

Some important issues to consider about working post-retirement

Brian Ralph

The original draft of the questionnaire below was part of a talk I gave to soon-to-retire principals at the 2010 NSWSPC Annual Conference, as part of Warren Marks' series of principal retirement workshops. I have now expanded and adapted it to try to draw out the implications of all the questions I posed at that time.

If you're serious about assessing your expectations and preparedness for work after retirement, try to answer the following questions and then determine what the implications of your answers will be – both in the short-term and long-term – and at a personal and broader level.

Questions or possible issues for you to consider	What are the implications of your answers?
1. Are you intending to work post-retirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe	
2. Why are you intending to continue working in some form or other post-retirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Financial reasons <input type="checkbox"/> Want to keep busy and/or stay alert <input type="checkbox"/> Have already been offered work in retirement <input type="checkbox"/> Have particular knowledge, skills and expertise that are in high demand, either inside or outside education <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
3. In what area of work would you be interested? <input type="checkbox"/> Education-related <input type="checkbox"/> Anything that appeals to me <input type="checkbox"/> Anything but education	
4. In what type of work would you be interested? <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid <input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Casual <input type="checkbox"/> Short-term contract <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term contract <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Work that allows you to pick and choose if/when you will work on any particular day <input type="checkbox"/> Work that involves a formal commitment to 1-2 days per week <input type="checkbox"/> Work that involves a formal commitment to 3-4 days per week <input type="checkbox"/> Work that involves a formal commitment to full-time work <input type="checkbox"/> Work that allows you to work from home <input type="checkbox"/> Work that allows flexible hours on any particular day <input type="checkbox"/> Work that might involve time on the weekend 	
<p>5. For how long would you hope/expect to continue working after retirement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For as long as you can get it <input type="checkbox"/> Just long enough for you to wind down slowly after your current hectic life as a principal <input type="checkbox"/> Until you have an established a routine of personal interests, travel and hobbies etc to keep you busy 	
<p>6. Do you actually need extra money post-retirement? If so, what will you do with it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pay off your mortgage <input type="checkbox"/> Pay off other existing debts <input type="checkbox"/> Put it into additional super <input type="checkbox"/> Invest it elsewhere to give an additional income stream during retirement <input type="checkbox"/> Renovate the house <input type="checkbox"/> Buy a new car/boat etc <input type="checkbox"/> Use it to fund Australian and overseas travel etc <input type="checkbox"/> Add it to other income sources to give more spending money each week <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ 	
<p>7. What personal costs or benefits would be associated with you continuing to work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Family relationships, e.g. wife/husband/partner, children, grandchildren etc <input type="checkbox"/> Health and/or wellbeing issues? Please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Foregoing other alternatives, e.g. current hobbies, sporting interests, travel, social network of friends etc 	
<p>8. How does your wife/husband/partner generally feel about the idea of you continuing to work post-retirement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Very positive 	

<input type="checkbox"/> Very negative <input type="checkbox"/> It would depend on the sort of work, days per week, availability to travel etc <input type="checkbox"/> Couldn't care less	
<p>9. What is your wife/husband/partner doing at the present time, i.e. where are they at in relation to their own work and retirement?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time with no intention to retire <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time but can't wait to stop <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time but hoping for get some sort of full-time, part-time or casual work post-retirement <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time or casual and hoping that this will continue <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time or casual and can't wait to stop <input type="checkbox"/> Not working but would love to work <input type="checkbox"/> Not working but with absolutely no intention of wanting or needing to work	
<p>10. What are their expectations of you after you retire? Please specify:</p>	
<p>11. How will you meet these expectations if they clash with your proposed/desired course of action? (Should I have left more space for you to answer?)</p>	
<p>12. What certainty is there for you to continue to work into the future? What will you do if work dries up? What implications will this have for you – and your family – especially at a personal level? Have you already thought about this? How will you handle this?</p>	
<p>13. How will you respond to offers of full time work, part-time/casual work, head hunting etc?</p>	
<p>14. Do you expect your attitude towards post-retirement work to change over time? What effect will your health, travel plans, financial situation etc have on your level of commitment to continue working post-retirement?</p>	

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Now that you've worked through these questions I hope that there are some signals coming through as to where you're at and where you could be in the future in relation to your work/retirement plans.

Things are never easy but I hope that the questions I have raised will help you in reflecting on where you will or want to be in a couple of years' time.

Contributor details

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Brian was Principal of Auburn GHS from 1992-2002, NSWSPC Futures Principal (2003), Principal in the Secondary Education Directorate (2004-05) and Principal Liaison Officer (2006-09). He is a Life Member of the NSWSPC. In his spare time these days he plays with his grandkids, plans trips abroad and among other things works on the new Principal Futures website.