for promotion twice and you won't get it the first time, but you'll get it the second and I didn't see that written in the job application, the job specification, and if there is a policy like that, that is kept as a secret dark inquisition policy then that's unethical. The promotion system here is, in my view, unethical, capricious and broken. (S/L, Male, ATN, HA, 5 years in academia)

> Somehow breaking through that ceiling into the professorial class is something that they [management] guard very jealously. So little about promotion is about your merits and so much of it is about what the university needs at the time. (S/L, Male, IRU, SA, 9 years in academia)

Many academic participants, regardless of discipline group, gender or career stage, considered the promotion documentation unnecessarily time consuming. In some cases, consequently, many made the decision to not apply for promotion, as one A/P from the IRU remarked:

> I don't want a promotion. Couldn't be bothered and too much effort of putting the whole thing together. It's a pain. (A/P, Female, IRU, HP, 35 years in academia)

Other reasons expressed by academic participants to explain their reluctance to apply for promotion were the promotional setbacks and the challenging promotion process. Indeed, academic participants' recollections of their past experience with promotion uncovered a strong sense of disappointment with academic promotion. Some academic participants felt that the promotion process was demoralising, to the extent that some have consciously distanced themselves psychologically from taking any sort of proactive role in advancing their career path. According to Moses (1986), unsuccessful promotion applications can sour many years of professional

life which might have been more productive. The following examples are comments that highlight these gloomy sentiments:

> I've seen it happen it over the years, so many times. People get depressed and they give up. They're really people who probably should have been promoted and weren't. They feel that there's nothing more they can do and they never apply again. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 37 years in academia)

> Promotions are difficult processes. There's no perfect promotion system as far as I can tell. Staff feel embarrassed about having to go through this process where they write an essay on their virtue and they get judged according to it. Most staff don't like doing it very much. If they get turned down, often times they feel because they weren't prepared to say how good they really were. It's a difficult subject to engage with staff, but it's also one that has a large impact on morale. I've seen staff so demoralised by not being promoted that they've refused to apply for promotions subsequently. (Professor, Male, IRU, HP, 33 years in academia)

On the whole, academic participants were keen to point out several flaws in the promotion process, and this view is supported by the document analysis that revealed one-third of the AUQA audit reports for Cycle 1 featured negative aspects about the promotion process (discussed in Chapter 4). For example, the AUQA audit report for Monash (2006) revealed that "an alternative to attracting senior staff would be to concentrate on recruiting young high quality staff and offer them development and promotion opportunities that allow them to grow within the University" (p. 21), which further reinforces university management's bias towards younger academics.

As discussed in Chapter 2, since the advent of managerialism in universities, academics' feelings of frustration and angst towards university management policies and programs, such as promotion, has escalated and the interview data suggest that these feelings remain strong (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winter, 2009). Hence, academic participants' negative views about the promotion process suggest a "psychological contract violation" (Rousseau, 1989). A psychological contract violation is when an

employee perceives that the terms of the psychological contract have been breached by the organisation or other parties, as they have failed to respond to an employee's contribution in ways that the individual believes they are obliged to do (Rousseau, 1989). Moreover, mixed messages and different contract interpretations can occur if there is misalignment among HRM policies and programs and multiple contract makers (Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & Greller, 1994).

5.3.4 Lack of Career Development Support

Central to career management is the extent to which universities shape an academic career (Baruch & Hall, 2004). As with most professions, an academic career requires nurturing, appropriate rewards, and opportunities for growth and development. However, academic participants noted a lack of inherent support for the career development for older academics. Several academic participants commented that the university career support they received during the course of their careers was non-existent and they felt under-valued, as the university had shown little to no interest in their career development. These sentiments are highlighted in the following comments:

> There isn't any career management here. The university is completely oblivious to that notion it seems to me. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 23 years in academia)

> Negatively, no help, and no interest. (Lecturer, Male, ATN, HA, 26 years in academia)

Another explanation for the perceived lack of career support for older academics is the belief by some academic participants that university management are focusing their time and resources on young and early-career academics, as highlighted in the following comment:

> It's just that there's this perception. It's a really interesting dynamic in our discipline at the moment, because there's a lot of focus, a lot of attention and

a lot of expectation on these new, young recruits. It's about being new and fresh, I get that, and also not having other commitments, which none of them do. I mean, they've got partners but they don't have kids, and they're very dedicated to their careers, but that's not to say that the rest of us aren't either. It's interesting because you can sort of feel like you're a bit invisible. (S/L, Female, Go8, SA, 11 years in academia)

Academic participants' perceptions that universities lack career development support for older academics confirm the document analysis that identified HRM policies for early career academics but for no other career stages (discussed in Chapter 4). This view also suggests a psychological contract violation (Rousseau, 1989), as the extent of organisational career support is related to the fulfilment of the psychological contract (Sturges et al., 2005). In addition, academic participants' perceptions of universities' lack of career development reinforce the document analysis and the interview findings with university management that revealed university management's preference and bias towards younger academics (discussed in Chapter4). Hence, it would appear that there is some validity to academic participants' perceptions of university management bias towards young and early-career academics.

5.3.5 Summary of Older Academics' Perceptions of Promotion

The interview findings revealed that older academics' perceptions of promotion were predominantly negative, with specific concerns about limited promotional opportunities, flawed promotion processes including gender disparities, and a lack of career development support. These negative perceptions about promotion reinforce previous research findings that older academics were more likely to perceive that their prospects for promotion have declined and that they see this as a change for the worse (Anderson et al., 2002).

Consequently, if universities wish to capitalise on the advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience of their older academic workforce, they not only have to address age issues, as focussed on in this study, but they also need to

address gender issues, such as supporting and managing the career needs of older female academics and, in particular, those who were inclined to have less opportunity for research due to entering academia via the sessional pathway and/or juggling childcare/family responsibilities.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed that the promotion process was perceived to be frustrating and deficient, to the extent it was implemented inconsistently, time-consuming in its operation, and lacked transparency. Therefore, older academics' negative perceptions about promotion are an enduring matter of concern that should be a signal for universities and their HRM policy-makers to re-examine their current HRM policies for academic promotion.

5.4   Older Academics' Perceptions of Performance Management

Along with promotion, performance appraisal was the other organisational career management program that was represented in the HRM policy documents for the16 universities sampled (discussed in Chapter 4). However, the document analysis revealed several criticisms from the AUQA audit panel, in particular about the lack of purpose and process in university performance management systems. In addition, when discussing their academic career trajectories, a common theme about performance management was a key concern for the majority of academic participants. The following sections explore older academics' perceptions of performance management, discuss, and analyse the findings that emerged from the interview data (outlined in Table 5.1)

5.4.1   Lack of Purpose and Integration of Performance Management

Promotion and performance management can play a key role in creating a framework for the psychological contract between the employee and the organisation, providing there is a common understanding of the organisation's goals and shared expectations of how both the individual and organisation can contribute (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994; Werner, 2000). However, the

majority of academic participants considered that performance management as practised in their university was meaningless, and held limited value in terms of advancing their academic careers. In fact, the most frequent comments were about issues of no genuine or clear purpose to conducting performance management, and that essentially the performance management system in universities was ineffective, and lacking in any career value. Several interviewees admitted that performance management is perceived to be like "playing a game" and, as a result, they were inclined to not take performance management seriously, as highlighted in the following comments:

> The philosophy was focused on enhancement. Now it's focusing much more on delivery of what you'd said you'd do. This is a negative because it makes people play safe and you don't want to try different things, so people will not be as adventurous as they once were. I know we'll play to the piper's tune unfortunately and that shouldn't be what academics should be about. Academics should be about, not radicalism necessarily, but it shouldn't be saying "well what do you want me to do and I'll do it for you". (A/P, Male, ATN, HP, 31 years in academia)

> We have our performance review every year, but it's not done seriously. It's just something you do, both the people being interviewed and the interviewers, they don't regard it as being a serious enterprise. It's not a significant thing. No one considers it a worthwhile thing to do. Neither the interviewer nor the interviewee can determine much, if anything, about the year's work and career plans. (S/L, Male, Go8, HA, 30 years in academia)

Managing performance is perhaps the key responsibility of management and an area in which a partnership between the organisation and its employees can be most beneficial. Yet several academic participants were keen to point out that they believed performance management to be oriented only towards organisational goals and objectives, and holding, at best, limited concern for individual goals and achievements. This view echoes previous research findings (e.g., Enders et al., 2009; Marginson & Considine, 2000) that, since the shift from an elite to a mass higher education system, universities have introduced controlling mechanisms

such as performance management, in order to be competitive, efficient, effective, and accountable. This approach reflects the hard HRM model (where people are viewed as costs and rational, quantitative and control-based strategies for managing people are emphasised) at the expense of the soft HRM model (where both individuals' needs and business objectives are recognised and addressed) (discussed in Chapter 2). The following comments highlight the view that performance management lacks a shared purpose:

> There is no evidence of the university's commitment to its staff. It's all to do with what the staff is going to have to do in order for the university to be able to achieve its goals. There is no sense in which this is a bilateral thing, in which the university has serious responsibilities to its staff. I think they've lost that sense completely that they have an obligation to us. (A/P, Female, Go8, SP, 26 years in academia)

> My experience of them [PMS] has been a bit of a joke but they're not forward-looking in terms of advice giving, they're not forward-looking in terms of you having goals and of you proving yourself more. But I don't think proving yourself is really that sort of setting goals in that way but that's very much you doing it. I don't see the advice and suggestions coming from the other direction really. (Lecturer, Female, Go8, SA, 3 years in academia)

Performance management is a holistic management process according to the literature and it should be interrelated strategically with other HRM policies and programs such as reward allocation and promotion (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2010; Nankervis & Compton, 2006). However, the majority of academic participants believed that performance management was not integrated with other HRM policies and programs, as one experienced Professor from the IRU pointed out:

> There's no incentive mechanism available in the university. So having a system that tries to encourage people to excel and yet doesn't offer them any [reward] – I mean the only possible reward for excelling is you don't get fired next time. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 37 years in academia)

Nearly all academic participants commented that the performance management process was informal and impromptu, and tended to be conducted intermittently, suggesting it is a possible reason to explain the lack of integration with other HRM policies and programs. This view is reinforced by the document analysis, particularly the AUQA audit reports that identified several concerns about performance management in universities. The comments from the AUQA audit panel ranged from criticisms that the performance management system was not working as intended (e.g., Murdoch University, 2006) to recommendations for universities to have a more systematic and consistent implementation (e.g., University of Notre Dame, Australia, 2008; Southern Cross University, 2008). The following comments are examples that confirm the "laissez-faire" approach by university management to performance management:

> It tends to be more informal than formal or done with a cup of coffee. (Professor, Male, Go8, HP, 30 years in academia)

> In terms of performance management, it was all mostly ad hoc stuff. Lots of chats and things about how we were but it was certainly not any sort of formal performance management system. (Professor, Male, ATN, 21 years in academia)

> I don't know if we have performance management systems. We occasionally have an interview with your superior but it's just been ad hoc and I think once in three years I have had such a thing. (S/L, Female, ATN, HA, 18 years in academia)

Hence, academic participants' perceptions about performance management was that they were lacking in both a clear purpose and integration with other HRM policies and programs, suggesting that performance management is perceived to be a tool of acquiescence to the university, and management's goals and expectations. This view is contrary to the literature, where the success of performance management in universities is argued to be contingent on incorporating the characteristics of academic work and the university environment into the performance management system (Hort, 1996; McCarthy, 1986). However, the academic participants' view reinforces the interview findings

with university management that revealed the impact of managerialism and the bureaucratic nature of universities were impediments to the development of HRM policies and programs for older academics. The commonality of views about performance management among academics and middle-level management suggests that, without a greater collegial and collaborative approach with senior management to ensure performance management has a clear purpose, is oriented towards both organisational and individual goals, and is integrated with other HRM policies and programs, its effectiveness will remain open to debate.

5.4.2 Deficient Performance Management Process

Similar to academic participants' perceptions of promotion, performance management was also considered by the majority of academic participants to be a compulsory administrative management exercise, with no organisational capacity nor any management willingness to regard performance management as strategically important. Many academic participants felt that their concerns about performance management were a result of performance management being centrally driven and developed by university HR departments, who appear to have little knowledge about the complexities of academic work or of the university environment. This finding supports the views of middle-level managers who expressed a sense of frustration with the demands from university HR departments, and who felt that they had insufficient knowledge about the nature of academic work (discussed in Chapter 4). The following comments highlight that performance management is driven by university HR departments:

> My university had several attempts to put performance management systems in, all of which were profound failures, because they were run largely by the HR department with absolutely no knowledge of that sort of academic side of the business: what academics do and how academics work and think. They [HR] expect all of the academic leaders who are supposed to be running [the performance management system] to understand what to do without any training, and they also weren't interested in training the others. If you don't train people on what to do with it then you don't get a

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successful system. They [HR] didn't seem to want to put the effort into that. (Professor, Male, ATN, HA, 33 years in academia)

The performance management system, that's driven centrally. They [the university] say that we have to do it and send your forms in, but in terms of centrally driven career-enhancing programs, there's sort of nothing other than various courses for office-based staff and things like grants for early career development. (S/L, Male, Go8, HA, 22 years in academia)

There was a general consensus that performance management is a rigid process of compliance and control that involves a copious amount of time-consuming documentation. This view reinforces academic participants' perceptions of promotion (discussed in Section 5.3), where many described the documentation for applying for promotion as unnecessarily time-consuming, suggesting an administrative overload. Furthermore, university management participants had considered that the bureaucratic nature of universities was a negative influence on the development of HRM policies and programs for older academics (discussed in Chapter 4). The following comments draw attention to the bureaucratic nature of performance management:

Most people see it as a chore. They only do it when they're told they actually have to do it. Most people hate doing it. I think it's kind of silly for senior staff. I think it is overly rigid and overly prescribed. (Professor, Male, IRU, HP, 14 years in academia)

Most of us regard it as yet another imposition on our time. (A/P, Female, IRU, HP, 31 years in academia)

It's so much paperwork and lip-service. (Lecturer, Female, ATN, HA, 18 years in academia)

There [are too many] compliance systems and requirements that are restrictive and [impose] much on one's time, really unnecessary and there is a lot of paperwork. There's about 10–15 pages to read and fill out and it's a waste of my time. (Professor, Male, IRU, SA, 26 years in academia)

In addition to the perceptions about performance management as a compliance and control tool, several academic participants thought it had a simplistic organisational orientation, to such an extent that the performance management process was susceptible to manipulation and misuse, as explained by the following comments:

> People will set themselves easily obtainable targets so they can't possibly be criticised for not meeting their targets. So there's no sense in which it's actually used to really encourage proper development or excellence. It's just completely worked around and that's what people do ... they work around it. I've become very conscious that what most people do, possibly everyone, is simply play the game. There's something wrong with the system. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 17 years in academia)

> The system doesn't work because no one's honest. There are no consistent standards that apply. I know that the guy next door is saying, oh you don't want to set high targets because if you do that you might not meet them, then you'll be in trouble later on. So just set lower targets. There's no consistency of application. I don't know if there really is a solution to that problem. (S/L, Female, IRU, HA, 18 years in academia)

From an HRM perspective, it is argued that performance management is typically understood to be a reciprocal agreement that is fundamental to a positive employment relationship (Hort, 1996; McCarthy, 1986). A key principle of performance management is to unlock an individual's potential and to be an encouraging process. However, some academic participants perceived the process of performance management as essentially controlling, even punitive, invoking a sense of punishment and thought to be belittling, as highlighted in the following comments:

> Performance management is a humiliating thing you go into once a year where they sort of nag at you and tell you off and you sit there and stare out the window and grit your teeth and finally it's all over. (Lecturer, Male, ATN, SA, 26 years in academia)

I think it's rubbish. There's no sincerity about its use, whatsoever. It's appalling. I think the administration is hopeless in this university. I think it's clear that very few people take it seriously. It's clear that everybody is scared of this whole thing and the extent to which it may be used to beat them over the head or to kick them out in times of budget cuts. It's very hard for the university to fire someone, but we now have in place this mechanism that assesses people's performance and I think a widespread fear that that may be used in processes like that. (Professor, Male, IRU, HA, 17 years in academia)

Hence, academic participants' negative attitudes about the performance management process suggest that there are deficiencies that need attention from universities and their HRM policy-makers. This finding reflects the arguments in the literature that universities are engaging in HRM strategies designed to enhance institutional rankings rather than provide opportunities to all academics who need to increase their knowledge and skills and, as a result, create strained collegial relationships between academics and universities (e.g., Harley et al., 2004). If universities are serious about exploiting the human resource advantage of older academics, then universities and their HRM policy-makers will need to review the purpose and process of performance management in order to achieve mutual benefits for both the university and their older academic staff. As Rousseau and Greller (1994, p. 398) argued, "Until HRM practices are aligned and contract makers operate on the same wavelength, the effectiveness of the organisation and the success of its relations with employees will be diminished".

5.4.3 Cynicism Towards Management

A majority of academic participants revealed a sense of ambivalence and cynicism towards senior management in regards to their role in performance management, as reflected in the following statement:

The university top heavyweights place too much pressure on academics, they need less compliance and the compliance costs are enormous. It is

better utilised elsewhere. What is the value being added by all of this? There is no value being added with this. (Professor, Male, IRU, SA, 27 years in academia)

In some cases, academic participants expressed feelings of anger, resentment and exasperation towards university management:

They're interested in keeping other people down as far as I can see. A lot of them are psychotic. Talk about psychotic managers, I think a lot of them are. They haven't got HR skills, people skills, negotiation skills, information system skills, accounting skills, strategic skills. They don't believe in, the better you make the staff, the better you are. (Lecturer, Male ATN, HA, 23 years in academia)

There is no feeling that management have any recognition of the people who are actually seen as being valuable. Occasionally you think it would be nice if management had enough understanding of what we do to recognise what goes on. (A/P, Male, IRU, HP, 30 years in academia)

They regard people as a drop of water and you can either be a drop in the bucket and therefore you're indistinguishable from everybody else or you can be a drop outside the bucket which actually doesn't matter because there'll be another drip along any minute. So they don't actually value people very much. (S/L, Male, ATN, SA, 5 years in academia)

Some academic participants even raised concerns about whether university management were serious about the performance management system, specifically at middle-level management. The academic participants maintained that university management do not read or act on information in the performance documentation and, moreover, tend to turn "a blind eye" to the legitimacy of the information, as highlighted in the following comments:

We'd go out to lunch. We'd have the forms. We'd say, do you think you're performing satisfactorily? I said, yes. I think so. So he'd tick – and there were two boxes to tick. Sufficient or insufficient. That was it. (A/P, Female, IRU, HP, 14 years in academia)

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I filled it in deliberately negative with no career aspirations to open up dialogue to see if anyone or the system was working, knowing that no one was going to read it. It was a waste of time, so I didn't bother putting one in the next year. When the Head [of the School] asked and I said it was all done, it wasn't the case. (Lecturer, Male, ATN, HA, 18 years in academia)

I talk to my supervisor and then we then fill in the bits. My supervisor tells me how to fill it in properly so that it fits. My supervisor then fills it in and says now this is how they [HR] want you to do it so you have to sort of change the words a bit, so it just becomes a bit of word smithing. My supervisor said now this is the way it is. (A/P, Male, ATN, HP, 30 years in academia)

Some middle-level management participants felt that the performance management process was overwhelming. They mentioned that they had received little to no training and support by the university, which may explain why some middle-level management are not taking performance management seriously:

I think performance management is a kind of unwieldy thing. I also think it's because we're [management] uncomfortable about performance management. We don't interact as line manager to employee even though we have to occupy those roles at various points in our careers. (Dean, Go8, SP, 17 years in academia)

I think one of the features of a good PDR [performance management] system is that everybody's trained in it. Now, I think the university does have training, but no one's ever asked me. (Dean, IRU, SP, 32 years in academia)

Academic participants' cynicism towards management in regards to their role in performance management confirms the pervasive disconnect between university leadership and academic staff (discussed in Chapter 2). However, middle-level management also raised concerns about the performance management process, and its futility, citing a lack of training and support by the university, suggesting that there is also a disconnect among senior and middle-level management. These

findings point towards an uneasy and ambivalent relationship between senior and middle-level management, which may reflect the levels of accountability and decision-making of a top-down structure within universities. Hence, there is some agreement among academics and middle-level management that there are, in general, negative perceptions about performance management. This shared view suggests that performance management maybe more effective when exercised through a collegial and collaborative form of "soft" managerialism than through direct top-down "hard" managerial control by senior management.

5.4.4 Summary of Older Academics' Perceptions of Performance Management

On the whole, older academics' perceptions of performance management revealed overwhelming feelings of dissatisfaction, coupled with cynicism and anger towards the purpose, process, and role of university management in performance management systems. Underpinning this were criticisms of a simplistic organisational orientation for performance management systems, essentially using these systems as a control and compliance tool that was susceptible to manipulation and misuse. Indeed, academic participants' views were strong and unanimous about performance management, and confirm previous findings that "in general, performance management in practice often fails to realise its potential as a useful HRM tool" (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2010, p. 262).

Negative perceptions about performance management, for example, can potentially create a climate of distrust and limit the possibility of open and honest participation by both parties during the performance discussion (Rousseau, 1989; Rousseau & Greller, 1994). In fact, academic participants noted tension and a strained employment relationship between them and their universities regarding performance management. The particularly disconcerting and negative comments made about university management, and how they insincerely utilise the performance management system, suggest that the relationship psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989) for older academics is in question, and reflect the arguments in the literature that the advent of managerialism in universities has led

to contracts between academics and their employing universities becoming more transactional than relational (Enders & Kaulisch, 2006; Harley et al., 2004; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995). These findings have implications for universities and their HRM policy-makers to look critically at their existing performance management systems and to re-examine current HRM policies and programs to ensure that these motivate older academics, support their different career needs and expectations, and focus on both organisational and individual goals, and that adequate training and support are provided to middle-level management.

5.5   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the individual perspective of career management for older academics from interview data, and sought to answer the third and fourth research objectives. The third research objective was to explore older academics' perceptions of career management. Given that 42% of academics are aged 50 and over, the interviews explored older academics' retirement plans. One of the most unexpected findings was that two-thirds of interviewees indicated they had no plans to retire, suggesting that the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) is over-stated. The one-third of participants who plan to retire or were strongly considering retirement within the next 10 years, mentioned a range of "push" and "pull" factors influencing their retirement decisions, and these were consistent with the retirement literature.

Academic participants' issues and their retirement plans were categorised into five thematic groups – "Fifty and Flourishing", "Fifty and Financially Focussed", "Fifty and Frustrated", "Fifty and Fit" and "Fifty and Flexible" – with the majority of participants associated with several of the thematic groups. The findings suggest that a better understanding of the retirement plans of older academics would provide some insights for HRM policy-makers to tap into the varied motivations of this age cohort. This is particularly important for participants categorised "Fifty and Flexible", who have the choice of whether they will tolerate the frustrations derived from an unsatisfactory working environment, since they have sufficient accumulated superannuation to retire. Another group that would benefit from

better directed HRM policies and programs are those participants who were categorised "Fifty and Financially Focussed", as they are not financially able to retire, so the universities need to ensure that they are highly motivated to maximise their contributions. A third group were participants who were categorised "Fifty and Flourishing", who are motivated to continue working due to their passion for academic pursuits. Universities need to ensure that the motivations of this group are not undermined by HRM policies and programs which may be focussed on more administrative concerns such as cost control.

As promotion and performance management were the two organisational career management programs that were represented by all 16 universities sampled in the document analysis (discussed in Chapter 4), the interview questions focussed on exploring older academics' perceptions of promotion and performance management. Overall, older academics' perceptions of promotion and performance management were predominantly negative. In some cases, the frustration and extent of disappointment had resulted in some academic participants consciously distancing themselves psychologically from taking any sort of proactive role in advancing their career path. There was an overwhelming feeling of dissatisfaction, coupled with cynicism and anger towards the purpose and process of promotion and performance management systems, indicating that these organisational career management programs have a largely transactional contract focus.

Promotion and performance management are central aspects of an academic career, and also key HRM policies and programs that recognise, reward, and support the retention of high-performing academic staff. However, older academics' perceptions of limited promotional opportunities, gender disparities, feelings of being under-valued, and dealing with a non-supportive and biased university management, could potentially lead to career stagnation, frustration, and increased intentions to leave the university. Hence, older academics' compelling negative perceptions of promotion and performance management suggest that these organisational career management programs are shaping the psychological contract. More specifically, it is argued that the relational aspects of psychological contracts for older academics have been violated, thus eroding trust and loyalty. An absence of adequate and valuable reward and recognition policies

and programs tailored to the different career needs and expectations of older academics could have a potential negative impact on the future career decisions of older academics, such as encouraging older academics to prematurely retire (discussed in Section 5.2.4).

Hence, the negative comments about promotion and performance management have implications for universities and their HRM policy-makers. Despite the interviews revealing that the majority of older academics are flourishing and passionate about their academic work, they have to endure managerial and administrative burdens that are frustrating, time consuming, and considered to be futile.

The fourth research objective was to identify whether these perceptions of career management for older academics differed based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage. The findings revealed that careers for older academics are more differentiated than acknowledged in university career management policies and programs. As academic participants reflected on their academic careers, it became evident that there were diverse career patterns and that some of these differences were reflected in their retirement plans. In relation to promotion, there was a perceived gender disparity within the promotion process. Many female participants expressed concerns about the difficulties and frustrations with the promotion system. In terms of performance management, the overall negative perceptions were universal and were not confined to academic participants from any discipline group, university type, gender or career stage.

Overall, older academics' perceptions of career management indicate a strong consensus that these policies and programs are deficient. These findings reinforce the document analysis that identified limited HRM policies and programs for older academics. Indeed, the overwhelming impression gained from the interviews with older academics is that the organisational career management programs of promotion and performance management were ineffective, meaningless, and lacked transparency. These career management programs are intended to encourage professional growth and be conducive to risk-taking that recognises and rewards innovation. Instead, the interview findings revealed that promotion and

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performance management were constrained by non-supportive management and leadership and, consequently, undermined academic motivation and morale.

Returning to the question embedded in the title of this thesis, "Fading @ 50?", as discussed in Chapter 1, an implication of this question relates to whether academics aged in their 50s are fading from the radar of university management and HRM policy-makers. The interviews with older academics revealed that many felt that they were invisible to university management, suggesting that they do not believe they are on the radar of university management and HRM policy-makers. These perceptions strengthen the findings of the document analysis and interviews with university management that revealed that older academics are "not considered to be a priority" and consequently, are largely ignored in their planning processes. The second implication of the question "Fading @ 50?" relates to whether the motivation of academics aged in their 50s is fading in the latter stage of their career. On the contrary, almost two-thirds of those interviewed indicated that they have no plans to retire, primarily because of their passion for academic pursuits (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flourishing"). While many academic participants had negative views, and were cynical about promotion and performance management, these views were not disheartening, as an overwhelming majority of academic participants expressed a strong commitment and have plans to continue producing significant research and undertake impactful teaching – specifically, academic participants remain intrinsically motivated by academic work.

Chapter 6   Conclusions and Implications

6.1   Introduction

Australia, like other OECD countries, is facing unprecedented challenges with an ageing academic workforce. In a global, dynamic and competitive environment, Australian universities cannot ignore their HR. With 42% of Australian academics aged 50 and over (DEEWRS, 2015), understanding how universities are responding to this age cohort is critical for sustainability reasons and to the future viability of a quality higher education sector. Furthermore, these statistics suggest that the next two decades present a time of crucial vulnerability, as an impending mass exit of academics through retirement will deplete the universities' skill and experience levels, with the situation compounded by high levels of job dissatisfaction, low morale, stress and burnout among academics (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; Harman, 2000, 2005; McInnis, 2000; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winefield et al., 2002; Winter, 2009).

Although researchers have long acknowledged the ageing academic demographic profile of universities, the responses by universities have been varied and limited (discussed in Chapter 2). Indeed, all the studies reviewed so far have failed to explore older academics' perceptions of career management, their career needs and expectations. The absence of an integrated strategy to adequately engage with their older academics is potentially a lost opportunity for universities and for Australia. For this reason, the changing age demographic signals the need for a systematic investigation to provide insights into how universities, their leaders, and their strategies and policies are responding to this unprecedented human resource challenge. This study was designed to make a contribution to this gap in the literature.

The focus of this research was to explore the perceptions of career management for academics aged in their 50s in Australian universities from both organisational and individual perspectives. The organisational perspective examined the institutional role in HRM policy-making for older academics, and university

management perceptions of career management for older academics, while the individual perspective examined the career trajectories of older academics and older academics' perceptions of career management.

The research was designed to determine the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics, irrespective of their career stage. A two-phase qualitative approach addressed the four research objectives, using both documents and semi-structured interviews as key data sources. The research design purposely incorporated different university types and academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities. Phase 1 involved the analysis of documents that were publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities and AUQA audit reports for the period 2006–2009 for 21 Australian universities. The findings of Phase 1 informed the next phase, which consisted of 52 semi-structured interviews with academics aged in their 50s, academics holding university management positions and administrative staff in senior university HR positions. Table 6.1 outlines the thesis chapter that corresponds to each of the four research objectives of this study.

Table 6.1:   **Research Objective and Corresponding Thesis Chapter**

Research Objective (RO)	Chapter
RO1. Identify what universities do to support the careers of older academics.	Chapter 4
RO2. Explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics.	Chapter 4
RO3. Explore older academics' perceptions of career management.	Chapter 5
RO4. Identify whether these perceptions of perceptions of career management for older academics differ based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage.	Chapter 5

This concluding chapter comprises seven sections. Section 6.2 provides a summary of the major findings for each of the four research objectives. Section 6.3 draws together the findings to address the primary research question. Section 6.4 details

the research contributions. Section 6.5 discusses the implications for policy resulting from this research. Section 6.6 outlines the limitations of the research design. Section 6.7 provides suggestions for future research and Section 6.8 contains the concluding comments in relation to the question embedded in the title of this thesis.

6.2 Summary of the Major Findings for each Research Objective

Each of the research objectives focused on an aspect of the primary research question to build an understanding of the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics. The following sections summarise the findings as they relate to each of the four research objectives.

6.2.1 Research Objective 1: Identify What Universities Do to Support the Careers of Older Academics

The first research objective sought to identify what universities do to support the careers of older academics. The purpose of this objective was to explore the organisational perspective of career management for older academics, utilising primary data sources (Phase 1), and then to use these findings to inform the semi-structured interviews in the next phase. The primary data sources were publicly available institutional HRM policy documents from 16 Australian universities, and AUQA audit reports for 2006–2009 for 21 Australian universities. The findings for the first research objective were presented in Chapter 4.

Support for the need for further empirical research on how universities are responding to an ageing academic workforce has been voiced in the higher education literature (e.g., Hugo & Morriss, 2010; Koopman-Boyden & Macdonald, 2003). Furthermore, the median age of the academic workforce has been increasing for over two decades: the percentage of academics aged over 50 of the total academic workforce steadily increased from 27% in 1992 to 39% in 2004, then remaining stable at 40 percent from 2006 to 2014, and further increasing to

42 percent in 2015. Moreover, Hugo and Morriss (2010) argued that there is a patchwork approach to workforce planning and development studies examining the impact of an ageing academic workforce and further empirical research is required to fill in the gaps to meet universities' educational and research needs.

The first primary data source used for this study was the publicly available institutional HRM policy documents, obtained from 16 of the 39 Australian universities. Prior to the document data analysis, the researcher reviewed the wide range of organisational career management programs from the literature (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.6) and selected those that were relevant to the higher education context and, in particular, to academic staff. These programs are specifically designed to help individuals to assess, plan and manage their career direction and development. Ten career management programs were identified for analysis: performance appraisal; retirement preparation programs; succession planning; mentoring; special programs for populations of unique circumstances such as gender and age; secondments; professional development; academic promotion; career development; and study programs (discussed in Chapter 2). Each document was examined to determine the extent of representation of the selected ten organisational career management programs, which followed a systematic process by counting the instances of each of the organisational career management programs for each selected university.

Overall, the content analysis of the institutional HRM policy documents revealed a low to moderate level of representation of the ten organisational career management programs among the 16 selected universities. Of concern were limited career management programs designed for older academics, except for retirement preparation programs that would discourage older academics from continuing to work. In addition, no HRM policy documents mentioned succession planning, which would proactively replenish key positions that would be vacated with the impending exit of retiring older academics.

Promotion and performance management were the two organisational career management programs that were represented by all 16 universities in the document analysis (discussed in Chapter 4). Given that there has been much

dissatisfaction and concern about performance management in universities and academic promotion (discussed in Chapter 2), this study particularly focussed on exploring in more depth individual perceptions of performance management and promotion (discussed in Chapter 5).

The representation of these ten programs differed across university groupings and geographical locations. Of the four university types, the Go8 had the highest representation of career management programs; this was not surprising, given their need to attract and retain high-performing academics in a competitive and global environment. Of the four geographic locations, QLD had the highest representation (65%), with the least representation in NSW and WA, both at 45%. The state differences may reflect the extent to which each state government supports, promotes, and oversees the higher education sector. The concern with the low representation of career management programs in NSW, in which 11 of 39 Australia's universities were sampled, was also highlighted in the Auditor-General's report for NSW (A-G NSW, 2010), which emphasised that the continued absence of policies, particularly succession planning, was a risk associated with an ageing academic workforce.

The second primary data source used in this study was the AUQA audit reports, drawn from 21 of the 39 Australian universities for the period 2006–2009. Of the 21 audit reports examined, 12 were from Cycle 1 and nine were from Cycle 2. The aim of Cycle 1 was to consider and review the policies and procedures that monitor and seek to achieve a university's objectives. Cycle 2 audits were conducted to review the university's progress in addressing the recommendations from the Cycle 1 audit, and to review major changes to the university's quality management system.

The focus of analysis of the AUQA audit reports was on the academic staffing component of the audit reports and, more specifically, what AUQA had identified in terms of issues of concern about the ageing of academics. In this way, the audit reports provided insight into the question of how well these universities were responding to their ageing academic workforce. Overall, the 21 AUQA audit reports revealed that universities give little prominence to the ageing of academics in the

discussion of their HRM strategies, workforce planning and succession planning. The analysis of the Cycle 2 audit reports indicated modest progress in implementing recommendations since the Cycle 1 audit, particularly in terms of workforce planning, which suggested that HR are not a priority for these universities.

On the whole, the document analysis revealed that universities have a limited range of HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce, with older academics not featuring prominently in universities' HRM and workforce planning strategies. While universities are knowledge-intensive organisations that are assumed to be innovative, the most startling finding in the analysis of the HRM policy documents – and also an issue raised in the AUQA audit reports – was the absence of policies in relation to snuccessio planning. Given the document analysis, coupled with the increasing national average of the percentage of academics aged over 50, it can be concluded that the current HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce are reactive, ad-hoc, and designed to respond to immediate and short-term needs. Moreover, the findings suggested that universities generally fail to define the organisation's strategy for their ageing academic workforce.

Several possible reasons could explain the lack of proactivity of universities to the ageing of their academic workforce. First, there may be the assumption that older academics will soon retire. There is some validity in this reason, as the document analysis revealed over a third of universities had programs designed to assist academics in the transition to retirement, and programs related to voluntary retirement schemes, suggesting that universities are actively managing older academics towards retirement, and may even be discouraging older academics from continuing work after the traditional retirement age of 65 years. Second, universities could be pre-occupied with responding to continually changing government policies, and an uncertain and unstable environment governed by strong competition for student numbers in a tight and competitive funding environment. This may be an explanation for both the document analysis and interview findings with university management that revealed that HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce, by and large, lack a strategic response, citing more important "priorities". Third, university management and/or

university HR departments might be unfamiliar with planning, foresight, and decision-making in relation to academic staffing, and could possibly be influenced by the myths surrounding ageing and professional competence. As evidenced in the interview findings with university management, the negative perceptions about older academics suggested ageist and discriminatory attitudes, including a misconception of age and productivity, and a narrow and stereotypical view about age and career stage. Fourth, the negotiation of staffing matters and employment conditions could be governed by industrial relations systems, HRM systems and processes that emphasise the hard HRM model (where people are viewed as costs and rational, quantitative and control-based strategies for managing people are emphasised), at the cost of the soft HRM model (where both individuals' needs and business objectives are recognised and addressed). Fifth, future staffing may be counterbalanced with the appointments of casual and fixed-term contracts, with their reduced risks and associated costs, as opposed to universities offering more secure and long-term employment contracts. This is reflected in the trend towards casualisation in academic employment that has doubled from 11% in 1990 to 22% in 2013 (DEEWRS, 2013).

Hence, the findings of the first research objective reinforce the NTEU's (2007) perspective that there is national concern about the future impact and consequences of the short-sighted institutional staffing strategies and policies to an ageing academic workforce. In light of this, this thesis argues that universities need to be more proactive in their HRM approaches to the ageing of their academic workforce, which includes maximising the effectiveness of their older academic workforce by reviewing and re-orienting their workforce policies and programs to fit the new demographic realities. While the notion is that an organisation's people are important factors in both strategy formulation and implementation (Barney, 1991), effective strategic HRM involves developing HRM policies and practices that develop its people for future strategy formulation processes (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2010). Thus, it can be concluded that it is long overdue for universities to move past this reactive approach to their ageing academic workforce to one which pays greater attention to longer term interests that have mutual benefits for universities and their older academics. Doing so would involve a planned and integrated

approach that focuses on the issues associated with an ageing academic workforce that will enhance and continue to foster motivation of their older academics, and is critical for business and market success.

6.2.2 Research Objective 2: Explore University Management Perceptions of Career Management for Older Academics

The second research objective sought to explore university management perceptions of career management for older academics. No conclusions could be drawn on either policy implementation or effectiveness of the career management programs identified in Phase 1 using just web-based publicly accessible HRM policy documents. Phase 2, therefore, utilised semi-structured interviews to explore in greater depth the university management perceptions of career management for older academics. The findings for the second research objective were presented in Chapter 4.

Support for the second research objective was underpinned from the literature review, which revealed a need to understand whether a shared purpose and a collaborative relationship exist between academics and universities. As discussed in Chapter 2, the selected review of the higher education literature, particularly the research spanning the past two decades, has shown that tensions between university management and academics have remained constant since the corporate structures and management systems in universities replaced traditional collegial forms of governance following the creation of the UNS of higher education in 1990 (e.g., Bexley, James & Arkoudis, 2011; Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; Everett & Entrekin, 1994; NTEU, 2015). The enterprise university is the primary model of governance for Australian universities (Marginson & Considine, 2000) and this introduced a hierarchical structure of management layers that led to the emergence of a new kind of leadership and management within universities – ranging from executive leaders having greater control and decision-making to senior university management required to take on both HRM and legislative responsibilities, and management-controlled tools such as performance targets and budgets. Consequently, academics are being managed by HRM policies and

programs that challenge academic freedom and collegiality and this has led to the deterioration in academics' motivation and morale. Moreover, the quality of the relationship between academics and the university has shifted from the traditional collegial model to the corporate model of governance, where there is a lack of shared purpose and collegiality. Hence, the second research objective was intended to contribute to an understanding of university management's role in relation to formulating and implementing HRM strategies, policies and programs that support the careers of older academics.

The sample for university management consisted of 20 participants from three universities. Of these 20 participants, 18 were academics holding university management positions and two were administrative staff in senior university HR positions. As explained in Chapter 3, university management participants included senior and middle-level management (see Section 3.7.6).

The semi-structured interviews with university management focussed on their perceptions of career management for older academics and the institutional role in HRM policy-making for older academics. The interviews revealed that senior managers failed to focus on the contextual environment regarding potential workforce crises with an ageing academic workforce, and they displayed almost no concern for actively managing the potential loss of institutional knowledge and skills. Indeed, senior management considered older academics "to not be a priority at the moment", and saw no need for specific policies based on age. These senior management perceptions supported the document analysis, which revealed that universities were inactive in workforce capability planning, with an absence of HRM policies in relation to succession planning, and they generally failed to clearly define the organisation's strategy for its ageing academic workforce.

Middle-level management, in contrast to senior management, expressed their wish to exercise autonomy and be more proactive in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce. However, middle-level management were concerned about feeling under pressure to adhere to senior management's tendency to stick to a narrow agenda, designed to address immediate concerns and short-term planning (within 12 months) at the cost of addressing long-term workforce planning issues.

They were also concerned about uncertain, tight and short-term budget allocations determined by senior management, which impeded any HRM strategy development and implementation at the middle management level. These findings pointed towards an uneasy and ambivalent relationship between senior and middle-level management, in that the levels of accountability, and formulating and implementing strategies may be indicative of the decision-making of a top-down management structure within universities (discussed in Chapter 2). Clearly the findings confirmed the tension that has developed between the old university values (collegiality) and the new university values (managerialism).

Besides the tensions between senior and middle-level management, the interviews revealed tensions and feelings of disconnect between university academic management and their HR departments. Middle-level management participants expressed considerable frustration with their university HR departments, as they considered that the non-academic staff in these departments had insufficient knowledge about the nature of academic work and, for that reason, provided only limited support for HRM policies and programs for older academics. Ironically, the interviews with university HR Directors revealed that they lack confidence in the HRM skills of senior and middle-level academic management. The university HR Directors commented that universities should pay greater attention to the career needs and expectations of older academics, and be more proactive in relation to succession planning; however, as the university HR Directors are senior administrative rather than academic staff, they need to wait for direction from senior academic leadership. Hence, the varied perceptions among senior and middle-level management and the university HR department highlighted a lack of shared understanding about the career needs for older academics and, consequently, the question about how best to utilise older academics was not being addressed.

Amid discussions about their role in career management strategies for older academics, the interviews revealed that senior management did not perceive older academics to be a valuable resource, and middle-level management thought that senior management lacked the focus needed to recognise the value and contribution of older academics. Moreover, some negative perceptions about older

academics suggested ageist and discriminatory attitudes, including a misconception of age and productivity, and a narrow and stereotypical view about age and career stage. For example, university management's bias and preoccupation with recruiting younger academics, and the perceived lack of interest in developing the careers of older academics because there would little or no return to the university, have tended to undermine the importance and wealth of knowledge and experience of older academics. These findings indicated that the highly specialised advanced knowledge and experience of older academics are not being recognised accordingly in university HRM policies and programs. This failure to utilise older academics stands in contrast to the RBV framework, which argues HRM policies and programs contribute to competitive advantage through developing and exploiting all of an organisation's HR (Barney & Wright, 1997; Boxall, 1996; Wright et al., 1994).

Based on the interview findings, it can be concluded that university management's role in career management strategies for older academics is limited and ineffective. As highlighted in the document analysis, the interview findings support the view that the university is not adopting proactive strategies to deal with the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) and this behaviour is characteristic of "Reactor" organisations (Miles & Snow, 1978), which tend to respond to short-term concerns rather than long-term strategic issues. Thus, despite the RBV framework emphasising managers' role to develop a competitive advantage through actively recognising, developing and exploiting HR (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1997), senior management are not creating the conditions to capitalise on their older academic workforce; instead, older academics are being overlooked and ignored. Clearly, there is a need for universities to eliminate the ageist and discriminatory attitudes about older academics held by university management, to have greater recognition by senior management of the diversity among their academics aged in their 50s, ranging from early to late career, and for university management to acquire a conviction that older academics really do matter. What is also needed is for university management and their HR policy-makers is to establish an active partnership in order to review and revise current HRM strategies and programs, ensuring that these focus on and respond to the

different career needs and expectations of older academics, and are conducive to retaining the talent of their older academic workforce.

6.2.3 Research Objective 3: Explore Older Academics' Perceptions Of Career Management

The third research objective sought to explore older academics' perceptions of career management. As discussed in Chapter 2, while academics are regarded as independent professionals, who, therefore, are responsible for managing their own careers, the changing work environment has shifted the roles of both universities and academics, such that the responsibility for managing academic careers has become unclear. Furthermore, studies to date on the ageing academic workforce have not explored older academics' perspectives on career management, their career needs and expectations. Hence, the third research objective was designed to make a contribution to this gap in the literature.

The third research objective was addressed in Phase 2, the semi-structured interviews with 50 academics aged in their 50s (30 were men and 20 were women), selected from three universities and from among the four distinct academic discipline groups. Given that 42% of academics are aged 50 and over, the interviews with academics explored older academics' retirement plans. The interview questions also concentrated specifically on exploring older academics' perceptions on promotion and performance management, as these were the two organisational career management programs that were represented by all 16 universities in the document analysis (discussed in Chapter 4). The findings for the third research objective were presented in Chapter 5.

Academic participants' comments revealed a diversity of preferences and ways of experiencing retirement. Five themes around academic participants' issues and their retirement plans emerged from the interview data. The majority of academic participants were associated with several of the thematic groups: "Fifty and Flourishing", "Fifty and Financially Focussed", "Fifty and Frustrated", "Fifty and Fit" and "Fifty and Flexible".

Contrary to the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a), the interviews revealed that close to two-thirds of academic participants had no intentions of retiring. Their comments highlighted an enduring commitment to their academic profession, a distinct sense of engagement, a strong determination and energy amongst older academics, who wished to continue with academic pursuits. What seemed to be clear was that academic work was highly valued and held significant meaning for older academics and that being an academic was a profession and not a job.

Academic participants explained two key reasons to delay retirement from the accepted 65 years of age: their enthusiasm, strong commitment, and passion for academic pursuits mentioned by the majority of older academics (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flourishing"), and the wish to accumulate more superannuation in order to have enough money to retire (thematic group "Fifty and Financially Focussed"). The lack of accumulated superannuation was predominantly due to those academic participants who had entered academia via the sessional pathway or the industry pathway (discussed in Chapter 5). The interview findings revealed more female academic participants than male academic participants had entered academia via the sessional pathway, due, for the most part, to family responsibilities. In addition, there were more academics from the SA discipline group, such as education, business, management and law, mainly employed at the IRU, who had an industry career prior to becoming an academic.

The one-third of academic participants who planned to retire or were strongly considering retirement within the following 10 years, mentioned a range of "push" and "pull" factors that influenced their retirement decisions. "Pull" factors to retirement were the financial incentives of superannuation and the anticipation to pursue leisure activities if they chose (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flexible"). "Push" factors to retirement were health (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Fit") and job dissatisfaction from a demanding and unsupportive work environment (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Frustrated").

Overall, the interviews with older academics about their retirement plans suggested that universities' "one size fits all" retirement policies and programs are

out of date, lending support to research that argues the decision to retire is multi-faceted and complex (Feldman & Beehr, 2011; Wang & Shultz, 2010). Indeed, for some academic participants, a preference for a transition to retirement is consistent with the concept of retirement as a career development stage (Wang & Shultz, 2010). Instead of viewing retirement as a career exit, universities need to recognise the continued potential for career development in an individual's retirement life and to encourage a "step change" in the employer-employee relationship as opposed to a termination of the relationship (Davis & Jenkins, 2013). As highlighted in the document analysis, the limited HRM approaches to career management for older academics (discussed in Chapter 4) signalled that universities and their HRM policy-makers have little understanding of what motivates older academics as they approach retirement, and that current policies and programs do not adequately support the diversity of retirement plans of older academics.

The findings also suggested that a better understanding of the diverse retirement plans of older academics would provide some insights for HRM policy-makers to tap into the motivations of this age cohort. This is particularly important for academic participants categorised "Fifty and Flexible", who can choose whether to tolerate the frustrations derived from an unsatisfactory working environment because they already have sufficient accumulated superannuation to retire. Another group that would benefit from better directed HRM policies and programs are those academic participants categorised as "Fifty and Financially Focussed": not financially able to retire, so the universities need to ensure that they are highly motivated to maximise their contributions. A third group, academic participants categorised as "Fifty and Flourishing", are motivated to continue working due to their passion for academic pursuits. Universities need to ensure that the motivations of this group are not undermined by HRM policies and programs which may focus on more administrative concerns such as cost control. Furthermore, these findings reinforced the view that it is important not to classify an individual into a particular career stage based on age, as careers can unfold in different ways and are not strictly determined by age (Cytrynbaum & Crites, 1989; Ornstein et al., 1989). Thus, a better understanding of the full range of factors that

are either "pushing" older academics or "pulling" them into retirement is needed. This would need universities and their HRM policy-makers to work collaboratively with older academics in order to recognise the diverse career needs and expectations of this age cohort.

As promotion was one of the two organisational career management programs that were represented by all 16 universities in the document analysis, the interview questions explored older academics' perceptions on promotion. The interview findings revealed that the perceptions were, for the most part, negative, with specific concerns about a lack of career support. Not only do universities need to address age issues, as this was the focus of this study, but it appeared there were also gender-related circumstances that may need greater attention if universities wish to capitalise on the advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience of their older academic workforce. Examples include older female academics, who tended to have fewer opportunities for research due to entering academia via the sessional pathway and/or juggling work and family responsibilities.

The interviews also revealed that the promotion process was perceived as frustrating and deficient, in that it was implemented inconsistently, was time consuming, and lacked transparency. In some cases, the dissatisfaction and the extent of disappointment had resulted in some academic participants consciously distancing themselves psychologically from taking any sort of proactive role in advancing their career path. As discussed in Chapter 2, the corporatisation of higher education has shifted the focus of universities to adopt more efficient and cost-driven managerial programs, and control-based strategies such as performance management, but, clearly, these programs and strategies do not necessarily recognise the valuable contributions made by academics to universities. In fact, Australian academics are experiencing high levels of job dissatisfaction, low morale, stress, attitudes of distrust and perceived ineffectiveness of leadership (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; Harman, 2000, 2005; McInnis, 2000; McInnis & Anderson, 2005; NTEU, 2015; Winefield et al., 2002; Winter, 2009). Therefore, it can be concluded that older academics' negative perceptions about promotion is an enduring matter of concern that should be a signal for universities and their HRM policy-makers to re-examine their HRM

policies and programs. This would include a greater need for dialogue between universities and older academics on what conditions are motivating and de-motivating, in an attempt to foster a collaborative and effective working relationship.

As performance management was the other type of organisational career management program that was represented by all 16 universities in the document analysis, the interview questions explored older academics' perceptions on performance management. The interviews revealed overwhelming feelings of dissatisfaction, coupled with cynicism and anger, towards the purpose, process and role of university management in performance management systems. The majority of academic participants considered that performance management as practised in their university was management controlled and meaningless, and held limited value in terms of advancing their academic careers. In fact, the most frequently made comments involved a lack of genuine or clear purpose for performance management, and that essentially the performance management systems in universities were ineffective and lacking in any career value. Several academic interviewees described their experience of performance management as "playing a game" and, as a result, they were inclined to not take performance management seriously. Underpinning this were criticisms of a simplistic organisational orientation for performance management systems, essentially a control and compliance tool that was susceptible to manipulation and misuse, particularly by academic staff.

On the whole, older academics' compelling negative perceptions of promotion and performance management suggested that these organisational career management programs were shaping the psychological contract. As discussed in Chapter 2, recent research (Bexley et al., 2013; Coates et al., 2010) has revealed that academic promotion continues to be a key concern for academics, with Australian academics reported to have one of the lowest levels of job satisfaction. One of the reasons was the lack of institutional management support for their career development plans (Coates et al., 2010). Hence, in light of the interview findings, the strong and unanimous criticisms of performance management systems and promotion suggested that the relational aspects of psychological contracts for older academics

have been violated, thus eroding trust and loyalty. This thesis argues that the lack of adequate and valuable reward and recognition policies and programs tailored to the different career needs and expectations of older academics could potentially negatively impact on the future career decisions of older academics, and result in outcomes such as premature retirement.

6.2.4   Research Objective 4: Identify Whether These Perceptions of Career Management for Older Academics Differ, Based on Discipline Group, University Type, Gender or Career Stage

The focus of the fourth research objective was to identify whether older academics' perceptions of career management differ based on discipline group, university type, gender or career stage. This research objective was in keeping with the literature review, which established that disciplinary values shape academic work and practices, and that academics across the broad range of disciplines found in universities, differ on several aspects, such as career stage in terms of when one enters academia, discipline groups, gender, and academic classification level (discussed in Chapter 2). The research design for this study was therefore justified, as it purposely selected different university types and academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities. The findings for the fourth research objective were drawn from the interview data with older academics that were presented in Chapter 5.

Overall, the interview data highlighted that the perceptions of career management for older academics are more differentiated than is acknowledged in university career management policies and programs. The variables among perceptions of career management were gender, discipline group, university type, career stage, and the level of management, discussed below.

Gender was the main demographic factor that revealed diversity among academic participants' perceptions of career management. This study identified that academic participants had entered academia via four distinct career pathways, and was consistent with the literature review that highlighted varied entry pathways

to academia (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4). The conventional teaching and research pathway typically involves the completion of a PhD followed by a post-doctoral posting. This study found that more men than women had entered academia by the conventional teaching and research pathway. In addition, there were more men than women who had completed their PhD overseas, and this is associated with the career pathways with different academic discipline groups. For example, a post-doctoral experience typically is the foundation of an academic career in the HP science fields. The teaching pathway is reflected in the period in the 1990s, when appointments at CAEs prior to the formation of the UNS were, on the whole, a teaching position. In this study, more women than men had entered academia by the teaching pathway. The sessional pathway usually involved initially being employed as a tutor on a sessional or casual or part-time basis. In addition, almost half of the women academic participants had entered academia either in a part-time academic position or as a sessional tutor on a short-term contract. Therefore, gender plays a part in the complexities of an academic career, particularly in terms of career routes and career advancement (discussed in Chapter 2).

Aside from gender, academic participants' entry to academia also differed based on discipline group and university type. This reinforces the literature that argues that the complexities of the academic profession and the nature of disciplines are key contextual factors that play an important role in influencing and shaping academic careers (discussed in Chapter 2). This study found more academic participants from the SA discipline group who were employed at the IRU. The possible explanation is that the SA discipline group are concerned with the application of knowledge to practical problems and comprise professions such as accountancy and management (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4). Some of the academic participants from the SA discipline group, employed at the IRU, were employed in management, accounting or education professions prior to entering academia. Also, the IRU is part of the group of universities that represent those research-intensive universities during the 1960s and 1970s – a dynamic period characterised by massive expansion in higher education and extensive innovation in educational design and delivery (discussed in Chapter 3).

Another gender difference that was evident among academic participants' comments was their retirement plans. More female academic participants than male academic participants had entered academia via the sessional pathway and, therefore, were more likely to delay retirement in order to build up their superannuation so as to have enough money to comfortably support themselves in retirement. This was consistent with previous research findings that women tend to reach career stages at different ages to men, as their workforce participation is often moderated by family responsibilities (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3).

Gender disparity was also evident among academic participants' perceptions of promotion. Many female academic participants perceived a gender bias embedded in the promotion process. For example, some female participants noted an expectation that women would assume more of the administrative academic workload than their male colleagues, and the persistence of the stereotype of older women as nurturers. Consequently, the time to embark on administrative tasks was often at the expense of time to build up one's research profile, which was typically perceived to have the stronger weighting in the promotion criteria. In addition, there was a general view that some female academic participants were reticent to put themselves forward for promotion and were more likely to undervalue their achievements or be open about their lack of achievements. Moreover, several female academic participants raised concerns that their male colleagues discouraged them from applying for promotion and it was expected that they would not behave "like one of the boys".

As highlighted in the document analysis, universities were giving attention to gender equity and gender imbalance issues among their academic workforce (discussed in Chapter 4). However, academic participants' comments highlighted indirect discrimination of some older female academics. For that reason, universities may need to provide greater support to older female academics, in particular those who had entered academia via the sessional pathway and those who tended to be pushed into administrative roles during their academic careers, which negatively impacted their research profiles and promotional prospects. Additionally, older female academics who are juggling their careers and childcare/family responsibilities may need support and assistance.

In addition to gender, discipline group and university type, academic participants' perceptions of career management differed based on career stage. More than three-quarters of academic participants had entered academia before 1990 (prior to the formation of the UNS) and would be classified in their late career stage. These academic participants would have witnessed the introduction of performance appraisal into universities during the late 1980s and experienced the evolution of this career management program or, in reality, how the development of performance management has stagnated over the past 25 years. The academic participants expressed almost unanimous negative and, at times, angry and sceptical views about performance management, perhaps because the much-anticipated fourth generation approach to performance management had not yet materialised in Australian universities. To reiterate, the fourth generation approach to performance management should include factors that motivate academics, be a non-judgemental process and focus on cooperation between all players (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2). In light of this, it would appear that there has been a "sluggish" approach to the development of university performance management systems and, therefore, the scepticism, cynicism, and frustration expressed by the majority of older academics about performance management can be argued to be entirely justifiable.

Perceptions of career management for older academics also differed based on the level of management, specifically between senior and middle-level management. Given that almost all the university management participants could be classified as older academics, it was surprising that some of their perceptions of academics aged in their 50s could be considered as ageist and discriminatory. Indeed, senior management appeared to have a low level of interest in the career needs of older academics, did not consider them as a current priority, and had a perceived lack of interest in developing the careers of older academics, as there would little or no return to the university. Middle-level management, in contrast, expressed their desire to be proactive in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce. However, the interviews provided evidence that these middle-level managers were constrained by managerialism, the bureaucratic nature of universities and budget control by senior management.

The divergence of views about older academics between senior and middle-level management may reflect the level of accountability, formulation and implementation of strategies indicative of the decision-making of a top-down management structure within universities. As discussed in Chapter 2, the corporatisation of higher education has encouraged universities to adopt managerial practices that emphasise the hard HRM model (where people are viewed as costs, and rational, quantitative and control-based strategies for managing people are emphasised) at the cost of the soft HRM model (where both individuals' needs and business objectives are recognised and addressed). Middle-level management's comments reinforced the document analysis that revealed that universities approaches to an ageing academic workforce were reactive and ad-hoc, designed to respond to immediate and short-term needs. Thus, within this top-down form of managerialism, it would appear that autonomy at the middle management level is inevitably constrained and, therefore, perhaps has limited their ability to attend to the needs of older academics and be proactive in supporting and utilising older academics, and strategically managing academic staffing matters in general. In light of these different perceptions, a collaborative approach and a shared understanding about the needs for older academics between the university's most influential leaders and middle-level management would be necessary for universities to be able to adequately address how best to utilise their older academic workforce.

6.3   Conclusions about the Primary Research Question

The four research objectives discussed in the previous section, addressed the primary research question:

"How effective is the university's role in career management for

older academics?"

The key conclusion is that the university's role in career management for older academics was limited and ineffective. These findings lend support to the NTEU's concern, expressed in Chapter 1, that universities are taking a reactive response to

the ageing academic workforce with short-sighted policies and strategies aimed at minimising staffing costs, which, in turn, could possibly threaten the future sustainability a quality higher education sector (NTEU, 2007).

Both the document analysis and the interviews with university management revealed that universities' HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce lack an organisational strategic focus to either workforce planning or the career needs of older academics. It is evident that the universities' actions to date on career management for their older academics are deficient. In fact, university HRM policies and programs need to catch up with the demographic reality. This reality demands a transformation in attitudes to older academics, particularly in terms of recognising their valuable contributions to universities.

The interviews revealed another possible reason for universities' ineffective career management for older academics: the disconnect between life stage and career stage in university HRM policy-making for academics aged in their 50s. Older academics can be at different career stages (as evident among several participants in this study) and, consequently, have different career development needs. It has been argued that to better understand or enhance academic careers, it is important to acknowledge the full range of individual, institutional and social influences and enable academics to express satisfactions or concerns in these areas (Sorcinelli, 1985). Even though Sorcinelli's (1985) study was 30 years ago, this study has provided evidence that universities have persisted with a "one size fits all" approach to the career management for older academics.

The majority of older academics indicated they had no plans of retiring, as they were passionate to continue with academic pursuits. However, several barriers remain, including the mismatch between the different career needs and expectations of older academics, and the current HRM policies and programs. Most prevalent was the negative view, based more on preconceptions than on evidence, that older academics are less productive, particularly in terms of research, and the narrow view of age and career stage, whereby university management believe that there would be no point to develop older academics' careers. In terms of achieving gender equity, passive and active resistance on the part of men (and even many

women) posed a serious roadblock to cultural change. Clearly, universities need to establish a workplace culture that values the highly specialised advanced knowledge and experience of their older academic staff. Part of this effort would involve reviewing and re-orienting the HRM policies and programs that tackle some of the indirect discrimination that are inadvertent barriers to promotional opportunities for older female academics and, in particular, ensuring that there is recognition of achievement and performance of older academics in an age diverse workforce.

This research has offered an insight into the career management for older academics and provided additional evidence that an ageing academic workforce requires a radical rethinking of workforce strategies if universities are to fully capitalise on their older academics. It is recommended that universities replace a "one size fits all" approach to career management for older academics with flexible and responsive HRM policies and programs that reflect the complexities of academic work, and which account for varied career needs and expectations of older academics. Extending the productive capacity and working lives of older academics is complex and multi-dimensional and, as such, the current "one size fits all" approach to career management for older academics is primarily driven by the university's short-term and reactive needs, and assumption that career stage and life stage are one and the same.

Clearly, there is the need for university management to acknowledge and understand that the productivity of an older academic should not be simply viewed as a declining function of age. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous studies have found that individual variability exists across the lifespan, that a strong predictor of subsequent research is an individual's past research productivity rather than age, and that older professors who stay active in research keep their productivity at a high level until their retirement (e.g., Christensen & Jacomb, 1992; Gingras et al., 2008; Over, 1982). Thus, those universities that can respond to the issues associated with an ageing academic workforce will sustain a competitive edge by capitalising on the accumulated specialised knowledge, experience and wisdom of their older academic workforce, and, at the same time, provide a working

environment that encourages older academics to continue to be productive, satisfied and motivated.

Acknowledging the complex reality facing universities and their HRM policy makers, in a broad sense, this study provides three possible options for consideration:

The first option is for universities to continue to neglect and ignore their older academic workforce. This option would validate university management's perceptions that older academics are not a valuable resource, irrespective of evidence. In addition, this option would be the path that would require the least effort for universities. The potential disadvantage of this option could negatively influence older academics' motivations and, consequently, their decision to remain working. This may generate an extensive and challenging task of replenishing the positions vacated by older academics who are likely to prematurely retire due to frustrations with an unsupportive and unsatisfactory working environment.

The second option is for universities to force out their older academic workforce to accommodate their bias towards and preference for recruiting younger academics. This option would confirm the embedded ageist and discriminatory attitudes held by university management about older academics. Indeed, this option would reinforce university management's ignorance about the competitive advantage of exploiting their older academic workforce. The potential disadvantage of this option could create major industrial unrest among older academics, who represent a significant proportion of their academic workforce. As a consequence, this outcome could negatively impact teaching, research, increase the reliance on short-term contractual teaching positions and, above all, cause considerable damage to the university's reputation.

The third option is for universities to recognise and understand the demographic realities by adopting a proactive role in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce. This would include the review of current HRM approaches to an ageing academic workforce, and the development of policies and programs that respond to the diverse career needs and expectations of older academics. This option would demonstrate proactivity, innovation, and foster a sense of

collaboration by recognising the valuable contributions made by their older academic workforce.

Listed below are possible measures for universities and their HRM policy-makers to take into consideration and which could start to make a difference for their older academic workforce. However, before such measures can be effectively developed, it is recommended that universities and their HRM policy-makers start to engage in a conversation with their older academic staff to identify and understand their differing career needs and expectations.

- HRM policies and programs that accommodate older academics by offering flexible work options that enable work/life balance, and provide alternative career options in line with changing life needs and career aspirations.

- HRM policies and programs that tackle some of the indirect discrimination that are inadvertent barriers to promotional opportunities for older female academics. This would include an assessment of the viability of initiatives that could assist older female academics in achieving professional success and meet family goals.

- HRM policies and programs that provide variable reward and recognition incentives for older academics, such as recognising the nexus between teaching and research, the role that older academics can play, such as mentors, and appropriately acknowledging the contributions and accomplishments of older academics.

- HRM policies and programs for job redesign that consider individual job preferences rather than strictly job enrichment, and also offer challenging and meaningful academic work.

- HRM policies and programs that support the recruitment, management, performance evaluation, motivation, and welfare of a more diverse age range of academics.

- HRM policies and university-wide communication programs that foster and encourage effective employee relations and employee engagement.

6.4   Research Contributions

This research has contributed to knowledge in a number of ways. First, this study was a response to the forecast of an ageing academic "time-bomb" (Hugo, 2005a) and the need to explore how universities are responding to their older academic staff. The findings of this study have contributed to an understanding of the limited role that universities currently play in the career management for older academics. The organisational perspective explored the institutional role in HRM policy-making for older academics and university management perceptions of career management for older academics, while the individual perspective explored the career trajectories of older academics and older academics' perceptions of career management. The linking of this understanding to the mounting challenges facing universities today constitutes a fundamental source of information for universities striving for continued productivity and organisational effectiveness.

Second, this study represents the first empirical investigation of Australian academics aged in their 50s, and it purposely incorporated different university types and different academic discipline groups to capture the diversity of Australian universities and to give a broad perspective of the issues. There were a number of reasons to investigate Australian academics aged in their 50s. First, these academics represent almost a third of Australia's total academic workforce. Second, this age cohort occupies a significant proportion of senior academic and senior management positions in universities. Third, older academics have at least 15 years or more of working life ahead, based on society's conventional retirement age of 65 years. Fourth, they are a pool of highly educated professionals with advanced levels of specialised knowledge and experience and, therefore, are an important resource that should be nurtured and encouraged to maximise their contributions to their respective universities. The findings of this study have contributed to the scarce research on the careers of older academics.

Third, this study has contributed empirical findings that illustrate the diverse career trajectories of older academics, and provided insights about older academics' career perceptions, career needs and expectations, thus strengthening the understanding of the complexities of an academic career. This study has

revealed that current universities' HRM policies and programs fail to proactively and strategically address the different facets of academic careers and instead, tend to be reactive, ad-hoc, and designed to respond to immediate and short-term needs.

Fourth, this study has provided insights from the individual perspective, particularly academics aged in their 50s, on performance management in universities and academic promotion. These insights constitute an important source of information for universities and their HRM policy-makers who are involved in the development and implementation of these policies and programs.

Fifth, the findings of this study are likely to be of value to universities and their HRM policy-makers. The identification of key variables that underpin the careers of academics aged in their 50s could assist university management and their HRM policy-makers in targeting career management strategies, policies and programs that account for the varied career needs and expectations of older academics. This thesis has argued that university HRM policy-making makers should discard the one-dimensional view of older academics, re-think a "one size fits all" approach to career management, and be flexible and responsive to older academics' different career needs and expectations.

Sixth, although the focus of this research is on career management for older academics, the findings have potential transferability to the career management for older professionals in a variety of other knowledge-intensive organisations. As with the academic profession, other professional occupations require time to gain the relevant qualifications and training and, therefore, it is important to determine the extent in which other knowledge-intensive organisations are responding to its ageing professional workforce.

6.5   Implications for Policy Resulting from this Research

Six implications arising from this research have been identified for the attention of universities and their HRM policy-makers. On a cautionary note about an ageing academic workforce, many vacancies may not actually occur if new teaching and

administrative technologies change the labour demand for replacements. The first implication is the need to establish a shared purpose and a more collaborative relationship between the university and their older academic staff. Universities, their HRM policies and programs are products of people working collaboratively, and their collective actions can influence motivation and morale. Furthermore, central to functional and positive employment relationships are exchanges between employers and employees that are characterised by mutuality or shared understandings of both parties' obligations, and reciprocal commitments and contributions (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). While academics are increasingly being managed by HRM policies and programs that challenge the traditional values of academic freedom and collegiality, it is vitally important that universities strive to preserve these traditional academic values by creating an organisational climate of high involvement, partnership, and effective communication. An appreciation of the psychological contract of academics aged in their 50s can provide universities with vital information on their HRM policies and programs, helping them to enhance and maintain high levels of motivation, satisfaction, and performance among their older and experienced academics, as opposed to setting aside older academics and ignoring their different needs and concerns.

The second implication is for university management to pay greater attention to the potential strategic capabilities of academics aged in their 50s. University management have a crucial role in creating an inclusive workplace culture. This study has revealed that academics aged in their 50s are highly motivated, strongly committed, and passionate about their academic pursuits, with close to two-thirds of those interviewed indicating that they had no plans to retire. However, apart from performance management, promotion and study programs, the career management programs for older academics were limited to retirement preparation programs and voluntary early retirement schemes, which would discourage older academics from continuing to work or potentially lure them to prematurely exit from the workplace. Considering flexible academic career pathways for older academics may be a starting point to aligning individual career needs and expectations with organisational goals and, above all, enabling the most

effective use of older academics' knowledge and skills, and improving HRM policies and programs where it is lacking, such as succession planning and mentoring.

The third implication relates to the role of middle-level management. Universities need to review the impediments that are preventing middle-level management from implementing workforce strategic planning matters that can positively impact their faculty. What emerged from this study is that there should be more recognition of the management skills and insights of middle-level management, and that they should have the appropriate conditions and flexibility to be able to proactively make decisions that will effectively support and utilise their older academic staff.

The fourth implication relates to the underdevelopment of HRM policies and programs that support the career management for older academics, in particular, the lack of identified policies or programs for succession planning. There are statistically fewer academics available to fill the vacancies that are potentially created when the significantly large proportion of academics aged 50 and over exit the workforce or contemplate retirement within the next two decades. A lack of identified succession planning policies and programs suggests that universities are missing out on opportunities: first, to capitalise on the highly specialised advanced knowledge and experience of older academics with institutional knowledge and, second, to build relationships among the next generation of academics and university leaders. Universities and their HRM policy-makers should concentrate on developing HRM policies and programs on career management for older academics that can add strategic value proactively, align with the university's strategies and objectives, and are responsive to the demands of the dynamic - external environment. Considering age audits and developing a comprehensive database of potential academics for university management positions can help pinpoint risks of workforce shortages and prioritise older academic retention strategies.

The fifth implication is the stereotypical image of older academics as being one-dimensional, particularly in the viewpoint held by university management, as identified in this study. University management have an ethical responsibility to

foster the motivation of older academics and to maximise their contributions for the benefit of the individual and the university. Indeed, universities can create a working environment that supports the different needs and capabilities of older academics. However, it will be difficult to re-orient and formulate HRM policies and programs, given the prevailing ageist attitudes and stereotypes of older academics. Universities and their HRM policy-makers must first overcome their negative biases toward older academics before they can enact any workforce policies and programs designed to retain or develop this age cohort.

A sixth implication is the paucity of research on an ageing academic workforce within each discipline group. A more comprehensive and systematic approach to investigate the impact of ageing among academics for each discipline group can assist in determining whether there will be sufficient academic staff to educate the next generation of professionals. While the literature has argued the pivotal role of disciplinary values in shaping academic work and practices, more attention to HRM policies and programs that exhibit the broad range of disciplines found in universities would benefit the university and each discipline group – as evidenced in this study, there are disciplinary differences among older academics based on entry to academia, career needs and expectations, and retirement plans.

6.6   Limitations of the Research Design

As with most research, this study had strengths and limitations. A key methodological strength of qualitative research is that it typically produces a wealth of detailed information and facilitates the study of issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002). However, this increase in the depth of understanding of individuals and situations presents a limitation, as it reduces the generalisability of the findings. There are several limitations in this research.

The first limitation relates to the data sources used for this study. In Phase 1, some university HRM policy documents were incomplete as they contained confidential information that was protected and, therefore, not made available to the public. The researcher was required at times to search out the information in other areas

of the university's website that were not necessarily dedicated to HRM policy documents, due to the different website designs of the selected universities. Although some of the breadth of documents is inevitably compromised by the limited access, the documents that were accessed generally reflected the university profiles. In Phase 2, not all participants were equally articulate and perceptive in their interview responses. For some participants there was limited time to participate in the interview and this possibly may have had an impact on the scope and depth of interview responses. Within these limitations, the researcher worked to the best of her ability, using data from other sources such as the individual academic's curriculum vitae and direct observation and experience to understand the career trajectories of the participants.

The second limitation relates to the sample in relation to size and representativeness. While there was a total number of 50 academic participants (note: an additional two participants were administrative staff occupying senior university HR positions), the researcher took into account the four distinct academic discipline groups to broaden the representation of the academic workforce. Furthermore, the researcher purposely selected the interview participants from three identified formal university groupings out of a total of 39 universities in Australia to reflect the diversity found in Australian universities. In addition, the numbers of universities were extended to 21 universities in the documentary data. Thus, the sample in this study is representative and reflected in the national statistics (discussed in Section 3.7.2).

The third limitation is the sample was purposely restricted to academics aged in their 50s. It is apparent that while this concentration on this age cohort may result in academics aged in their 50s being perceived as a potential source of sustained competitive advantage for universities, this does not mean that it could also be the case for academics of different ages. Moreover, there could be other possible sources of competitive advantage for universities, such as intangible resources, for example, the university's reputation and its organisational culture that would deserve further investigation and consideration.

The fourth limitation is the role of the researcher. The researcher is a student as well as an academic, and this raises the possible limitation of interviewer bias. The researcher ensured that the research was undertaken in a competent and responsible manner, and undertook steps to minimise researcher bias, as she was mindful of the possibility that her position might influence or cause misinterpretation of the research findings. Therefore, she adopted a detached and systematic approach in the analysis of the data in order to protect the independence of the research (Kvale, 1996, 2007).

6.7   Future Research

The findings from this study highlight several potential directions for future research. As this study is restricted to Australian universities, clearly future research could involve a larger number of universities, and from different countries, to make comparisons and to determine whether the findings represent the broader international academic community.

This study has provided an initial understanding of the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for academics aged in their 50s. The key data sources were carefully selected to ensure a wide range of public and organisational documents, and a balanced representation of university management and academics aged in their 50s. However, the limitations of qualitative research are nonetheless present. Future research could extend the sample to include interviews with a greater number of university management and academics aged in their 50s to further explore the topic.

This study has revealed some differences in the perceptions of career management for older academics based on discipline group, university type, gender and career stage. These differences were evident from entry to academia, career needs and expectations, and retirement plans. Further research into the impact of these variables could build on these findings and provide a useful addition to the literature on academic careers, specifically the careers of older academics.

Given the dynamic and uncertain higher education environment, with increasing government control and direction of universities for research funding, it is possible to argue that many of the views were probably a reaction to events of a particular time. A replication of this study could help to determine whether the views expressed are embedded in a particular time or are enduring.

This study concentrated on older academics and universities. Research in broader contexts would be worthwhile, particularly for other types of older professionals in a variety of knowledge-intensive occupations that require considerable time to obtain the necessary qualifications and training. Specialist medical practitioners are one possible example. It would be interesting to explore how an organisation's role in career management for their older professional staff is perceived in other professions.

6.8   Concluding Comments

Returning to the question embedded in the title of this thesis – "Fading @ 50?" – for the purposes of this thesis, the term held two implications, as discussed in Chapter 1. The first implication related to whether academics aged in their 50s are fading from the radar of university management and HRM policy-makers. Together, the document analysis and interviews with university management suggested that academics aged in their 50s are generally "not on the radar" for university management. Older academics were "not considered to be a priority at the moment" and, consequently, they were largely ignored in their planning processes. The negative perceptions by university management suggested ageist and discriminatory attitudes. Those middle-level managers who considered older academics to be" on the radar" expressed their desire to be proactive in supporting and utilising their older academic workforce; however, some middle-level management were found to view this age cohort as an obstacle to recruiting younger and more research-active academics. These perceptions strengthen the findings of the interviews with older academics, many of whom felt that they were invisible to university management and apparently did not believe they were "on the radar" of university management and HRM policy-makers.

The second implication of the question "Fading @ 50?" related to whether the motivation of academics aged in their 50s is fading in the latter stage of their career. On the contrary, almost two-thirds of those interviewed indicated that they had no intentions to retire, primarily because they are highly motivated, strongly committed and passionate about their academic pursuits (thematic group labelled "Fifty and Flourishing"). While many academic participants had negative views and were cynical about promotion and performance management, these views were not disheartening, in terms of their passion for research and teaching. The findings also highlighted that not all academics aged in their 50s are in the latter stages of their career were fading in their motivation, as some were in the early career and mid-career stages. What became clear is that academics aged in their 50s possess advanced levels of highly specialised knowledge and are an experienced resource, are motivated to continue producing significant research, and undertake impactful teaching, despite the constant changes and pressures of managerial impositions impacting the nature of their academic careers.

If universities adopt the perspective that ageing academics are a workforce priority, and review and re-orient their current HRM policies and programs to be responsive to academics aged in their 50s, there are potential benefits for the university, the individual older academic, and more than likely, for all academics. The potential benefit for universities is the retention of a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience among their older academics, who would be encouraged to continue to create and disseminate high-quality teaching and research, and potentially, mentor the next generation of academics. The potential benefits for academics aged in their 50s would be more flexible workload options that are responsive to their different career needs and expectations, and the anticipation of a rewarding 15 or more years ahead of work to continue with their academic pursuits. The potential benefit for all academics is an inclusive and motivating working environment that continues to encourage impactful teaching and innovative research.

The essence of universities is to be progressive and knowledge-intensive institutions. Universities would be well positioned to manage the organisational risks, opportunities and sustainability issues associated with an ageing academic

workforce by reviewing and re-orienting current HRM policies and programs to respond to the diverse career needs and expectations of older academics. This research recommends that universities recognise the competitive advantage that would come from taking a proactive approach to fully leverage the advanced levels of highly specialised knowledge and experience of their older academic workforce.

To conclude, this study has provided insights into the diverse career needs and expectations, and the future career plans of academics aged in their 50s. This study has identified that this age cohort is not a homogenous group. Notably, this study has highlighted that academics aged in their 50s are a vital resource for universities that should be nurtured and encouraged to remain productive, satisfied and motivated. This study has contributed to knowledge about the effectiveness of the university's role in career management for older academics from both organisational and individual perspectives, and generated findings that are relevant, and can be of value for universities and their HRM policy-makers.

This research has shown that academics aged in their 50s are clearly not fading, but, in fact, are flourishing, as reflected in the words of the following two participants in this study:

> I feel like I've got a career. I've only just begun and I've got a whole lot of writing and publishing to do. I feel like there's no reason at all why I can't become a professor now. (Lecturer, Female, Go8, SA, 3 years in academia)

> Age shouldn't matter but experience should. (Professor, Male, Go8, HP, 19 years in academia)

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Appendices

Appendix 1:   Ethics Approval Letter

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Research Office
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Ethics
Phone +61 (0)2 9850 6848
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18 March 2009

Ms Jacqueline Larkin

Reference: HE27FEB2009-D06348

Dear Ms Larkin,

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: An exploratory study on universities addressing the career needs and expectations of academics aged 50-59

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) and you may now commence your research. This approval is subject to the following condition:

1. Please forward when available a copy of the ethics approval from each of the universities involved in your study.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. Approval will be for a period of twelve (12) months. At the end of this period, if the project has been completed, abandoned, discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are required to submit a Final Report on the project. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. The Final Report is available at: http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/forms

2. However, at the end of the 12 month period if the project is still current you should instead submit an application for renewal of the approval if the project has run for less than five (5) years. This form is available at http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/forms. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report (see Point 1 above) and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

3. Please remember the Committee must be notified of any alteration to the project.

4. You must notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

5. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/policy

ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics

www.mq.edu.au

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If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely

p.p

Ms Karolyn White
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Ethics Review Committee (Human Research)

Cc: Associate Professor Ruth Neumann, Macquarie Graduate School of Management

Appendix 2: Universities in each University Grouping

University Grouping	List of Universities
Group of Eight (Go8)	University of Adelaide (SA) Australian National University (ACT) University of Melbourne (VIC) Monash University (VIC) University of New South Wales (NSW) University of Queensland (QLD) University of Sydney (NSW) University of Western Australia (WA)
Australian Technology Network (ATN)	Curtin University of Technology (WA) University of South Australia (SA) RMIT University (VIC) University of Technology, Sydney (NSW) Queensland University of Technology (QLD)
Innovative Research Universities (IRU)	Flinders University of South Australia (SA) Griffith University (QLD) La Trobe University (VIC) Murdoch University (WA) University of Newcastle (NSW) James Cook University (QLD) Charles Darwin University (NT)
Regional Universities Network (RUN)	Central Queensland University (QLD) Southern Cross University (NSW) University of Ballarat (VIC) University of New England (NSW) University of Southern Queensland (QLD) University of the Sunshine Coast (QLD)

Adapted from www.go8.edu.au; www.atn.edu.au; www.iru.edu.au; www.run.edu.au

Appendix 3:   Interview Guide for University Management

<u>Interview Questions for University Management – Researcher use only</u>

1. What are the responsibilities of your role, in particular in relation to academics and their careers? How do these responsibilities relate to the development of strategies, policies and programs relating to career development for academics?

2. What strategies, policies and practices does your university offer in terms of assistance to progress the career of academics, particularly academics aged 50–59?

2.1 Probes:

What does the university offer? For example: succession planning, mentoring, professional development such as research training, teaching training, phased retirement programs?

3. How does the university evaluate its strategies, policies and practices that support the career for academics aged 50–59?

Probes:

3.1 How effective are they?

4. What are the university's plans to further support the career development for academics aged 50–59?

Probes:

4.1 How would your role be involved?

5. If you could change these strategies, policies and programs, what would you do?

Probes:

5.1 If you had no restrictions, e.g., unlimited budget, free rein?

We've discussed several issues about academic careers and the role of the university; is there anything we've not covered that you'd like to add?

Thank you for your support and time. Your contribution to this research is highly valued. If you have any further enquiries, please feel free to contact me.

Appendix 4:   Interview Guide for Academics

<u>**Interview Questions for Academics – Researcher use only**</u>

1. To start with, tell me briefly about your academic career so far. What are some of the defining moments career-wise as you see them?

Probes:

1.1. Did you complete your PhD full-time then go into an academic position?

1.2. Did you teach whilst completing your PhD?

1.3 How long have you been in your current position?

1.4 How long have you been at your university?

1.5 Where were you before you joined this university?

2. When you think back on your academic career, did it work out the way you expected it to be?

Probes:

2.1 Did you have a career plan? If so, briefly outline it.

2.2 Has your career plan worked out the way you expected it to be?

2.3 What were the qualification requirements?

2.4 Did you need teaching experience to start an academic position?

2.5 To what extent does your university influence your academic career?

2.6 What other developmental activities have you done to assist your academic career?

3. Where do you see yourself in the next 10 or so years?

Probes:

3.1 Are you aiming for an administrative and/or management position in the university?

3.2 Are you working towards a promotion?

3.3 Do you see yourself in a different university? If no, why not? If yes, why?

3.4 Have you thought about retirement and when? If no, why not? If yes, why?

4. How has this university or other universities helped you to develop your academic career?

Probes:

4.1 How does the university support your academic career?

4.2 To what extent does this meet your expectations?

4.3 How should the university support your academic career?

Is there anything else you'd like to make comment on about your academic career that hasn't already been covered?

Thank you for your support and time. Your contribution to this research is highly valued. If you have any further enquiries, please feel free to contact me.

Appendix 5: Participant Demographic Data

Demographic Data (to be obtained mostly via university/ staff webpage):

(attach this page to the interview guide/summary for each interview and if there is any information outstanding, follow up at the end of the interview)

1.   Male   Female

2.   50–55 years   55–59 years   59+ years

3.   Born in Australia   Born overseas

4.   University Name:

5.   G08   IRU   ATN   Regional

6.   No. of years at current university:

7.   Department/School Name:

8.   HP   HA   SP   SA

9.   No. of years, in current department/school?

10.   Full-time

11.   Level A   B   C   D   E

University Mgmt: HoS, Dean, DVC, Associate Dean, Director, HR, Other

12.   No. of years, at current academic classification level

13.   Teaching/Research   Research only   Teaching only

14.   Bachelor degree   Masters degree   PhD   Other

15.   No. of years since highest qualification obtained

16.   Early career   Mid-career   Late career

17.   No. years in academia

18.   Plan to retire (years) <5   5–10   10–15 15+   No plan

Appendix 6: Information and Consent Form

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SCHOOL OF
MANAGEMENT

Information and Consent form

Academics in their 50's: A Study on the Role of the University in Career Management
Ethics Reference No: HE27FEB2009-D06348

You are invited to participate in a PhD study titled: '*Academics in their 50's: A Study on the Role of the University in Career Management.*' Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this research is to examine how universities support the careers of academics in the 50 – 59 year age bracket. The study seeks the perceptions/views of both academics and university management on suitable ways of assisting the careers of academics in this later life-stage. Interviews will enable a more in-depth approach to exploring complex issues and matters that academics consider important.

Academics in the 50-59 year age group and university managers such as Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Head of School; Dean and Director, Human Resources are invited to participate in a 30-45 minute interview. Interviews with University management will investigate the range of institutional, faculty and departmental strategies, policies and practices that address the careers for academics in this age bracket. Interviews with academics aged 50- 59 will explore their perceptions on their career development needs and experiences and on the role of the university in career management.

This study is being conducted by Jacqueline Larkin, a PhD candidate, Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Associate Professor Ruth Neumann and Dr Paul Nesbit, Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University. Any information collected will be used for the purposes of this research only and will not be released to third parties.

If you agree to participate and with your permission, the interview will be digitally audio recorded. Hand written notes will also be taken. Please be assured that your interview will be strictly anonymous and confidential. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data. All data will be kept in a locked cabinet. Under no circumstances will any individual or university be identified in any publication of the results. Confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved.

It is also intended to publish the aggregated results of this study in academic and professional publications. Participants can have access to the research outcomes, including any academic and professional publications, by contacting the researcher.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact Jacqui Larkin on ___ or email her jacqueline.larkin@students.mq.edu.au). Naturally, should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without having to give a reason.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information. Thank you for your time.

PhD candidate: Jacqueline Larkin
Phone:
Email: jacqueline.larkin@students.mq.edu.au

Associate Professor Ruth Neumann
Phone: 9850-7766
Email: Ruth.Neumann@mq.edu.au

Dr Paul.Nesbit
Phone: 9850-9908
Email: Paul.Nesbit@mgsm.edu.au

Information and Consent form

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Academics in their 50's: A Study on the Role of the University in Career Management

Ethics Reference No: HE27FEB2009-D06348

Investigator's Copy / Participant's Copy (circle)

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without having to give a reason and without adverse consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's email: _____ Participant's phone: _____

Investigator's Name: _____ JACQUELINE LARKIN _____
(block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's email: jacqueline.larkin@students.mq.edu.au

Investigator's phone: _____

Thank you for your time. Your contribution to this research is highly valued.

I would / would not like a copy of the brief report of the research results. Please send it to me at:

_____

_____

_____

WHERE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE GO TO GO FURTHER