



# AGEDCARE

WORKFORCE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### 10 SEPTEMBER 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

In its discussions today on the Aged Care sector workforce and its continued resilience and effort in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council noted that the current and future demands of the sector's workforce cannot simply be met through a replication of current work patterns.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the key workforce issues experienced in the aged care sector. The workforce changes and supports we are working with Industry and Government to put in place are vital to the sustainability of the workforce which has been doing an incredible job during very difficult circumstances.

The Council analysed progress under the eight programs of work it was currently advancing to address workforce conditions and issues. Its effort was firmly focused on working with Industry and Government to ensure the workforce is equipped to meet the changing needs of consumer.

This workforce reform is about recognising the value of older Australians and the way Australia recognises this through valuing and resourcing our aged care workers.

Specific recognition was paid by the Council to the work of the Aged Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC)

Re-packaging units of competency for workers undertaking Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) to ensure the units are much more targeted towards the skills workers need in aged care was a good first step.

The more comprehensive review the IRC is now undertaking of all the units of competency will be informed by stakeholder responses to several discussion papers, the last of which was published recently.

The Council commended the extensive consultations undertaken by the IRC with the support of SkillsIQ in reframing the qualifications and skills framework.

Consultation enables the IRC to identify the specific workforce skills gaps in the sector and create qualifications that will address these gaps.

The IRC's work now needed to be built upon through strong Government action. The Council noted that Industry could continue to skill up its workforce, attract new talent and provide career pathways but none of these reforms would have any effect in ensuring older Australians received quality care if the Government didn't take quick and decisive action.

We now require strong Government support to push ahead with industrial relations changes that will enable us to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Without Government support, our work on improving the aged care sector's quality of jobs, along with our efforts to shift negative attitudes and promote the value of the aged care workforce, will not succeed.

The Council called on Government to change minimum employment conditions for all aged care workers to reflect the additional skills, qualifications, attributes and roles we require of workers to properly care for older Australians.

It is not okay that aged care continues to have one of the oldest and lowest paid workforces in the country.

The Council looked forward to welcoming a strong Government focus on the aged care sector in the October 2020 budget. It was concerned to ensure that any additional government financial assistance to the aged care sector reached workers.

The Council thanked Leading Aged Services Australia for conducting early consultations on the Voluntary Industry Code of Practice. The revision of the Code incorporating stakeholder sentiment has assisted in enhancing consumer, provider and workforce understanding of it. The Council looks forward to publishing the Code shortly, noting that consultations and reviews will be ongoing. It encourages Industry leaders to commit to the Leadership pledge and note that work is progressing to ensure the Code meets its purpose to raise industry standards through self-regulation.

Members welcomed the publication of the Council's website which can be found at [www.acwic.com.au](http://www.acwic.com.au). This website will be an excellent platform to showcase the work Industry, Government and the Council are doing in building a better, more sustainable aged care system across Australia, with a clear focus on the consumer.

The next monthly Council meeting is scheduled for 1 October 2020.

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