



AGEDCARE

WORKFORCE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

COMMUNIQUÉ

3 DECEMBER 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

The Aged Care Workforce Industry Council (the Council) has set an ambitious work plan for 2021 which will result in tangible progress across all 14 Strategic Actions outlined in *A Matter of Care*.

Aspiring higher

The Council will continue to work with the sector to generate strong support for the Aged Care Voluntary Industry Code of Practice (VICOP/Code). The Council will provide practical assistance and advice that will help Industry lift its standards of practice. It will ensure that workers and providers have the tools they need to provide high quality and safe supports and services to older Australians. Our focus will be on heightening worker and consumer voices in governance, workforce planning and continuous improvement processes as well as providing direct support to providers to help ensure they are well-prepared in advance of the Code's implementation on 1 July 2021.

Training & Qualifications

Work on a re-framed qualifications and skills framework will be a key deliverable for the Council in 2021. The Council will continue to work with the Aged Services Industry Reference Committee (AS-IRC) to ensure qualifications reflect the skills and knowledge aged care workers need to perform their jobs well. From these qualifications, we will identify and articulate the job architecture and subsequently career pathways both within aged care and across other sectors.

To address competency gaps, the Council will continue to work with the tertiary sector and digital innovators to finalise development of a digital learning platform that will give workers and providers access to short courses mapped to a unit of competency, and step-out validation processes. The Council will also fund a micro-credential app that will help workers to keep their skills, knowledge and capabilities current.

Workforce Planning

The Council will build on its successful 2020 start to Workforce Planning with the publication of a best practice guide. This guide will be full of pragmatic tools to enable providers to easily implement key reforms that will result in improved services and better business practices. The Council will build this guide into an accessible digital hub which it will update and

administer. It will support understanding and uptake of workforce planning best practice through specific hands-on training workshops and outreach services that will enable providers to receive both group-based and one-on-one assistance.

Integrating smoothly with other care systems

Making sure older Australians experience smooth transitions between different care systems is a priority for the Council in 2021. It will be working closely with the Government to improve transfer and discharge procedures, as well as enhanced hospital workforce training in geriatric care and cognitive impairment, to minimise older Australians' functional decline and complications during hospitalisation.

Workforce relations: IR and future funding

Developing an agreed way to tackle aged care workforce relations reform will be a focus for the Council in 2021. The Council will bring together industry experts and key stakeholder groups to define those aspects of industrial relations which are supported across the sector – as well as those requiring further thought - and seek to advance these in discussions within Industry and with Government. To do this, the Council will sponsor the development of a White Paper which will be socialised across the sector by mid-2021.

Evidence-led decision-making: Census Database and CGTR

The aged care sector is committed to improve the quality of its services. The Council firmly believes that all decisions to improve aged care need to be evidence-based. In the past, the lack of available evidence on aged care has frustrated sector efforts to make informed decisions. The Council-funded Aged Care Census Database created by BPA Analytics has filled a much-needed data gap. Throughout 2021, the Council will be promoting the value of this data to help providers better understand, and respond appropriately to, their workforce. The Centre for Growth and Translational Research (CGTR) will be another important aspect of evidenced-based decision-making. The Council will be working closely with the CGTR to ensure its research is answering the questions the sector wants answered and provides results that can clearly be translated into practice.

Embedding Social Change

Changing the way we think about older Australians and those who care for them will be a key pillar of the Council's work in 2021. If there's one thing we know – people of all ages want to be taken seriously. Older Australians do not want society's expectations of them to diminish simply because they wake up each day a day older. In early 2021, the Council will launch phases 1 and 2 of its social change and workforce recruitment campaign. The campaign aims to reframe the public image of the sector and to promote the workforce opportunities that the sector provides. The aim is to attract a larger and more diverse workforce into the sector to ensure that quality care is provided into the future - and that perceptions of ageing and care receive a greater value in our society.

Building on 2020 success

The Council's 2021 workplan, recognises and builds on key progress made in 2020. With much of the foundational work on the VICOP, social change, qualifications and skills and workforce planning having started this year, the Council anticipates making strong progress across these actions in 2021. It also looks forward to driving ahead with reforms on some of those strategic actions where development is currently at an early stage, so that we can see significant development on these by end-2021.

The Remote Accord will continue to provide a unified voice for remote and very remote aged care services which the Council will listen carefully to when advancing its 2021 workplan.

Information on the Aged Care Workforce Industry Council, including previous meeting communiqués, can be found at <https://acwic.com.au>

The next meeting of the Council will be held on 4 February 2021.