

## Insight #6

# Workforce ages – a changing profile

Everyone knows that the Australian population is ageing ... but did you know that the aged care workforce is getting younger? Compare the workforce age profile from 2009-11 with the workforce age profile from 2017-19.

Workforce age profile (2009-11)

Respondents: 13,090



Workforce age profile (2017-19)

Respondents: 29,390



In 2009-11, the median aged care workforce is dominated by employees aged 46 to 55 years. Fast-forward to 2017-19, and the median aged care workforce is about to hand over leadership to employees aged 26 to 35 years.

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### Analysis of the insight

The Aged Care Census Database (ACCD) shows that at the beginning of the decade (2009-2011), 29.2% of the workforce were under 40 years of age. By the end of the decade (2017-19) over 44.6% were under 40 years of age.

Looking at this from the alternate perspective, over the same ten-year period, the percentage of older workers (over 40 years of age) decreased from 70.7% to 56.5%. Currently, the majority of this 56.5% of older workers are aged over 50 years (32.5%).

Interestingly the top age bracket of workers (aged more than 60 years) has grown during the ten-year period from 8.6% to 9.2%. This can be explained primarily by the decline in the 41-60 age brackets during the same period – it partly reflects workers ageing during that period and moving from the younger age bracket into the older age bracket.

### So, what does this mean for you as a provider?

- There is a difference between home care and residential care in terms of workforce age profile trends.
  - While the median age of the residential workforce had decreased since 2012 (from 48 years to 46 years in 2016), the community workforce has continued to age (from 50 years to 52 years).<sup>1</sup> This is supported by the results from Department of Health's 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census Report and 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report
  - The differences in these trends will affect workforce planning decisions. As a provider, you rely on workers to provide services and support and meet organisational goals. You may need to think about what will happen when your older workers leave.
- With careful planning and preparation, you can manage the changes that will result from the forthcoming generational transfer of leadership when your older workers retire – as well as the ongoing changes that occur regularly when key employees leave your organisation.

- The ideal is to have a **balanced aged distribution that allows for a better transfer of expertise from one generation to the next**<sup>2</sup> and a plan to have – at the very least – the same number of incoming workers to the expected number of outgoing workers. Refer to Insight 2 for detail on recruitment initiatives.

1. Mavromaras K, Moskos M, Mahuteau S, Isherwood L, Goode A, Walton H, Smith L, Wei Z, Flavel J. Evaluation of the NDIS. Final report. Adelaide: National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University. 2018 Feb. Tables 3.5 and 5.5 The Department of Health, 2017, THE AGED CARE WORKFORCE, 2016 ([gen-agedcaredata.gov.au](http://gen-agedcaredata.gov.au)) The Department of Health, 2021, 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report ([health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au))

2. Vincent, Etienne (2019) Workforce Modelling in Support of Rejuvenation Objectives Department of National Defence, 101 Colonel by Dr, Ottawa, Canada, p 1.