

Fact sheet: Australian aged care workforce profile today

Total number of people employed as direct care workers:

240,000

Direct care workers include nurses, personal care workers, allied health or other workers who provide care through physically interacting with the person they're caring for.¹

Personal care workers (PCWs) make up the largest group of direct care workers across all aged care service care types

- **75% of direct care workers are PCWs**
- 20% are nurses
- 5% allied health workers²



- The aged care workforce is highly **feminised**
- In residential care, 86% of the direct care workforce are women
- In home care, 89% of the direct care workforce are women³

The median age of PCWs and enrolled nurses is

40-49 years.⁴

- Direct care workers from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background make up a significant proportion of the workforce
- 35% in residential aged care (RAC)
- 18% in home care (HC)⁵



Around **30%** of the current aged care workforce is made up of migrants.⁶

Workers who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander make up just **1.9%** of direct care workers.⁷

Most of the direct care workforce are employed in permanent part-time positions. It is not known why so many workers are part-time, however some workers may have several part-time positions which when combined are equivalent to or greater than one FTE

- **93%** of direct care roles are part time
- **96%** of PCWs work part time⁸

Around **30%** of the RAC workforce and **40%** of the HC workforce want to work more hours. More than 10% hold a second job.⁹ This represents an opportunity for the sector to explore different approaches to the delivery of care that meet the needs of older Australians and offers more work for employees.

66% of PCWs hold a Certificate III or higher in a relevant direct care field.¹⁰

^{1, 2 & 9} Committee for Economic Development Australia, 2021, [Duty of care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge](#), Melbourne, ISBN: 0 85801 307
^{3-8 & 10} Commonwealth Department of Health, 2021, [2020 Aged Care Workforce Census](#), Canberra

Fact sheet: Workforce of the future with an ageing population

CEDA predicts that an

additional 35,000

direct aged care workers will be required each year to meet basic standards of care.¹

Given the move to more individualised care, and our ageing population, workforce needs will continue to grow. There are challenges with understanding the true need for workers. The need for 'on the ground' for workers appears to be greater than CEDA's forecast. A snapshot taken in 2020 indicated an estimated **22,000** vacancies in direct care roles across the sector.²



A **skills shortage of 53%** in residential aged care, and 42% in home care settings was reported in 2016.⁵

Our population is ageing.

The number of traditional working age people to support each Australian over 65 is expected to fall from 5 people today, to just 2.7 people in 2049-50. In 1970, there were 7.5 working aged people for each person over 65.⁶

Only around **65%** of workers across aged care believe their organisation delivers high quality service to older Australians.⁷

If the workforce expands at its current pace, there will be a **shortfall of 110,000+ workers by 2030.**³

There has been a decline in the proportion of full-time registered nursing staff employed in aged care, from 21% in 2003 to 15.6% in 2020.⁸ This trend may change as new government policies come into practice.



D Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of volunteers providing support in facilities in 2020 had roughly halved from the number in 2016.⁴

Home care packages were first introduced in 2012. 60,000 were released that year.⁹ During 2017-18, 116,843 people accessed a Home Care Package (noting that a single package can be accessed by more than one person over the duration of a single year as people enter and exit care). There were 91,847 people in a home care package at 30 June 2018.¹⁰

As part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report, 40,000 additional packages were announced for both 2021-22 and 2022-23 (80,000 in total).¹¹

At the end of 2021, **217,724** senior Australians had access to a home care package and **825,383** received support through the program.¹²

^{1 & 3} Committee for Economic Development Australia, 2022, [Duty of care: Aged Care Sector in Crisis](#), Melbourne,

^{2, 4 & 8} Commonwealth Department of Health, 2021, [2020 Aged Care Workforce Census](#), Canberra

⁵ Mavromaras, K, Knight, G, Isherwood, L, Crettenden, A, Flavel, J, Karmel, T, Moskos, M, Smith, L, Walton, H and Wei, Z, 2017, [THE AGED CARE WORKFORCE](#), 2016, Australian Government, Department of Health, Canberra

⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, 2021, [2021 Intergenerational Report: Australia over the next 40 years](#), Canberra, ISBN 978-1-925832-37-2

⁷ Aged Care Workforce Industry Council, 2021, [Workforce Narrative](#), Melbourne.

⁹ Department of Health and Ageing, 2013, [Home Care Packages Program Guidelines](#), Canberra.

¹⁰ Department of Health, 2018, [Home Care Packages Program: Data Report 1st Quarter 2018-19](#), Canberra.

^{11 & 12} Department of Health, 2022, [Budget 2022-23: Home care – supporting senior Australians to remain independent for longer](#), Canberra.

Fact sheet: **Caring for older Australians**

Older Australians (those 70 years and older) have a strong preference to stay living in their own home should they need support or care.

Only 25% would prefer to live in a residential home.¹

The number of older people using home care has tripled over the last 10 years² and this is set to grow with the release of 40,000 home care packages over next two years (80,000 in total).³

Around 2 in 3 people using aged care services are women.⁴



In 2018, **1.3 million** older Australians living at home needed some assistance with everyday activities. Of these, almost two-thirds had their need fully met.⁵



People aged 85–89 in metropolitan areas had an aged care usage rate over 10 times higher than that of people in very remote communities.⁶

Half of all older Australians (aged 65 years and older) have a disability.⁷



Almost a quarter (24%) of people aged 65 and over live alone.⁸

37% of people aged 65 and over were born outside of Australia.⁹

18% of people aged 65 and over speak a language other than English at home.¹⁰



By 2031, nearly 20% of the population is expected to be over 65. The current figure is around 16%.¹¹

The number of Australians aged over 85 will continue to increase:

- from 515,700 in 2018–19 (2% of population)
- to over 1.5 million by 2058 (3.7% of population)¹²

Similarly, the number of older Australians living with dementia will continue to increase:

- from around 342,000 people in 2015
- to about 900,000 in 2050¹³

¹ Roy Morgan, 2020, [What Australians think of ageing and aged care: A survey for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#), Research Paper 4, Canberra.

^{2, 4, 6} Commonwealth Department of Health, 2021, [2020 Aged Care Workforce Census](#), Canberra

³ Department of Health, 2022, [Budget 2022–23: Home care – supporting senior Australians to remain independent for longer](#), Canberra.

^{5, 7} Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, [Disability, Ageing and Carers. Australia: Summary of Findings](#), Canberra.

^{8–10} Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020, [Australia's health 2020 data insights](#), Australia's health series no. 17. Cat. no. AUS 231. Canberra: AIHW.

¹¹ Committee for Economic Development Australia, 2021, [Duty of care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge](#), Melbourne, ISBN: 0 85801 307

¹² Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2021, [Final Report – Volume 2: The current system](#), Canberra.

¹³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020, [Australia's health 2020. Dementia 'snap shot'](#), Canberra

Fact sheet: Workforce sentiment

(All data sourced from BPA Analytics, [Aged Care Census Database](#) unless otherwise stated)

Being able to spend time with, and support older Australians was the top reason cited by workers for undertaking aged care work

- good location of their workplace ranked second
- good reputation of their employer ranked third

On average, 55% of workers describe their workload as fair and equitable. The same issue is common across the health care sector. There is too much work to do, and too little time to do it.

Despite the significant challenges of a Royal Commission and a global pandemic, the aged care workforce returned a much stronger, more positive sentiment towards their employers and the industry during COVID in 2020 compared to 2019:

- Aged care employees felt more appreciated by their employer (65%) and valued by their community (63%)
- Aged care professionals felt prouder to work in the industry (8.4/10) and were the second proudest workforce behind community services professionals within health and community services (8.6)¹



Men working in aged care have generally been 8-10% happier with their workload than women. This may be because men seem to receive more positive reinforcement from consumers and management due to their minority status within aged care and work more night shifts which can be less intensive.



Over the last ten years, the Aged Care Census Database (ACCD) data shows that there has been a general upward trend in workers thinking more highly of their organisation's approach to training and skills. Over 65% of personal care workers (PCWs) believe their organisation addresses training and skills issues.

However there are still significant workforce challenges for the aged care sector, suggesting a polarised workforce.

- Around one in three aged care respondents did not feel valued and appreciated by their community and employer
- Between 32% to 38% of aged care employees were unlikely to recommend their employers, leaders, or a career in the sector
- Professionals aged under 30 and nurses were the most likely to intend to leave the aged care sector in the next year or two²

Aged Care managers appear to be good at cultivating productive working relationships with their workers. Amongst for-profit aged care workers, 58% of believe their manager provides support to overcome performance shortfalls, 56% said their manager provides appreciation for good performance, and 59% are a role model to whom they look up to and learn from.

Aged care workers rate their sector more highly on addressing managerial competencies than other health and community sectors rate theirs: 54% compared to the next highest rating of 47% for the disability sector.

Retirement was the top reason cited by workers for leaving the sector

- underpayment ranked second
- poor management in general ranked third
- excessive workload ranked fourth

Over 70% of workers think that consumers are satisfied with their aged care. When asked if everyone in their workplace maintains high quality of standards in their service to consumers, 68-74% of workers said 'yes'.

^{1,2} HESTA, 2021, [State of the sector: 2021 – aged care workforce insights](#), Melbourne.