

Perceptions around the fairness of the pay in Aged Care organisations has consistently increased over the last 10 years...

... But more so for Male Aged Care Workers than for Female Aged Care Workers.

### The organisation provides a fair day's pay for a fair day's work



### The organisation provides appropriate remuneration for the responsibilities I have



### Analysis of the insight

The Aged Care Census Database (ACCD) data shows that a record high of aged care workers believed they were receiving fair pay for the work they were doing in 2015-17.

For the remainder of the decade, this sentiment has been declining, reflecting a growing number of workers who do not think they are receiving fair pay for their work.

Referring to insight #5, we see that this **growing sense of unfair pay is reflected in workers' reasons for leaving aged care**, with the reason 'underpaid' ranking as the top reason given for workers leaving aged care in 2016-18, and 2017-19.

### So why do aged care workers feel that their work is undervalued?

- Anecdotal, there is a political and social assumption that aged care workers are doing the work for 'love' rather than 'money'. This overriding sentiment strongly upholds the altruistic motivations of aged care workers while it downplays workers' need for extrinsic rewards. It also suggests that workers can't be doing aged care work for 'love' and 'the money'. We need to change this perception. - For example, the former Australian Minister for Aged Care and Disability the Hon. Mitch Fifield made this comment in relation to wages and conditions in aged care:

**"We need to look at ways to make working in the social services area incredibly attractive. But I think we've also got to recognise that for the majority of people in the aged care sector and in the disability sector, they do this work because when they wake up in the morning, they want to know that they're going to be making a difference to someone's life. Yes, quality of workplace is important, but it's not the only factor and neither is pay".<sup>1</sup>**

- Workers are prevented from making demands to recognise the value of their care work by the highly casualised and part-time nature of their employment and industrial barriers that prevent them from participating productively in collective bargaining.

Similar to responses regarding fair workloads, males score consistently higher than females in their responses to fair pay. On average, more males think that the pay they are receiving for the work they are doing is fair.

### What can providers do?

If possible, providers should focus on making transferring their workers from casual/contract to a more permanent role. This would make the sector a more attractive place to work at as it would be more secure for people looking for work. It will also ensure that those who were previously working on a casual or contract basis the security of permanent hours which may improve responses to fair pay.